

Golda Gutner 's Brother, Boris Gurevich



My brother, Boris Gurevich. 1926; Konotop.

In 1908 my mother and father had twins: Boris, named in honor of grandfather Borukh, and Ida. For some reasons they were always ashamed of admitting that they were twins.

All Konotop boys, just like my brother Boris, were trained in Vengerov's workshop. My brother studied metalwork in this workshop for several years. Then he said he wanted to continue his

studies. Vengerov supported his idea, considering him very smart. My brother dreamt of studying in Moscow, but my mother did not like Moscow for some reason, and in around 1929 my brother Boris went to study in Kharkov, to aunt Rakhil. In Kharkov he worked at a plant as a tool-maker and simultaneously studied at the Workers' Department. Then he entered the Heavy Engineering Institute. My parents could not help him financially, for these were the difficult 1930-s. He lived in a dormitory on his scholarship. He was a good student. He graduated around 1936. He was sent to work in Sverdlovsk (now Yekaterinburg) to the "Uralsmash" plant. From that plant he was sent to Leningrad, to the Higher Military Academy, where he studied for another two years. From there he was sent to Kramatorsk, where he worked as an engineer up to the beginning of the war.

When the war broke out, my brother Boris volunteered to go to the front. But at the military enlistment office he was told that specialists like him were needed in the rear. So, he was sent to Kuibyshev. We knew nothing about him. From Pugachevsk, from evacuation, we wrote to every institution we could; we had a whole folder with correspondence. Finally, with great difficulty, we found him. He was working at the aircraft-building plant in Kuibyshev.

My brother had to work hard; sometimes he even slept at the plant. They were building the plant and putting out products at the same time. It was very cold, and their hands froze to the metal. Everyone worked for the front back then. They put out armor. My sister met his girlfriend, Katya, whom brother married after the war. But I will tell you later about this.

Immediately after the end of the war, my brother Boris married that Katya, whom he met in Kuibyshev and about whom my sister Ida told us. He brought Katya to Konotop. Boris was 37 then. Boris and Katya loved each other very much. My mother was certainly very concerned that her daughter-in-law would be Russian, but my father told her not to talk about this. So, mother received them very well. My brother remained to live in Kuibyshev for the rest of his life, together with Katya and his children.

I would like to tell you some more about my brother, Boris. He spent all his life at that plant in Kuibyshev. His and Katya's elder daughter was born in 1946, but when she was 12 years old she died because of leukemia. Then they had two more children - Alla and Mikhail. Their children never changed their last name or patronymic.

My brother was the chief constructor. But during the Soviet Union's fight against cosmopolitanism, in early 1950-s, a Jew, Gurevich, could not remain the chief constructor. So, the plant's director made him a teacher in the plants' technical school and put him in charge of a design bureau. Of course, after Stalin's death he could work better again. But he never shared about the nature of his work. I only know that he spent months in Moscow in business trips.

In 1978, I received tragic news about his death. He died from stomach cancer. It was hard for me to think that I would bury my brother. My children stayed with my mother, while my husband and I went to Kuibyshev. The whole plant expressed great honor to him. The cemetery was far from the town, and there was a truck covered with carpets (it was in March when it was still cold). But the workers did not put the coffin on the truck - they carried it to the cemetery in turns. They made a great funeral banquet for him. I know that Jews do not do such things, but at that place people did that. The tables of the plant's canteen were covered, but not everyone could fit in. So again, people took turns. Many people spoke about him, shared how he taught, how he treated students, what a wonderful and honest person he was. In 1985 I went to Kuibyshev to visit Katya and her children. Katya invited me to the plant's museum, which speaks a lot about Boris. It even has his big portrait.