

Isaac Rivkin



This is a photo of my elder brother Isaac Rivkin. The photograph was taken in 1944, but I don't know where. The Jewish lifestyle was natural for me, though I was brought up according to Soviet rules. I was a pioneer, and so was my elder brother. That wasn't the point where our parents pressed their children down, they gave us the freedom to choose. My brother Isaac, born in 1913, also entered the Party when he was 18 years old. After he finished technical school, he studied at a flying school in Stalingrad. On 25th or 26th June 1941 my brother came to us from Brest. In Brest before the war Isaac worked at the Brest Communist Party Committee. In Brest his first wife perished. She worked in a district Komsomol Committee, and he worked in the regional Communist Party Committee. When the bombing of Brest began, his wife ran to the Komsomol Committee to

find her documents, and was killed on her way. My brother ran away from Brest, which had been besieged by fascists. He went on foot, wore out his boots and reached us barefoot. According to wartime laws, he had to register at a regional military registration and enlistment office. Gomel citizens started evacuating from the first days of the war, but my mother said that she would move nowhere, until she received a letter from Haim. Haim had left for the army at the end of May 1941. And then Isaac said, 'Mum, I'll be put before a tribunal, but I'll not go to the regional military registration and enlistment office until you leave Gomel.' My mother nearly had a heart attack, but she took her son's advice. On 27th June we left. The regiment where Isaac served was located near Voronezh. He managed to get to our village and told us that we had to leave. Sredniy Karachan wasn't situated far from the railroad, and my brother realized, that a sudden attack of German troops wouldn't give us enough time to escape. He said, 'The Germans will come here. Make preparations to leave.' We left at night, got out through the window, and I was ashamed, because we had no time to say goodbye and thank Vera Andreevna for her kindness. Isaac took us all to Gribanovka railway station. There my father got a job at a factory. Isaac's regiment was still near Voronezh. After some time Isaac came to us again and said again, 'Leave, leave immediately!' He went to the Gribanovka military registration and enlistment office and said to them, 'I'll go to the front. I only ask you to evacuate my family.'