

Sally Uzvalova's Uncle Meyer Barzak With His Wife Golda And Grandson Zhenia



My father's brother Meyer Barzak, his wife Golda (on the right) and grandson Zhenia. Meyer and his family were in exile in Siberia. His grandson was born in exile. Photo made in Mogochino village, Krasnoyarsk region, Siberia, in 1953.

My grandparents had five sons. The oldest Itzyk was born in 1895. The next one was my father Borukh that was born in 1898. Meyer was born in 1900. Leon (Leib) was born in 1906. Daniel, the youngest son, was born in 1908.

My father and all five children worked very hard. The boys finished cheder (4 years) and after they had to go to work. Their parents couldn't afford to give them education. My father worked at the state tobacco plantation since he was 11. He took a piece of mamalyga (Editor's note: corn pudding) and a clove of garlic or an onion to work. Working hard he made some saving and at 27 he owned a house and two stores. His brothers were also doing well. Leon was my father's partner. Meyer owned a big shoe store. He had two children: son Lyova and daughter Bella.

We arrived at Soroki and on the next day the Soviet army came to the town. This happened on 28 June 1940. The stores sold out their stocks. In three days NKVD (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs) arrested my father and his brother and partner Leon, as "socially dangerous elements". They were considered "dangerous" to the society, because they were co-owners of a store with hired employees that meant that they were "exploiters" in terms of the Soviet power. My father and Leon were put in jail and then they were sentenced to 8 years in a high security camp. Shortly after the trial my father and Leon were sent to Siberia along with thieves, bandits and other criminals. My father's other brothers didn't have hired employees and had no problems with the

Soviet authorities for some time. Meyer and his wife worked in a store and Itzyk also worked. Daniel, the younger son, his wife and their son lived in a room in their parents' house.

Our first year in the soviet regime was terrifying for us. We were in expectation of something to happen. We didn't know Russian and couldn't listen to the radio or read newspapers. There was tension hanging in the air like before a storm.

On the night of 12 June 1941 the silence exploded in women's screaming and children's wailing. Richer people and people with average income were taken out of their houses and onto the carts. They didn't get a chance to take any luggage with them. The carts moved in the direction of the railway station in Floreshty where trains were waiting for them. I can still remember the tapping of horseshoes on the cobbly pavements of Soroki. It lasted for about 24 hours. People were afraid of looking out of the window or leaving their home. On this day all other members of the family were sent in exile as suspicious elements: my grandmother, my father's brothers and their families. On 15 June 1941 (editor's note; 6 days before the beginning of the Great patriotic War) all these people were put on a train with barred windows at the railway station in Floreshty. Inhabitants of Floreshty came to the station to give some food to people on the train, but the convoy took this food away. The train headed to Mogochino village of Krasnoyarsk region, Siberia, in 3500 km from their home. The village was fenced with barbed wire and patrol dogs guarded the area. Every day an orderly called the roll. They lived in dugout houses that they excavated by themselves for two years before barracks were built. Town people were dying, as they were not adjusted to the severe conditions of the cold climate. Men went to work at the wood throw. The ones that failed to complete a standard scope were deprived of their miserable ration of food that they also shared with their families. My grandmother and her son's wives dug out mice holes and made soup with nettle and mouse meat. They starved to death, swell from hunger, had their feet and hands frost bitten. In 1942 the older brother Itzyk, his wife and 6 children died. They were buried in a common grave and there was no gravestone installed or no other indication of their personalities. Their exile was for an indefinite period of time. Only in 1980, in 40 years' time the survivors were allowed to return, but they were not allowed to reside in bigger towns. However, they all stayed in Mogochino. Meyer went to exile with his wife Golda and two children: Leo, 14 years old and Bella that was 9 years old. Their children grew up and got married and had children of their own. Meyer loved his wife dearly. He was a tall handsome man and Golda was a short slim woman. Meyer died in 1980s, shortly after his wife. We have no information about their children.