

Volf Kabakov



This is my father Volf Kabakov. The picture was taken in Minsk in 1916.

Father is the student of Juridical department in Saint Petersburg. He came to Minsk on vacation.

I did not live to see my paternal grandparents. I do not know exactly where they were born, but I know for sure that they came from Byelorussia. When they reached mature age, they lived in Minsk. Grandfather Morduch did not have a house, but a spacious comfortable apartment in the downtown area.

Grandmother Sofia Kabakovà died at the age of 25-26 while having parturition of her younger daughter in 1900. Grandpa remained with 3 little kids.

My father was only four, the eldest Gersh was 6 and Sofia was a new-born. My grandfather's second wife was Feiga. She was called Feigale or Fanya at home. They did not have common children. Fanya raised my father and his siblings. My father, his brother and sister loved her very much, like their mother, but they called her auntie.

Grandfather Morduch Kabakov worked as an accountant for his rich relatives Kabakovs. There were two lines of Kabakovs in Minsk- one wealthy and another one, where my grandpa belonged to, was not very rich.

The business of the Kabakovs my grandpa worked for was very prosperous. They even had their own synagogue. There were only 50-60 telephone subscribers, 20-30 out of which pertained to

public institutions and one of them belonged to the rich family of Kabakovs.

At that time it spoke for welfare. Though, my grandfather, the accountant, was not a poor man either. All his children finished lyceum and obtained higher education in Warsaw and Saint Petersburg, which was rather problematic for the Jews of that time.

My grandpa Morduch Kabakov died of heart stroke in 1916. Grandparents Kabakovs were buried in Jewish cemetery of Minsk. Their tombs were not preserved after Great Patriotic War.

Grandpa Morduch Kabakov was very religious. He strictly observed all Jewish traditions. The solemn holiday of Yom-Kippur was the most revered by grandpa.

On that day all Jews, including women went to the synagogue. They had stayed there all day long and fasted until the first evening star. If some of the children broke the fast, grandpa was infuriated and in father's words the violator got in the neck.

My father was born in 1896. Having finished lyceum father left for Saint Petersburg, where he studied at Juridical Department of the University.

He managed to finish only two courses. He could not go on with his education as the civil war was unleashed, there was no scholarship, no heating in the hostel, no prospects for future and in a word it was not the time to study.

Father went to his relatives in Minsk. He married my mother Anna Pelix in 1919. I do not know what kind of wedding they had- secular or religious. Unfortunately, I know hardly anything about my parents for two reasons: first the upbringing of our generation, the motto of that time was: "We would raze the world of violation...!", and we were taught that after October 1917 [Russian Revolution of 1917] we would start a new life and we should not care for the past and forget it.

I belonged to that generation Secondly, it was even more aggravated by my service in fleet since the age of 16. I was rarely at home and was hardly involved in the life of my kin.

The only thing I know that parents' wedlock was considered to be a misalliance. At that time the gradation of the past was still there, and Soviet regime had not affected the minds and mentality of Jews.

The marriage between Haim Pelix daughter, who had his own business, and the son of Gersh Kabakov, who owned no business, was reckoned as misalliance. Nonetheless, they got married. Daughter Sofia was born in 1920. She died soon.

Then they moved to Leningrad. Father was an officer, i.e. performing office functions. Such profession was called clerk in the west. Clerk was supposed to work in different branches, one day in one, tomorrow in another etc.

My father was such type of a clerk. Though he was called the economist or statistics expert, all the same it changed nothing. He had never been involved in legal work.