

Yakov Averbukh



This is my father Yakov Averbukh. The photo was taken in the Cabinet Portrait studio, somewhere in Austria, on 15th January 1918. My father was born in 1887 in the town of Novokonstantinov. He was born into a very religious family. He had an exceptionally good knowledge of Judaism and kept every religious tradition and holidays up until his very death. In our home we always kept kosher laws and observed traditional Jewish holidays. Even though we were extremely poor, we had one or two needy Jewish students from the synagogue, who received monthly support from us, according to the Jewish tradition. To our holiday table on Friday evening and during Pesach seders we always invited Jews who were visiting from other cities and who had no place to celebrate. My father was

highly educated. My father knew Hebrew perfectly and spoke Russian with a strong accent. However, his accent wasn't caused by poor knowledge of the language, but by some phonetic changes in his throat, I think. Besides, he was quite fluent in German, which he had to learn during his trips to Austria and Germany. Until the very outbreak of the Second World War we had a wonderful library in Hebrew. Even though he was a very young man, he was appointed director of the yeshivah. Being the son of very religious parents, he certainly couldn't get any secular education, but we had the following encyclopedias at home: School At Home and University At Home, both published before the October Revolution. The letters my father wrote to me at the beginning of the war were written in surprisingly good Russian. He learned to play the violin without the instruction of any teachers. He finished correspondence courses and got an accountant diploma. After the Revolution, when he could no longer work in his main professional job, he worked as an accountant for some time. He also had a diploma of a penman. And as far as I can remember, from the age of 40-45, he was a member of the arbitration court of the Kiev synagogue. He perished in Babi Yar at the age of 54.