

Yakov Bunke With His Wife Dalya Baykuyte And Her Friend



My future wife Dalya Baykuyte is to the left, I am in the center, and to the right is my wife's friend. The picture was taken during our walk in Plunge in 1949.

In April 1947 I was demobilized from army and went to motherland, Plunge. Mother and sisters came back from evacuation. I moved in their room. Mother was so happy that I was alive, and the only survivor in the family came back full of awards.

We had to adapt to living in peace. Since childhood I dreamt to become an artist. I even drew pictures anywhere I could, but I had to work to help out mother. I was send to work as an instructor of rifle department of Dosaaf [Volunteer society of assistance of Army and the Front]. I did not work there for a long time, less than a year. Then I found job in some company as a joiner. I made complex furniture, then I became a foreman and ran production. I had a chance to be creative in my work- I made carving and inlay. Since 1962 I started taking part in the competitions and was conferred with the title- people's artist.

My private life turned out to be pretty good. I often went to ispolkom on various matters and I met the secretary there- a young Lithuanian lady -Dalya Baitkute. Dalya was born in Plunge in 1925 in the family of a launder lady. In her childhood she often delivered washed clothes to Jewish houses and she made friends with Jewish girls. She even spoke Yiddish. During the occupation, Dalya was in Plunge and saw what wrongdoings fascists did. Dalya was divorced and raised a son born in 1947. In 1949 we met and fell in love with each other. Our parents - my mother and Dalya's parents were at first against mixed marriage, but soon they agreed and -in 1950 I married Dalya. My sisters were married off before me, and Dalya with me lived in mother's place. Having high military awards, I was given a small apartment. When we had kids, we got a good three-room one.

We are still living in it.

I adopted Dalya's son Virgilius and he treats me like his own father, though he knows that I am not his natural father. In 1952 our elder son Evgeniy was born. Then in 1953 - Leonid. He named him Leibl after my dad. We had a modest living. We had neither dacha nor car. My sons went to school, when they had to choose which nationality should be put in their passport, even my mother said that they should put Lithuanian to be able to enter the institute without any hindrance. Though, at the age of 16 they got passports with Lithuanian nationality, they identify themselves as Jew as they love me and respect Jewish history.