

Natalia Zilberman With Her Son Leonid Zilberman And Husband's Sister Manya With Her Daughter Talka



From left to right: upper row - Talka (born in 1936), the daughter of my husband's sister Manya and I, Natalia Zilberman, lower row - Manya (my husband's older sister, born in 1908) and my son Leonid Zilberman. Photo made at a photo shop in Shevchenko Blvd., Kiev, 1948. I am 30 years old, Manya is 40; we are photographed with our children.

In 1941 I evacuated with my husband's relatives, but I got lost on the way. I was going to the East on a train. We reached Saratov where my father's youngest brother lived. When the train stopped I decided to go visit him. When I came there I saw my father sitting at the table reading a newspaper. What a meeting! We decided that I would go to my destination anyway and they would join me later. I reached Tashkent region and stopped at the Nizhniy Chirchik area (about 4000 km from Kiev).

There was a hospital there and I worked as chairman of military commission. My husband got a 10-day leave and visited me. My mother stayed with me some time before my baby was due. When it was time for me to go to hospital chairman of the collective farm Vassilenko gave us a horse-driven cart. My mother and I went to the hospital. It was snowing and was very cold. They started fire in the stoves in hospital, but it turned out that flues were not cleaned and all smoke was gathering in wards. They opened the doors to let some fresh air in the wards. My mother looked around and said "Come what may, but we are going home. They will both catch cold if she stays". My son was born at home on 13 November. My friend, midwife Valia, assisted me during childbirth. My husband was in the Ural at that time and heard the news about his son in December.

There was a shop in Nizhniy Chirchik where employees made ropes from toe. One of the employees was a young Jewish woman from Poland. She had no warm clothes whatsoever and was in a desperate situation. I decided to invite her live with me as an aid. Rosa used to say that my son saved two lives: mine, because I wasn't recruited to the army due to my pregnancy and hers, because she would have died of cold. Rosa was very happy and adored my son Leonid.

In some time we went back to Kiev. The 3 of us: my mother, my son Leonid and I. One carriage of the train was full of doctors and the rest of the train was for Kiev Franko Theater. Our return trip lasted over two weeks. We arrived in June 1945. Our house in Zhylanska Street was destroyed. My father-in-law and his family were back. The younger sister of my husband had a fiancée, military engineer. He received an apartment and she lived with him, so my family could stay with my in-laws for some time. Later we my mother, my son and I went to Nemirov. Only one bomb was dropped on Nemirov during the war. It destroyed part of our house and a printing house nearby.

Soon I went to work as a doctor at the clinic.

In spring 1945 my husband returned (during the war we wrote letters to one another). He came to Nemirov to take all of us to Kiev. He managed to get an apartment for my mother in 44 Saksagan-skogo Street and we lived with my mother at first. There was one big room where we installed partitions to make two rooms, a kitchen with no windows and a toilet. There was no bathroom. My husband was director of metalwork plant. He was a born manager and his workers respected him a lot. Many buildings in Kiev were destroyed. My husband obtained permission to build a house for his employees in Gorky Street. In 1947 we received a two-room apartment in this house. My mother invited Clara from Tula to live with her. We sold our house in Nemirov.

We lived a happy life of love and understanding. We had friends of various nationalities. We got together on holidays and birthdays and went to theaters and cinema together. In summer we went to the seashore.