

Malea Veselnitskaya's Father Isaac Ostrovski



This is my father Isaac Ostrovski. This photo was taken in Kremenchug in 1939.

In late 1933 our family moved to Kremenchug. It was easier to get a job in an industrial town. Father was assistant accountant in the Communtrans organization: it was equipment yard of the town keeping transportation vehicles, snow ploughs, etc. In the morning father wished us a good day and left for a day. He was reserved and never punished us while mother could even slap us when necessary. If father ever felt like punishing any of us we began running around the table and he was chasing us until he burst into laughing. Our father was interested in politics. There was a plate-shaped radio hanging high in the corner of the room. Our father used to listen to news standing on a stool. Besides, he subscribed to Pravda [Truth, the main paper of the Communist Party of the USSR] and Izvestiya [News, daily communist newspaper published in Moscow]. He wanted to join the Party, but mother was against it. She said if he did he would have to attend their meetings and stay away from home for a long time. Our parents didn't have many clothes. Father wore his work uniform.

After the beginning of the Great Patriotic War my parents and me evacuated to Tashkent. My father was released from the army, but in 1943 he was recruited to the so-called labor army to dig trenches. Its units were involved the construction of defense facilities. Father had duodenal ulcer and might have been released had he insisted, but he said 'I want to go to the front'. He left holding his hands on his stomach. He exchanged everything he had for food on the way, but it was not enough. He was on the train 12 days and ad one meal per day - his ulcer opened. In Moscow he got off the train and was sent to work as receptionist in the institute named after Molotov. However, his condition got worse and he had to go to hospital. My older brother Semyon whose unit was moving from Leningrad to Stalingrad Front was going via Moscow. He obtained a permit

for few hours' leave from his commanding officers to visit our father. When he came to see him he found our father exhausted: he weighed 42 kg. His diagnosis was: general tuberculosis. My brother left some money with an attendant to buy food for my father. He almost missed his train. We were notified that father died in hospital in 1943 and his body was incinerated.