

Remma Kogan's Father Moisey Kogan



This is my father Moisey Kogan with Komsomol members at the meeting of the Komsomol bureau of the Kirovograd house of teenagers. From left to right: Kostin, my father Moisey Kogan, Morokhovski, Rozenfeld (standing), Breyelovski. This photo was taken in Kirovograd in 1923.

In 1919 my father joined Komsomol, and in early 1920 he volunteered to the Red (Soviet) Army. My father wanted to get self-confident and take revenge for his father and other innocent people's death. One summer in 1920 in Podolia [an area in Western Ukraine, east of Bukovina] my father stood night watch with Van'ka, a Russian man from Vologda province. The young man was missing his homeland in the north a lot. He didn't like anything in Ukraine. 'They say there are zhydy [yids] living here. They are like us, only they are so ugly: they are black and have tails. I wish I saw one,' he said. My father got angry and said; 'Well, you want to see a zhyd? Then look!' and he turned his back to Van'ka, pulled down his pants and showed that there was no tail. When he turned to look at Van'ka he felt sorry that he had done this; Van'ka was very confused. He didn't mean to hurt my father.

In May 1921 my father demobilized and returned home. Grandmother Chaya was very ill. My father's 19-year-old brother Yakov worked in Raiprodkom [abbreviation for 'raionnyi prodovolstvennyi komitet,' i.e. district product committee, main responsibility of which was perhaps distribution of food supplies among the population]. David was 16 and Anatoli was 12. They were desperately poor. My father went to work in a bakery. He received food packages there. In autumn 1921 all crops were gone. The food packages that my father and Yakov received were not enough to support the family of five. They had about half hundred pigeons that the brothers chased away to be not tempted to eat them; the brothers were sentimental. David and Anatoli were stealing beet leaves in their neighbors' gardens. They cut and boiled it with bran. This made their main food. In 1922 my grandmother's died of gangrene. She was buried in Novomirgorod according to the Jewish tradition.

In 1923 my father went to work in Kirovograd by a Komsomol assignment. My mother Rachil Anherth followed him from Novomirgorod. My parents got married in Kirovograd on 14 January 1924. My father told me that he was late for his wedding at the registry office. He worked in the publishing

house of a Komsomol newspaper and got a task from chief editor. My father couldn't leave the office until he finished his assignment and my mother waited for him until the registry office closed. They didn't cancel their wedding party, though. They had a Komsomol wedding. My parents rented a two-bedroom furnished apartment. My father worked in the Komsomol regional committee and my mother was assistant accountant in an office. My parents were not religious. They didn't celebrate Jewish holidays or go to the synagogue. They spoke Russian at home.