

Engelina Goldentracht's Father Vladimir Zorin



My father Vladimir Zorin photographed after he was released from jail in Kiev in 1939. In summer 1938 my father went to the sanatorium in Zheleznovodsk [a resort in Northern Caucasus] to get medical treatment for his ulcer. He went there with my brother Julen, and my mother and I went to Sochi. After a few days my mother received a telegram. My father's co-tenants informed her that my father had been arrested and that my brother was staying with them. My mother and I went to Zheleznovodsk. My mother was trying to find my father, but she was told that he had been sent to Kiev. We returned to Kiev. My father was kept under arrest. Later he told us that he spent a few

weeks in jail in Minvody, a town near Zheleznovodsk, after he had been arrested. There were many inmates in his cell. Once a little bird flew through the window and sat on my father's shoulder. One of the inmates said to my father that this was a good sign and meant that he would be free soon. My father was charged of espionage and declared either a German or a Japanese spy. Investigation officer Gorodinskiy, who defended the case, was our neighbor, but he pretended that he didn't know us when we met. The interrogation lasted for hours and hours, and Gorodinskiy was trying to make my father confess, to give him evidence of his guilt. He told my father that I had fallen ill with tuberculosis and that my mother had become a street woman [prostitute]. Of course, my father didn't believe him, but he was still nervous and worried about us. The interrogation officer hit him on his lower leg during interrogations, didn't let him sleep for days and wore him down with non-stop interrogation. At the end of 1938 the Soviet authorities announced an exaggeration in the struggle against criminals, and the Chief of the State Security, Yezhov was arrested. My father was released at that time. He was told that he had come through this test - they called his time in jail ?test? - and turned out to be a devoted communist. After my father was released it took months for his leg to heal. My father had a sick stomach and he felt very bad in jail. At times he felt like signing any charges brought against him in order to stop the tortures. But he thought that if he was believed to be an enemy of the people, Julen wouldn't be accepted to serve in the Soviet army when he turned 19, and that I wouldn't be able to become a Komsomol member. These thoughts stopped him from signing any charges brought against him.