

Semyon Gun's Father Anatoli Gun And His Sister Bella Andreeva



This is my father Anatoli Gun, and my sister Bella Andreeva. This photo was taken in Sobornaya Square in Odessa in 1953. In 1947 my father became a tailor in the Navy School. He was responsible for fixing uniforms for cadets. My father also made uniforms for the management of the school. Cadets usually asked my father to make their trousers narrower or wider depending on fashion trends. My father had a lot of work to do and was well respected at work. Cadets liked him. He was a good mixer. My father also continued sewing at home for some time. He had dinner after he came from work and then went to sleep for 2-3 hours. Then my mother woke him up and sat down to his desk to work until about 4 am. He worked in the same room where I slept and the light and Singer sewing machine often woke me up. My father made tussore, canvas and woolen suits at

home. He took the welting to be starched, then sewed over horse's hair, applied cotton wool to straighten up the shoulders. To make the long story short, such jacket just stood in a corner. Such was a fashion trend after the war. In the end of 1940s my father began to go to the synagogue in Pushkinskaya Street with grandfather Lazar. When this synagogue was closed they began to go to the synagogue in Peresyp [in an industrial neighborhood in the outskirts of Odessa.]. On the Day of Atonement [Yom Kippur] morning my father and grandfather put on their fancy suits, ties and hats and went to the synagogue. I didn't see them wearing yarmulka at home, but they took them to the synagogue. They stayed in the synagogue a whole day. They didn't eat or drink anything. When they came home in the evening they followed the ritual of having tea with lemon after the first star appeared in the sky. In 20-30 minutes they sat at table and said a toast. My mother didn't go to synagogue. She was there probably once or twice from what I remember. She always made gefilte fish and all kinds of delicious food at Pesah. Our father told us about Moses leading Jews in the desert for 40 years. I don't think we had Pesah in real Jewish sense. We had candles lit in candle stands, but I don't remember on what holiday. My father couldn't help working on Saturday since he was the breadwinner in the family. He didn't observe kashrut and the other family members as well. When my father's friends visited him they had tea and jam and cookies. They played lotto, cards and dominoes. My parents always went to see performances of Jewish theaters that came on tours, which happened rarely after the war. My father sang Jewish song. I remember a song about a tailor and 'Varnechki'. After the war a well-known tenor Alexandrovich often came on tours to Odessa. He sang in Yiddish. My father liked him. Alexandrovich sang Varnechki at a concert in Philharmonic and it was quite a hit. My father also liked songs from Soviet films. My father often sang popular song with his Jewish friend Farber: 'Dark barrows are asleep', or 'Because of you, my sweet cherry, I argue with my friend'. I still love those songs. In 1950 - my father bought an expensive Minsk wireless and began to listen to the 'Voice of America' in secret from the children. He thought that we might blurt it out somehow and it was dangerous. He was interested in politics. My sister Bella was born on 5 January 1945. Bella went to school in 1952 at the age of 7. Boys and girls studied in different schools, so she and I studied in different schools. She studied well, but at about 10 years of age she began to have heart problems, rheumatism. Our parents were worried about her. They sent her to a children's recreation center in Tuapse.