

Naum Bitman And His Wife Victoria Sapozhnikova



I, Naum Bitman, and my future wife Victoria Sapozhnikova, photographed in Kiev before the wedding in 1964. The photograph is signed: "To dearest Mummy and Fimochka from Naum and Vika". This photograph was made by Berdichevskiy, a well-known photographer in Kiev.

In 1955 I finished school. We knew in our circles that a Jew practically had no chances to enter an institute in Kiev. Again, we never mentioned this in our discussions, we just knew that one had to go to Novocherkassk or Kursk or Bryansk if one wanted to study in a higher educational institution. One needed acquaintances that would support him or have a birth certificate reissued. We knew what it meant to be a Jew in this city or in this country. It didn't make sense to discuss it, we just knew that one wouldn't get a job at the Arsenal plant, for example. It was all clear to us, you know. At that time there were shops that manufactured smaller products - haberdashery, hardware, etc. These shops were a kind of ghettos employing Jewish people.

I wanted to continue my studies, and I even tried to take entrance exams. But I noticed that the moment they heard my last name their attitude changed. . It was next to impossible for a Jewish person to enter a higher educational institution due to the quota for Jewish students. The Jews did enter - I am not trying to say that Jewish people did not study. I'm just saying that of two people (Ukrainian and Jewish) with equal knowledge the Jewish person had no chance to be accepted. I entered the extramural department at Kiev technological institute of food industry named after Anastas I. Mikoyan. I studied well. However, at some faculties there were staunch anti-Semites, and it was impossible to pass exams at their subjects from the first. But I managed to graduate from this Institute in 1961.

My personal life, basically was not good. I got bad luck twice. It was bad luck indeed. I wanted to have a good life but I failed. I met a girl in 1964. I liked her very much. Besides, she was Jewish.

She was 7-8 years younger than I was. It was important for that age. I was 26 and she had just finished school. Her name was Victoria Sapozhnikova. We got married and had a wedding. All our relatives and friends attended it. Victoria was a very pretty girl. She was wearing a lovely white dress and everything was just fine. In 1966 our son Valeriy was born. But we didn't have a good life. As I said Victoria was a very pretty girl and I loved her dearly. But she didn't like the idea of family. She loved to visit people and show off her new dresses. However, family is something different. But Victoria didn't understand it and didn't want to do the housework. Perhaps, I was wrong somewhere as well. We got a divorce in some time, but I suffered a lot. Later I got married a second time. I married a Russian girl that came from Lvov. My second marriage failed, too. My second wife met all my requirements to the wife and hostess of the house, but.. In this case I must have taken attraction for love. I grew totally indifferent to her in the course of time. And I can't live in marriage without love. We separated.