

Lazar Sherishevskiy's Father Veniamin Sherishevskiy



This is my father Veniamin Sherishevskiy. This photo was taken shortly before he was arrested in 1937. My father was photographed for the board of honor by the plant photographer.

In 1920s my father went to work as an accountant in Mostootriad, a bridge construction and renovation company. Later he went to work at the instrumentation plant 'Leninskaya Forge' where he worked as an accountant till he perished. Papa earned 600 or 700 rubles at the time - this was a good salary and he was a valued employee at his plant.

My father loved literature and taught me to like it. I knew many of Pushkin and Lermontov's works by heart. My father also knew Jewish antiques and Jewish literature. He told me Biblical stories with no reference to religion or Jewish traditions. My father also taught me to read Sholem Aleichem and he knew the works by Mendele Sforim. He was well aware of Russian, Jewish and foreign classical literature. In autumn my father went to Sochi [Black Sea resort town.] in the Caucasus [about 1600 km south of Moscow] where he stayed at a recreation center, and his employer paid for his stay. He had heart problems and took hydro sulfuric bath treatment. I remember my father bringing a suitcase full of tangerines and nuts. My father taught me culture. Only when I grew up I understood what an interesting man he was.

In 1938 during the period of arrests, my father was arrested and executed. I got to know that he was executed only 50 years later. At that time I only knew that my father had problems at work and that he was arrested. I wished I could believe this was a mistake, they would find out and my father would return home. We lived in a communal apartment in Kiev that we shared with two other families. 2 party officials from was our co-tenants in this apartment. One of them Golyi, a Party Central Committee official, a decent and honest man, lived in one room, and Claudia Zakharovna, a young woman, who worked in the Komsomol Central Committee of Ukraine, and her daughter lived in another room. We were friends. First Golyi was arrested and then, one night in summer 1938, my father and this lady were arrested. Perhaps they beat and tortured Golyi trying to make him confess who else he had involved in the anti-Soviet group and he must have named his colleagues and neighbors. The lady was released and I met with her later. Golyi must have been executed. My father was convicted of anti-Soviet activities and executed. What they wrote there was: 'for anti-Soviet activities aimed at the detriment of the economy and disruption of Soviet production'. They didn't give much thought to the wording, it never occurred to them that one day relatives would get access to these files. Besides, there were millions of innocent people put on this conveyor, exterminated and exiled without trials or investigations, so they didn't care much about definitions of crimes. Besides, what could they accuse him of? He was an honest person and a skilled employee. It was just that the policy was aimed at the extermination of the best individuals. Golyi was also innocent, but we would never be able to find out why he gave the names of his neighbors, and besides - did he? This is what I assume. Perhaps, somebody else reported on my father ... I received notifications in the 1990s. My mother and I managed to have my father rehabilitated posthumously.