

Isabella Karanchuk's Father Yefim Lerman



My father Yefim Lerman at the front near Stalingrad. This photo was taken one day before he perished and was sent to us with the letter that he wrote my mother and me one hour before the battle, in which he perished in August 1942. My father Yefim (Jewish name Haim) Lerman was born in 1905. He studied in cheder and then became a shoemaker's assistant for a Jewish shoemaker in his shop. He met my mother in the club where my mother acted in the theater and my father played the tuba in the orchestra. The young people fell in love with each other. They were photographed together for the first time in Mogilyov in 1924 - my mother was 16, and father - 19 years old. I don't know exactly, when my parents got married. My father was already a Komsomol member and protested against having a wedding at the synagogue. They registered their wedding in a registry office and had a small wedding party with relatives and friends at home. Shortly after the wedding my parents moved to Kharkov where my father went to work in a shoe shop. I was born on 8 August 1928. My parents rented a room in a communal apartment where my parents slept behind a curtain. Soon my father received a small two-bedroom apartment in a one-storied house. My father was a member of the Communist Party that he joined in 1928. Though he had little education he was a born manager. From a plain worker he was promoted to supervisor of the shoe shop providing services to the families of government officials. In 1934 we moved to Kiev because the capital of Ukraine moved from Kharkov to Kiev and our family moved there, too. My father was appointed director of the 'Kommunar' governmental shoe shop. In Kiev my father received a big room in a seven-bedroom communal apartment on the fourth (last) floor of a brick house located in the yard. In 1941 my father went to the army, he was sent to Sverdlovsk military political school and before he finished his studies they sent him to the Stalingrad front. Before going there he was given a leave to stay with us a few days. I remember one early morning, when my mother left for work, my brother stood up in his little bed, stretched his hands toward our father

and said: 'This is my Papa!' This was amazing how considerately he pronounced this. My father took him in his hands and kissed him. On that same day he went to the front. In middle August we received a death notification: my father took part in combat action for just a couple of weeks, but they were the hardest days near Stalingrad. I think I will never forget mama's screaming. Some time later we received a letter that my father wrote before a battle and my mother decided he was alive. She wrote a letter to his unit and received a reply that Yefim Lerman had perished. He perished in that battle, before which he wrote his last letter.