

Communella Bunikovskaya's Father Michael Bunikovskiy, Aunt Rosa Bunikovskaya And Uncle David Bunikovskiy



From left to right: my father's sister Rosa Bunikovskaya, my father Moisey (Michael) Bunikovskiy, and my father's brother David Bunikovskiy. Mariupol, 1939. My father was visiting his relatives and they were photographed on this occasion. My grandfather and grandmother got married in 1900s. They had a traditional Jewish wedding. They settled down in Mariupol. My grandfather supported the family and my grandmother was a housewife. They had four children: my father Moisey, born in 1905, David, two years younger, Isaac born around 1910, and sister Rosa, born in 1913. I often visited my grandmother and grandfather before the WW II. My father and his brothers finished cheder. They went to the synagogue with their parents. After the revolution the Soviet authorities struggled against religion and in 1930s when I came to visit them there were no religious signs in the family, though I am sure that they remained religious people in their heart. I guess they prayed in secret. The last time I came to Mariupol in 1938 I didn't know that I would never see my grandmother Sarah and my father's brothers David and Isaac and their sister Rosa. In the end of 1941 they evacuated from Mariupol, but got in encirclement and were exterminated by Germans. In 1950s I found a sheet of paper with my mother's notes: 'In summer 1941 my husband's family: his mother, sister Rosa, brothers David and Isaac and Isaac's daughter was martyred by fascists during a mass shooting of Jews in Mariupol. The family of my cousin Meirah Fine also perished at that time. They resided in a Jewish agricultural colony. She and her husband, children, brothers and sisters were killed. My cousin sisters Luba, Nyusia and Rosa Lvovskiye and their families were thrown into mine pits in Donetsk'. This was how I got to know about the death of my father's family. In 1939 my father went to the army. He took part in the establishment of the Soviet power on the territory of Poland that had joined the USSR shortly before. He was dismissed before term for some reason. When the war began on 22 June 1941 my father wasn't recruited to the army since he was in reserve. My parents probably didn't believe that Hitler would attack our country since they went to a resort in Sukhumi at the end of May and returned home few days before the

war began. There were trenches excavated in our yard where we hid during air raids. In September 1941 we evacuated with the plant where our father worked to Barnaul Altaysk region [over 4000 km from Kiev].