

Leo Lubich's Father Pinkhus Lubich



My father Pinkhus Lubich in evacuation in Izhevsk. Photographed for the Board of Honor in 1945. He was the head of manufacturing. He gave me this photo when I was leaving Izhevsk for Lvov in 1945.

At the end of 1918, Soviet power was established in Kiev. The Civil War was over and NEP began. My father continued to work. My father had assistants: a vest-maker and trouser-maker that worked from home. We children used to take fabric cuts to them and pick up the finished clothes. One representative of the district trade union committee came to see my father. They demanded that my father stop exploiting workers, enter into an agreement with them, and pay some membership fees. My father refused and, as a result, his business was boycotted. Workers would stand in the yard and at the front door of our building. They didn't let my father's clients in and didn't let my father go to his assistants. My father signed some papers for the trade union activists and continued to work. His assistants were gone, though. My mother became his assistant. My father had a license and paid taxes. He was not afraid of the auditors that visited him every now and then. They didn't bother my father because he had an influential clientele; he made clothes for many officials and, I believe, they ordered the auditors to leave my father alone.

My father continued to do a good job of providing for the family after the revolution of 1917. We didn't starve in the 1920s, nor in 1932-33 during the periods of famine. My father had money and my mother had the jewelry that she used to take to Torgsin and exchange for food whenever we needed it. Torgsin stores were opened in Kiev in the early 1930s.

My father continued to work at home, but he was afraid of being arrested for owning a private business and for having had employees. The prayer house located nearby was closed. My father went to the only functioning synagogue in Kiev on big holidays. We continued to celebrate Jewish holidays at home, but we did it quietly and without guests.

In August 1941 my parents, sister Maria and her son David, and my brother Jacob and his daughter Nelia evacuated to Izhevsk. In Izhevsk my parents, my sister and brother stayed in a big four-room apartment in the center of the town that uncle Boris arranged for them. He also helped my father get a good job: Director of the Special Military Trade Agency. My father had tailor, shoe, and hosiery shops under his guise. My father got a good salary and received special food packages. As a result, we didn't starve like many others in evacuation.

In 1945 my parents, Maria, Jacob and their children left for Kiev. My parents lived in their apartment with Maria and her son until they received their own in the 1960s. My father went to the synagogue in Podol after the war. My parents celebrated all the Jewish holidays like they had before the war. They were pensioners and helped Maria with the house. I visited them once in two or three years during my vacation. My father died in the early 1960s and my mother passed away in the 1970s when she was ninety years old. They were both buried in the Jewish section of the town cemetery - there were no Jewish customs followed.