

Ivan Moshkovich



This is a picture of me after I returned from Dachau. The photo was taken in the village of Dolgoye Pole in 1945. During World War II my father and me were in Auschwitz, Erlenbusch and Birkenau camps together. From Birkenau we moved to the last camp in Dachau, a death camp. My father and I were separated: old people and young people formed separate groups. We didn't get any food there. Hundreds of inmates were dying: every morning there were so many dead bodies that the others had to walk on them! All our emotions atrophied and we were indifferent to the surrounding. When I think about it now I'm horrified. Recollections of this time are unbearable for me. We didn't get any news from the front. When we saw that the Germans were changing into

dead inmates' clothes we wondered why they were doing this. The day when there was no guard left came. There were no Germans left in the camp. All inmates gathered. We didn't know what happened when we saw planes making rounds over the camp. We thought that they were going to drop bombs on the camp when we noticed red stars on their wings. The planes began to drop something that fell on the land, but didn't explode. We came closer and saw packages with bread, butter and chocolate. The starved people greedily grabbed the food. Somebody told me that we had starved too long and couldn't eat too much. I was angry with him at that moment, but later I understood that he was right. Many people died from eating too much. So much food happened to be deadly for people that had only eaten miserable stuff for so long. On the first days of May 1945 Soviet troops came to the camp. This was long waited for freedom. It was a happy day in my life that I'll never forget. We cried out of joy and kissed our liberators. After I was liberated I didn't have any information about my family. I didn't see my father and thought that he had perished. After the liberation I decided to go home. I didn't know the way and just followed other people. In a village I sat down on a bench to rest when somebody called my name. I looked up and saw my father! It was a happy reunion. We walked on together. We hoped that other members of our family had also survived. I don't know how long it took us to finally get to Dolgoye Pole. My older brother Mayer and my sister Clara were at home. They told us that my mother and younger sister Olga had perished in Auschwitz. My grandfather Eikef and my mother's sisters also perished in Auschwitz and so did my mother's older brother Ignas. He was the strongest man in the village. He could do any hard work. He would have survived in the camp, but when the Germans took his little son to the crematorium my uncle went there with him. They both perished.