

Volko Redko With Employees



This is my brother Volko Redko (standing, 1st from the right) with employees of the editor's office of the Yiddish newspaper 'Der Shtern'. This photo was taken in Kiev in 1939. In 1932 my brother went to study in a rabfak in Kharkov. Volko moved to Moscow after finishing the Industrial School in Kharkov. He read a lot since childhood and since 16 he wrote poems in Yiddish. He was going to enter the Jewish department of Moscow Pedagogical College. My father fell severely ill in 1939. There was something wrong with his legs: he couldn't walk and became an invalid. He couldn't work any longer. His doctor, a surgeon, told him there was no cure. My younger sister and I studied at school. My mother didn't work. My brother switched to the extramural department in his college and moved to Kiev. He went to work in the editor's office of 'Der Shtern', 'The Star' newspaper, published in Yiddish. There was a big team of Jewish writers and journalists. My brother's poems and articles were published in 'Der Shtern', and the Kiev newspapers 'Komunist' [Communist] and 'Pravda Ukrainy' [The Truth of Ukraine], published in Russian and Ukrainian. Volko also wrote reviews on Jewish literature. Sometimes he took me with him to meetings of Jewish poets. Volko believed that whatever I was going to do in life, I had to know the Jewish literature. Volko finished college in 1940 and received a diploma with honors. My brother was the pride of our family and my idol. In September 1941 we received a notification saying that my brother Volko was missing in action. We wrote to the military units and registry offices searching for him. His comrades, writers and journalists, also tried to help us, but in vain. We didn't have any information till 1976. In my despair I wrote to the 'Pravda Ukrainy' newspaper, which published my article, 'Looking for my brother' in 1975. My brother's former fellow comrade called me. This was Yakov Ziskind, a Jewish man. He met with me and told me about my brother. Volko perished on 7th August 1941 in the battle near the village of Stepantsy, Kanev district, Cherkasy region. During a counterattack he threw himself with a bunch of grenades under a German tank. Yakov Ziskind took my brother's passport and diploma to give them to us after the war, but on the next day there was an air raid and Yakov lost his leg. He was evacuated to a rear hospital at Zolotonosha station. The following day this station was captured by the fascists. All warriors of regiment 148 defending the station perished. Yakov was in hospital for a long time. Later he tried to find us, but failed. The newspaper

article helped him to find me. I went to Stepantsy where I met with the former director of the local school, Ivan Skoropud. He promised me to try to find my brother's grave. In 1980 the district newspaper 'Dneprovskaya Zvesda' [The Dnieper Star] published an article about Volko, entitled 'On a field near Stepantsy'. All school children were looking for Volko's grave, and, finally, they found it. His comrades had buried him in the field?