

Klara Dovgalevskaya's Brother Pinya Dovgalevsky With Their Sister And Her Husband Buzya Dovgalevskaya And Yefim Dovgalevsky



This is my brother Pinya (left), my sister Buzya (right) and my sister's husband, Yefim Dovgalevsky. The photo was taken after the wedding of Buzya and Efim in 1928 in Kiev. Our parents had seven children. Pinya was born in 1905, Buzya in 1907. The children attended cheder. Then they went to a Ukrainian school in Tripolye. Our family suffered a terrible tragedy. In 1918-1919 there were gangs in Tripolye that consisted of 15-20 men. They would come to villages, and rob and kill Jews. Pinya was not living with us at the time. Once some Komsomol members came from Kiev to our village to fight against the gangs. They were all young men and women, without any training or knowledge of how to fight against bandits. So, the bandits encircled them and put them into the basement of my father's store. They also posted guards there. My brother Pinya, who was 14 years old, decided to rescue them. He went to the store and began digging in the ground in order to reach the basement. The guards saw him and shot him, wounding him in the leg. He dived into the river to escape them, and my mother lost communication with him for a long time. Later, we found out that he had managed to reach Kiev and got to the hospital there. His leg was amputated and he remained handicapped for the rest of his life. After this event, some time later, another gang burst into Tripolye. They came into our house and one of them slashed my father on the head with his saber. I saw that happen. My brother Aba rushed to defend my father, but he was also slashed by the saber. My father died at once. We found Aba dead later in the village. After the gang attacked our house and killed my father, they raped my mother. Those of us Jews who remained alive after the pogrom, around 15 people, found a boat and crossed the Dnepr River. We went to Kiev. In Kiev my mother found Pinya, who now walked on crouches. Pinya, the invalid, sold cigarettes; he hung a tray with cigarettes on his neck and sold them. Later he worked at the knitting factory where invalids were employed, and he was chief of the section that prepared yarn. Buzya married her cousin Yefim Dovgalevsky. She never worked outside the home; she was a housewife. When the war broke out, my mother and Buzya, and mother's four young grandchildren were in Brovakyh village. There was a collective farm there, where Yefim Dovgalevsky was working. He went there every spring to fix tractors. So, Buzya with her children and our mother went there every summer as well. During the war I was trying to find out what happened to them. But I learned the horrible truth only after I returned to Kiev in 1944. Once at the market a woman approached me and said, 'Are you Klara Dovgalevskaya? I can tell you about your family.' Buzya's husband, Yefim Dovgalevsky, went to Brovakyh village to take them away before Hitler's coming. On his way there, he met some Ukrainian friends, who gave him a lot to drink, got him drunk, then took all of his money and killed him with an axe. They left his body in the forest, where it was found by the locals. Before the fascists came, the locals hid my mother, Buzya and her children in someone's basement. A neighbor took the oldest girl, Firochka, to stay with her. She said, 'Let her stay with me. If something happens, she will live'. When the fascists came, somebody betrayed my family. Mother, Buzya and the children were led out of the basement put on horses and taken into the forest. They also took the owner of the horses. In the forest he was ordered to dig a grave. My mother was thrown into that grave and buried alive. Buzya and her small children were shot. The man who was ordered to dig the grave told that story. Firochka, Buzya's oldest daughter, remained at the neighbor's. Once, a woman in the village quarreled with this neighbor and told her that she would let the Germans know about the Jewish girl. So, this neighbor took Firochka to the commandant's office, and she was also shot.