

Ierahmil Korolik



This is my father Ierahmil Korolik. The photo was taken in Kiev in 1967. My father was working a lot. He was a real Soviet man. He became a member of the Communist Party in the early 1930s. He believed in the five-year plan and in socialism and communism and he used to convince us even in the most difficult years that those were temporary difficulties in our country and that everything would be fine some day. My parents' friends often came to our home. We celebrated 1st May and October Revolution Day. Everybody enjoyed these holidays, we danced and sang Soviet songs. Everything went fine until unjustified arrests and repression began in the late 1930s [during the so-called Great Terror]. We, children, didn't quite understand what was happening. We saw that our parents were upset and depressed. My father often came home from work looking pale and lost.

My parents went to the room and closed the door behind them. They used to talk for a long time. Later we got to know that one of my father's closest friends had been executed. My father was called to the NKVD. They forbade him to help his friend's family. But he did support them. And he did it openly. It was difficult because my father's salary was very small. And the money that my mother made was a modest support of our family budget. Often we had nothing left before the next pay day. This support that my father decided to provide was dangerous and also hard from a material point of view. But my father thought it was a question of honor and he openly visited his friend's wife and helped her as much as he could. These people were our neighbors. Once we, children, started teasing the children of this man that was executed. We didn't quite understand what we were doing. My father hit me for the first time in my life. He said I was the oldest and was supposed to understand how mean it was on our part. We never did it again. My father got married for a second time in 1966 after I got my life under control. He went to live with his wife Maria Lvovna, a Jew. They lived together for six years until his death in 1972.