

Gerasim Dembo With His Brother And Wife



These are my parents with my father's brother, Aron Dembo. The picture was taken in France in 1928 in Nancy, where father studied at the applied mechanics faculty of the Sorbonne.

Aron studied at that time at the faculty of chemistry at Berlin University and came to visit his brother in Paris.

This picture was taken in honor of his visit. From right to the left are: Gerasim Dembo, my father; Frida Dembo, nee Sivashinskaya, my mother and my uncle Aron.

My father's elder brother Aron - they called him Ronya at home - was born in Riga in 1898. He finished a classical gymnasium in Riga and later graduated from Berlin University. He was a chemist by occupation and worked all his life in the field of oil-processing.

In 1937-1938 he married Olga Lvovna Tsymbal and their son Lev was born. They lived in Leningrad. They were aware of their Jewish origin, but were secular people having little in common with Jewish traditions.

Olga Lvovna was a doctor-roentgenologist and worked at Leningrad Pediatric Institute. Aron was in the chemical forces at the frontline during the war.

Right after the war he worked at some plant in Leningrad. There was an explosion at that plant, Aron was considered guilty and was put into prison.

I remember how some ex-prisoner came to our place and gave father a note from his brother. My father hired various attorneys and finally my uncle was released.

Later Aron was working at the oilfields in Bashkiria with a center in the town of Ishimbay. He spent most of his time in that town. He bought a Volga car in 1958 before he retired.

[Editor's note: a Soviet car mark, very expensive and prestigious at that time.]

He was returning to Leningrad via Moscow in this car along with his colleague. The car was hit by a dump truck and they were both killed.

Uncle Aron was buried in Leningrad in the Jewish Preobrazhensky cemetery.