

Communella Bunikovskaya's Grandmother Sarrah Bunikovskaya And Grandfather Abram Bunikoskiy



My grandmother and grandfather on my father's side: Sarrah and Abram Bunikoskiye. Photo signed on the backside: "To our beloved son Mosia from his Mom and Dad". Mariupol, 1924. My grandparents were photographed to have the photo sent to my father that served in the army in Vladicaucasus. My grandfather on my father's side Abram Lyova Bunikovskiy was born in Priazovie, in 1870s [a Jewish agricultural colony near Mariupol]. He moved to Mariupol when he grew older where there were more opportunities to get education or a good job. He managed to get professional education and became a hat maker. The majority of population in Mariupol was Russian and Ukrainian. There was also Greek, German and Bulgarian population. There were not many Jews in the town. I remember my grandfather at the age of over 60: he was a strong man with straight hair with a parting to the left side and moustache. My grandfather was religious, but he didn't wear a kippah or a beard. After the revolution in 1917 it was quite common in Mariupol that Jews changed their traditional looks. My grandfather's dream was to move to Palestine and he paid a high price for this dream; he was repressed as a Zionist in 1937 and perished in Stalin's camps. I don't really know whether grandfather was involved in any arrangements for departure or whether he was a member of Zionist organization, but I guess, he was. We didn't discuss this subject in our family and had no information about when or where he perished. After Stalin died in 1953 I tried to raise this subject. I wanted my father to get some information about my grandfather, but he didn't do anything about it. My grandmother Sarah Bunikovskaya was also born in Priazovie in 1880s. I don't know how or when she moved to Mariupol. My grandfather and grandmother got married in 1900s. They had a traditional Jewish wedding. They settled down in Mariupol. My grandfather supported the family and my grandmother was a housewife. They had four children: my father Moisey, born in 1905, David, two years younger, Isaac born around 1910, and sister Rosa, born in 1913. I often visited my grandmother and grandfather before the WW II. I remember that they lived in a 2-storied house. I guess they owned this house since I never saw any neighbors or a different owner of the house. My grandmother was a short fat woman with gray curly hair. She was a very quiet and reserved woman. I loved her dearly. My father told me that my grandparents observed all Jewish traditions before the revolution: they only had kosher food, celebrated all Jewish holidays. My father and his brothers finished cheder. They went to the

synagogue with their parents. After the revolution the Soviet authorities struggled against religion and in 1930s when I came to visit them there were no religious signs in the family, though I am sure that they remained religious people in their heart. I guess they prayed in secret. The last time I came to Mariupol in 1938 I didn't know that I would never see my grandmother Sarah and my father's brothers David and Isaac and their sister Rosa. In the end of 1941 they evacuated from Mariupol, but got in encirclement and were exterminated by Germans. In 1950s I found a sheet of paper with my mother's notes: 'In summer 1941 my husband's family: his mother, sister Rosa, brothers David and Isaac and Isaac's daughter was martyred by fascists during a mass shooting of Jews in Mariupol.