

Iosif Sivashinsky



This is my uncle, my mother's brother, Iosif Sivashinsky.

He is 30 here. He was a navigation device expert and worked in besieged Leningrad in that field during the war. He served in the Far East from 1944.

The picture was taken in Vladivostok at the end of the war in 1944.

My mother's younger brother, Iosif Sivashinsky, was born in 1914. He was a very wise man and his wisdom harmonized with his secularity and merriness.

He was a very good electronic engineer. When he was young, he suffered from his father's being a minister of religious cult. Iosif worked at a plant, which produced projecting and cinematographic equipment and decided to enter a technical school attached to the plant.

However, he had great difficulties to enter this school as he was a member of the family of a 'lishentsy'. [Editor's note: 'lishentsy', or deprived citizens of the USSR, members of the so-called 'former classes' who were disfranchised; in particular, when entering higher and secondary educational institutions.

According to the Constitution of 1918, this category included people who before the Revolution of 1917 had used hired labor, received interest on investments, been involved in trade and commerce, clergy, agents of the pre-revolution police, mentally handicapped persons and convicts.

They were deprived not only politically, but often also of civil rights.] They managed to solve the problem with great difficulty. Iosif finished this school and later on worked with navigation devices as an engineer.

He lived with his wife and daughter in one apartment, along with Grandfather Moisey and Grandmother Khana. I remember very well his wife Tasya, who died at a young age of cancer.

She was German, her father was subject to repression and she was scared of everything. Tasya, not being a Jewess, was very much loved in such a religious family as my grandparents Sivashinskys'. She was quiet and nice; a real dove.

During the war Iosif worked in besieged Leningrad. At the end of 1944 he was sent to the Far East on the threshold of the war with Japan.

After the war Iosif and his daughter worked in a secret organization and were 'rejected' for a long time; they weren't allowed to go abroad. Later they moved to the USA. Iosif knew Jewish traditions very well.

Since he was a kohen, he was often invited to the Boston synagogue to commence the service. He did go, though he thought that Judaism possesses superfluity of small details of ritual specifics, but he had a humorous attitude to it. Iosif knew the history of the Sivashinsky family very well.

My cousin Semyon told me that when he visited Iosif, in two days he found out more about his family, than he was able to find out during his whole life. Iosif died in 2000.