

Matvey Alperovich



This photo was taken in 1943, during the Great Patriotic War.
Here you see my father Matvey Alperovitch.

My father Matvey Davidovitch Alperovitch was born in 1898. Among those children, who stayed (those, who didn't leave for America), father was the oldest one, sisters Ghenya, Rachel, Ghitah and step-sister Maria were younger, than he. He didn't communicate a lot to his American relatives, but even after the October Revolution father's sister Ghenya wrote to them.

I don't know anything about their lives over there: no what they were, neither where exactly they lived. However, I recall that we received their parcels: they sent us food and some fabrics.

We also received letters in Yiddish, and father read them together with aunt Ghenya - they both knew Yiddish and could write it. Of course, Yiddish was their mother tongue, but at home father spoke both languages: Russian as well as Yiddish. He wasn't religious person, not at all.

I can't recall that he would observe Sabbaths or pray. Perhaps, he had some Jewish education, but he never told me if he studied in cheder, or in regular elementary school. I can't even say what kind of education did he get; maybe, they had no schools in Begoml district?

In 1926 my parents moved to Valdasi, where mother's sister Bertha together with her husband lived. There father got a job of regular employee in Prom cooperation [so-called Industrial cooperation, State unit of stores and small businesses].

We left Valdasi, when I was six, and my sister Sophia was something around three, e.g. in 1930. And settled in Bologoye, rented an apartment from a dentist: two rooms and a kitchen.

There was electricity and radio in the house, but we had to bring the water from outside. The kitchen was very cold, and there was a great demand for firewood to warm it up.

Father was a director of 'Koghsyrie' - small organization, part of Prom cooperation, where peasants from neighborhood villages brought skins. A man, responsible for roar materials worked there too, together with my father, who, as a matter of fact, only admitted the skins.

The job was very little paid, we lived very modest. We had neighbors, who worked on the railway and got better rations [food help for state employees], than my father. We mainly bought food and stuff on the market, then acquired a goat, a pig, chicken, and, for some period of time, even a cow, so we managed somehow.

Father wasn't the Komsomol member, however in 1938 he joined the Party [Communist party] - maybe, not on his own, I think, they made him to join. At those times Stalin terror had begun already, and it was less dangerous to be the communist, especially for Jews.

Once in their life they went for holidays with a voucher (father got this voucher as the civil servant): before the World War II, when they just built the Belomorsko-Baltiyskiy Channel [connecting White Sea with Onega Lake, was built in 1930s, political prisoners actively participated in its creation].

Then father went to the rest home to Eysk [small town in Krasnodar district] on Azov Sea, before World War II, he also went to Moscow, when VDNH [so-called Exhibition of People's economy achievements], was just opened. And mainly our parents spent time in Bologoye, we had a lake, and we went for walks to Putyatin garden, and organized dances in the evenings.

He served in Red Army. I think, in the sanitary troupes (the auto-sanitary unit on the Third Ukrainian front). He came back home in 1946 only. I have no idea how we kept connection with my father. Maybe, we wrote him letter. Perhaps, he knew our address in Chuvashi, because when we left for evacuation, he was in the Home guard (he went to the front a little bit later).