

Yelizaveta Zatkovetskaya's Son Mikhail Freidkin And Husband's Sister Tsylia Freidkina's Daughters Yenia And Genia



Our children in the evacuation, from left to right: Mikhail Freidkin, my son, Yenia and Genia, daughters of Tsylia Freidkina, my husband's sister. This photo was made in Begovat in 1944 and sent to the front to Tsylia's husband Avrum.

I shall always remember the day of 22 June 1941, when the Great Patriotic War began. It was a warm sunny day, Sunday, and we were at home. My husband was cutting wood in the yard and I was playing with my son nearby. It was about noontime and we were going to rest in the garden after lunch, when our neighbor ran in screaming 'It's the war!' We ran into the house: we were the only owners of a radio. We listened to Molotov who spoke about the war and perfidious attack of fascists on our country. There was panic and people tried to escape wherever they could manage. We packed whatever we could grab in a basket and a bag, locked the house - and left. We went on. There was 7 of us: I, my son Mikhail, my father-in-law, mother-in-law, my husband's sister Tsylia and two her daughters: Yenia and Genia. Tsylia and I became friends.

In late November we reached Elista town, the capital of Kalmyk ASSR in 900 km from home. A Kalmyk family gave us shelter. We slept on the floor in a big room. I was sleeping near the door and every morning I found a piece of bread or a lump of sugar by my side. The host of the house left them feeling sorry for us, but keeping it a secret from his wife. His wife also sympathized with us. She gave food to the children till I went to work. I began to work at the post office and Tsylia got a job of a cloakroom attendant at the theater. We received bread coupons for us and the children. My father-in-law worked as a shoemaker and his customers paid him with food: milk, eggs or bread. We lived there till summer 1942. When fascists approached the Volga, we decided to move on to the east. We boarded a freight train. Our trip lasted about ten days. We didn't know where we were going. We got off at a station. It turned out to be inviting people to come with them. Our

family left for a kolkhoz . We were accommodated in a nice house. The kolkhoz provided wheat grains to us. Tsylia and I took it to the mill to have it ground. We worked in a cotton field. It was hard work. Misha and I were allergic to cotton. We decided to leave this sovkhov. We took a freight train to Begovat station near Tashkent. We lived in a small room in the basement. Tsylia and I went to work at a shop manufacturing ropes for the front. Mikhail and Yenia went to a kindergarten and Genia went to school and helped her grandmother about the house. I was ready to do any work to support my family. After work I made jam from cherry plums or apples - whatever I could pick in the streets, and ran to the market to sell it. I sold jam in glasses and then bought food for the money I got. Tsylia received letters from her husband. I wrote many requests searching for him, but it was in vain. My husband Perets perished on the front in 1941.

On 14 March 1944 Kalinindorf was liberated. In late December 1944 we arrived at Kalinindorf. I hired a wagon to take us home. Our house was there, but the door was locked. A Ukrainian woman and her son had moved into our house. She came back in the evening with a friend of hers and chairman of the village council. They allowed us to live in half of the house, but we were happy about it. Hungry and exhausted, we fell asleep on the floor. Tsylia and I went to work in the kolkhoz. People were helping us giving us whatever they could.