

Dimitri Kamyshan's Father Anatoliy Zilberberg And His Sisters



My father, Anatoliy Zilberberg, and his sisters in the yard of their house.

My grandparents had six children. All my grandmother's children lived with her, and she was the mistress of the house. Their oldest daughter, Lilia, was born in Kharkov in 1892. She finished Russian grammar school in Kharkov and she worked as a planning manager at a plant. The second child was Victor. The third child, Ida, born in 1898, also finished grammar school and worked as deputy chief accountant at a plant. She was single and had no children. Then there were twins: Ludmila and Valentina, born in 1900. Valentina died of measles when she was 2 years old. Ludmila was my father's only sister that got married. Her husband, Arkadiy Zbar, was a Jew from Western Ukraine. They were engineers at a plant and had a daughter called Valentina, who was born in 1937. My father, Anatoliy Zilberberg, the fifth child in the family, was born in 1902. The youngest girl, Tamara, followed in 1910. She was an accountant at a plant in Kharkov.

My father was my grandparents' favorite son. He studied at the classical grammar school for boys in Kharkov. He was supposed to get a higher education later. They had classes in religion where they were divided into three groups, according to their religion. The classes were conducted by an Orthodox priest, a Catholic priest and a rabbi. Being a Jew, my father studied religion in the Judaism group, but his family paid little attention to religion, and he was growing up an atheist. My father studied well. He was easy-going, cheerful and popular. Nationality didn't matter to them at all. My father was fond of Russian literature and was very good at mathematics. He finished grammar school during the Civil War, so he couldn't enter a higher educational institution, according to new

Soviet laws. He came from a bourgeois family and their children had no right to get a higher education. My father finished a course in accounting and became an accountant.

My father's sisters were spinsters, and they all loved me. I called them by their first names: Ida, Lilia and Tamara, and I was allowed to do anything I wished. My aunts spoke fluent French. They taught me French and raised me. On certain days I was only allowed to talk French with them. They had rather attractive appearances, by the way, and why they were single - I don't know. They were all different. Only now, after so many years have passed, do I realize how much I loved them. Tamara, the youngest one, finished music school and was forcing me to learn to play the piano, although I had no ear for music. I learned to read notes a little. She used to hit me on my fingers when I made mistakes. She was very unbalanced. I guess she wanted a man next to her. In 1941 she was 31. She kept the house and everything in it very clean. Ida was very sickly. We had to take her to Sevastopol to get treatment for a very severe form of radiculitis. I remember that she was taken there on a stretcher and came back even without crutches.

All Zilberbergs died at the same time. They were shot by the Germans in 1941 in Kharkov.