

Boris Bashmet



My father Boris Bashmet. This photo was taken in Leningrad in 1946. My father came to see how I, a student of the Railroad College, settled down in my new dwelling. This is the nicest portrait of my father.

My father was a private in anti-tank troops. He was in captivity, and he was wounded and had to stay in hospital. Near Stalingrad he was sent to a village riding a horse. There he was captured by Germans and they intended to shoot him. A Russian reported on him saying: 'But he is a Jew,' and Germans were going to kill him, but my father managed to escape. My father hid on a stove and the Germans were too busy to look for him.

When the village was liberated, my father was sent to a punitive company being a former prisoner-of-war. At that time prisoners-of-war were treated as traitors. He was wounded by a mine and

taken to a hospital. There were splinters from this mine in his legs for a long time, and he also lost few fingers. When he was discharged from this hospital in 1944, he came to us in Alma-Ata. He arrived walking on crutches. He decided to learn to ride a bicycle and it took him a long time. We had to help him on and off the bicycle since he could hardly move at first.

By this time Uncle Aizik, his family and Grandmother Feiga moved in with us. My father and his younger brother obtained a license for making candy. They rented a facility, purchased sugar and boiled candy using some interesting technology. They boiled sugar, added color agents, poured this mass into pans and cut it. Then they cooled, dried, sugar powdered and sold them. They also made ice cream for sale. My uncle had a stand at the market. They also bought gauze, colored it and made curtains. They also painted cards. My father was very handy.

The 9th of May 1945, the Victory Day, was a very happy, but also a sad day for our family. The day before we received a notification that my father's brother Grigoriy had perished. My father and Aizik were in no hurry to return home to start everything anew on the ruins. My parents remained in Alma-Ata till 1949. I went to visit them on vacations. My trip lasted six days, and I got a cheap ticket to sleep on the third-tier berth since I couldn't afford to buy a more expensive ticket. My father also visited me in Leningrad and stayed with me at the hostel.