

Faina Minkova's Father Yuzik Minkov



My father, Yuzik Minkov, photographed for his party membership card in Orsha in 1929. My father is wearing a Soviet Army uniform of the time before the Great Patriotic War. My father was born in 1911. In 1919, during the Civil War, a military unit of the White Guards came to town. All Jews, including my grandmother and her children hid, but my grandfather recalled that he had left his cowshed open. He went back out to lock it and was beaten to death by the Whites. Shortly after his death my grandmother died. My father was 8 years old at the time, and his younger sister Tania was 5. By that time my father's older brother Aron was already married. He lived with his family in the town of Orsha, on the border of Russia and Belarus. He was a leather specialist. My Aunt Zina and her husband also lived in Orsha. Her husband Gorfinkel, a Jewish man, was a tailor. They had a son. My father and his sister Tania were raised in the families of Aron and Zina. In Orsha my father completed eight years of lower secondary school and started working part-time at the age of 13.

He was a shepherd in the Krasnaya Niva commune. He herded cows after school and did his homework in the field. After finishing lower secondary school my father went to work as a laborer at the bakery in Orsha. He became a Komsomol member. He was very active, took part in public life, was fond of progressive revolutionary ideas, and soon became the secretary of the Komsomol unit of the bakery. My father had a very serious attitude towards public activities. The Komsomol unit headed by my father received the 'Red Flag of the Central Committee of Belarus' award for being the best performing Komsomol unit in the country. My father was 18 years old at the time. In 1932 he became secretary of the Komsomol unit of Orsha. From 1932-1933 he studied at the party school. After finishing this school he got a job with the district newspaper of Orsha, Lenin's Call, a communist propaganda newspaper for the struggle against capitalist society and the construction of a new communist society. I think the title of this newspaper speaks for itself.