

Yakov Driz's Cousin Ovsey Driz



My cousin Ovsey (Shyke) Driz (1908 - 1971). During the period of struggle against cosmopolitanism he was about to be expelled from the Association of Soviet Writers. They blamed him for not writing or publishing anything, although at that time it was impossible to publish a book in Yiddish. Ovsey was obliged to work as a laborer in the children's theater. At this time Ovsey was deathly ill. The struggle against cosmopolites that began in 1948 impacted our family. Ovsey Driz, the son of my father's cousin and a famous Jewish poet, wrote his poems in Yiddish. They were translated into Russian by famous Russian poets like Mikhalkov and Marshak. In the early 1930s when Ovsey Driz was beginning to write, a very famous Jewish poet, Lev Kvitko, was helping him. Many of Ovsey's books were published before the war. After the war no books in Yiddish were allowed to be published. Ovsey's Russian was excellent, but when I asked him why he didn't write his poems in Russian he said that he could, but then they wouldn't be his poems. When the struggle against the cosmopolites began, Ovsey couldn't provide for his family. His books were not published and he was about to be expelled from the Association of Writers of the USSR. Ovsey turned to the Soviet poet Marshak for help, but he couldn't do anything to help him. Whenever I went to Moscow I often stayed at Ovsey's home and was the first to hear many of his poems. Ovsey died in 1971 .