

Hertz Rogovoy With His Brother Grigoriy Rogovoy And Mother Bella Rogovaya



This is my, Hertz Rogovoy's family. From left to right is my mother Bella Rogovaya, I Hertz Rogovoy, my elder brother Grigoriy Rogovoy. Father asked to take picture. Mother sent this picture to the place, where my father was exiled for the tax dodging. The picture was taken in Kiev in 1930.

In 1912 my father rendered to a matchmaker [shadkhan], who told him about a beautiful eligible maid in Zhitomir [Ukraine]. My father went to Zhitomir [140 km from Kiev] to propose to her. Father's wooing was successful and at the beginning of 1912 my parents got married in Kiev. It was a traditional Jewish wedding. Parents had a marriage certificate issued by rabbi. My elder brother Grigoriy was born on December 28, 1912. In the year of 1917 my second brother Lev was born. He died the year when I was born, 1924.

In 1922, when NEP began, my father working as a salesman in the store, gradually became the owner of the store. He bought a good apartment at Bolshaya Podvalnaya street, in the center of Kiev. Unfortunately NEP period was of short duration. When the soviet regime decided to do away with private entrepreneurship and transfer to planned economy private entrepreneurs, so-called nepmans ['NEPist, people dealing with NEP' in Russian] at that time were suffocated by taxes. Those taxes could be changed 3-4 annually. Hardly had one tax been paid, when another was levied, exceeding the preceding one 2 or 3 times as much. Smart people dropped everything and escaped abroad. Unfortunately my father did not turn out to be sagacious. He was arrested as an offender of tax laws. He went through a trial and was sentenced to 3 years in GULAG. After the trial my father was sent to the camps in Solikamsk [Russia, about 2000 km from Kiev]. Even after he was released, he was not entitled to return home, he had to be exiled for a while.

I was born in August, 1924. I was named Hertz after eldest brother of my father, who died a year before, 1923. He was buried in Lukianovskoy Jewish cemetery in Kiev.

Mother did not work before father's exile. When my mother and I were left on our own, she found a job in some sort of workshop. I do not know what her job was like. The most important that she was paid. Of course we lived from hand to mouth. The most jovial event for me was when mother took me to the market, which was located close to our house, and bought me a big rice patty. It was a real feast! We were starving. But my mother strove to support me. It is the most delighted recollection from those times, but there are others. I remember there was a tram line near our house. The trams were remade from horse chaises. There were no doors, and the steps were along entire train. I remember that there were very many homeless children. At that time streets started being asphalted. There were large cauldrons, where asphalt and pitch were melted. The melted mass was ladled and rolled manually with the rollers. In the evenings when the workers left, vagrants were warming in the cauldrons.

In 1938 father returned from exile. Parents lodged in private house on the left bank of Dnieper river. Now it is the recreational area of the Kievites-Hydropark, back in those times that district was called Predmostnaya Slobodka ['outskirts' in Russian]. Father found a job to sell newspapers and magazines in a kiosk.

My parents were not very religious. The life was hard and it was difficult to stick to all Jewish traditions. I do not remember if we observed kashrut at home. But my father never missed any religious holiday in the synagogue. He obligatorily celebrated Yom Kippur, fasted the proper way. It was sacred to him. My mother and I always went to meet father on his way back from the synagogue. It was in the post-war period, when I was the student of the medical institute. We always celebrated Pesach at home. Beforehand we cleaned the house from chametz. During all Pesach days we used to eat only matzah instead of bread. All holiday were celebrated strictly according to the traditions. Father knew how to read Hebrew and pray. I do not remember how other holidays were celebrated. All I remember is that I was given money by father for Chanukkah.