

Moishe Rogovoy



This is my father Moishe Rogovoy. I took his picture, when he was strolling in the park. The picture was taken in Kiev, in 1956.

My father Moishe Rogovoy, was born in 1879. I do not know what Jewish education my father got. Before 1917 my dad worked as salesman in the store that belonged to Swarzman, the Jewish manufacture, merchant of the 1st Guild. His store was located in Podol. Swarzman highly appreciated my father, and in course of time he even promoted my father to the title of the merchant of the 2nd Guild.

In 1912 my father rendered to a matchmaker [shadkhan], who told him about a beautiful eligible maid in Zhitomir [Ukraine]. My father went to Zhitomir [140 km from Kiev] to propose to her.

In 1922, when NEP began, my father working as a salesman in the store, gradually became the owner of the store. He bought a good apartment at Bolshaya Podvalnaya street, in the center of Kiev. Unfortunately NEP period was of short duration. When the soviet regime decided to do away with private entrepreneurship and transfer to planned economy private entrepreneurs, so-called nepmans ['NEPist, people dealing with NEP' in Russian] at that time were suffocated by taxes. Those taxes could be changed 3-4 annually. Hardly had one tax been paid, when another was levied, exceeding the preceding one 2 or 3 times as much. My father was arrested as an offender of tax laws. He went through a trial and was sentenced to 3 years in GULAG. After the trial my father was sent to the camps in Solikamsk [Russia, about 2000 km from Kiev]. Even after he was released, he was not entitled to return home, he had to be exiled for a while.

In 1938 father returned from exile. Parents lodged in private house on the left bank of Dnieper river. Now it is the recreational area of the Kievites-Hydropark. Father found a job to sell newspapers and magazines in a kiosk.

My parents were not very religious. The life was hard and it was difficult to stick to all Jewish traditions. I do not remember if we observed kashrut at home. But my father never missed any religious holiday in the synagogue. He obligatorily celebrated Yom Kippur, fasted the proper way. It was sacred to him.

My father and I were very close. He loved me very much. Father was a very intelligent man, well-read and politically-minded. My friends respected him, even when we became adults. My friends took humiliation of the Jewish peoples very hard. I remember he often used to say: 'Why Tartar and Gypsy songs are broadcast on the radio, and there are no Jewish songs? Shall we have lived by the time when it happens?'. Of course after all father had to go through, he did not trust the soviet regime very much, and due to that we argued with my father.

During the WWII my parents were evacuated in Voronezh oblast [Russia]. They were very indigent in the evacuation. They sold everything they had, even the wedding rings, which were sacred to them. All - clothes, linen was sold and exchanged for bread. In 1946 my parents came back to Kiev from evacuation. They did not have a place to stay. First they found a poky apartment for rent, and then bought it from the landlords. It was a tiny room, without conveniences, with no water and toilet. They had a hard life. They were indigent. My father died in 1962. We buried him at Jewish lot of the city cemetery. Father was buried according to the Jewish rite. His grave is next to my grandfather's, where the name of my father is written. I keep both of my father's prayer books as precious things. My father's picture and the calendar leaf dating his death - March 28, 1962 - are glued to in his prayer book. This is a keepsake of a wonderful man, my father.