Samuel Eirus’ Grandmother And Her Sons



This photograph taken in Leningrad and shows my grandmother Sara and her sons Emil and Max (my father).

My paternal grandmother and grandfather also lived in Estonia, but I do not know in what town they were born. They were professional revolutionaries. I do not know what they were engaged in besides that.

Probably my grandparents were members of a political party (I do not know exactly what party). Their activity resulted in the attempt of making revolution, but it failed. My grandparents were arrested, tried and sentenced to death.

They were kept in the death ward. Grandfather was executed by shooting, but Estonian authorities had no time to do it with my grandmother and her sister: our government exchanged them for some Estonian political figures arrested in Russia.

Probably my grandmother and her sister were granted a political asylum in Russia and made Petrograd their home in the beginning of the XX century.

In 1937 authorities started mass repressions. My grandmother's sons were arrested first. They took all her sons except Emil, the youngest, who was a schoolboy at that time. Shortly before the war he finished his school (he was 18 years old).

It was a good boy: he could draw very well, he studied very well. He was drafted. He went to the local military registration and enlistment office and what a surprise! They called him to serve in the navy. Why? He had got a congenital heart disease.

Nevertheless… He showed us his new identity card with an anchor and a star. Emil was appointed a political officer.

During the war we corresponded. In 1943 he fought somewhere near Leningrad.

Emil loved my younger brother very much. He used to send us his ration certificate. I keep one of those certificates till now.

In 1943 we received a notification that Emil was wounded, died and was buried in the town of Pitkyaranta [in Karelia]. My younger brother (before his departure to Israel) and I visited Pitkyaranta twice.

There is a common grave, but we did not manage to find Emil's name. We went to the local Ispolkom, showed them a letter (a notification about Emil's death in Pitkyaranta).

They promised to inscribe Emil's name on the stele (all victims had to be named there). We promised to check the result later, but did not manage: my brother left for Israel, and it is too much for me alone.