

Iosif Gotlib With His Colleagues



This is an amateur orchestra of the locomotive depot of Sambor station. I, Iosif Gotlib, am the 2nd from the left. We were photographed during a parade on 7 November. Our orchestra was always ahead of parades and later we played popular and dance tunes for people. This photo was taken in Sambor in 1948.

I demobilized in early 1946. My wife and I arrived at Sambor and went to my house: and there were strangers there. They told me that my family moved to Israel in 1945. I felt distressed and bitter about it. I didn't know that I could claim my house to be returned to me and nobody told me there was this opportunity. My wife and I were accommodated in the hostel of the railroad depot. I went to work there as a locomotive operator. I submitted my application to the Party and obtained recommendations.

I could play few musical instruments: piano, accordion, saxophone. I took part in an amateur club of the Sambor depot. There was a brass orchestra that often performed at concerts. I was a saxophone player, a dancer, master of ceremonies and a soloist singer.

Chief of depot authorized me to organize an amateur club. I spent a lot of time organizing a choir and an orchestra. We began to perform at parties and in contests. My wife didn't like it that I spent there my time that I could spend with my family. Later she confessed that she was jealous. Whatever, but she posed an ultimatum: a family or an orchestra. I chose a family, of course, but I had to give up my orchestra. When the Party bureau was reviewing my application, they blamed me that I didn't accomplish my Party task: that I gave up this amateur activity. They didn't admit me to the Party. I became a member of the party only in 1956. I was a convinced communist and a convinced atheist. Religion has been alien to me.

In 1950 I was sent to work in a depot of Lanovtsy station [360 km from Kiev] where I became chief of the depot. My wife and son stayed in Sambor till I received a lodging. In 1952 I received a dwelling in Lanovtsy and my family moved in with me. My wife went to work in the depot.