

Yevsey Liberman, His Wife Regina Gorovits-Liberman And Other Family Members



Here's a family celebration in the Liberman-Gorovits family -- the 80th birthday of Regina Gorovits, the wife of my uncle Yevsey Liberman. The picture was taken on January 10, 1980, in Kharkov. My father's brother ? Yevsey Grigoryevich Liberman ? was born in 1897 and graduated from Kiev University. From 1923 he worked in Kharkov. He was an undoubtedly talented man: he later created an economic school famous all over the country. He started in Kharkov [which was the capital of Ukraine then] as an assistant or a secretary to a famous party leader of the Ukrainian Republic, People's Education Commissar Nikolay Skrypnik. When famine hit the Ukraine [in the mid-1930s] and they began arresting the national Ukrainian intelligentsia, Skrypnik, as one of the honest people of the old generation of party members, committed suicide. My uncle was among those arrested, and working for Skrypnik was one of the charges against him; he was accused of supporting Ukrainian nationalism (they apparently forgot that he was Jewish). He was imprisoned for almost a year and even tortured. But he did not sign any papers. One of his students, who was teaching at the Kharkov Economic Institute at the time, helped obtain his release. People tried to hush up the truth about the arrests. The extent of people's fear at the time can be seen from the following episode. Uncle Yevsey and his wife Regina Gorovits [the sister of the world's famous pianist Vladimir Gorovits, who lived in the USA], was visited by the Vladimir Gorovits? wife, V. Toscanini. My uncle thought it was necessary to ask the NKVD [People's Commissariat of the Interior] for permission to receive this foreign guest. He also asked them to send a representative of the authorities to every family meeting with her. It was probably due to the fact that his sister-in-law was known worldwide (she was a daughter of the famous conductor Arturo Toscanini) that there were no negative consequences for the Liberman-Gorovits family for having had 'contacts with foreigners,' even though in many other cases it was enough for someone to have a relative abroad in order to be arrested and disappear. Later, my Uncle Yevsey's lectures, articles and speeches drew the attention of the highest Soviet leadership; he won support from prime ministers Khrushchev and then Kosygin. An article titled 'Plan, Profit, Prize' that he published in 'Pravda' [the main newspaper of the USSR] in 1962 touched off a whole discussion among economists, while his

line of reforms, supported by the leadership of the USSR, was nicknamed 'Liberianization' in the West. My famous uncle died in 1984. Aunt Regina died in 1986.