

Iosif Seiler



This is a photo of my father, Iosif Seiler, when he was in the Russian army in 1945. On the back of the photo it says in German: "Zur ewigen Erinnerung, dein Tata, ?" [For eternal memory, your dad?] March 27th 1945. He is dressed in a Russian uniform here, and still handsome: he had beautiful black curly hair, blue eyes and dimples. My father was born in Nepolokovtsy [Chernivtsi province, Ukraine], in a village near Cernauti, where his mother came to visit some of her relatives, in 1901. His mother tongue was German, and he studied in a school for chef d'hors d'oeuvre [school for preparing appetizers] in Vienna. He stayed there two or three years, and then he went back to Zablotov, but he no longer fit in that small town, so he came to work in Cernauti. He worked in a restaurant, but he didn't cook, he just knew a lot of recipes for fancy appetizers, salads, cold buffets with fish and so on, and supervised everything. We were deported to Transnistria in 1941 and we stayed in the ghetto of Mohilev-Podolsk until April 1944, when we were liberated by the Russians. My father was drafted by force in the Russian army because he didn't hide like others did, and he went with the front to Stalingrad, as he later told us. So after Mohilev was liberated, and the news spread that Cernauti was liberated as well, my mother found herself

alone, with two girls and without my father. We had to go back to Cernauti on foot, only when we reached a railway station could we travel by train for a few miles. Life was very hard for us, my mother , me and my sister, but fortunately we received news from my father, who managed to send us a package with clothes, and in 1946 he came home. Soon after we left for Brasov. In Brasov he was the manager f a food laboratory. My father died in 1989, it was during the revolution. Because of the troubled times, I couldn't bring a rabbi or a chazzan for my father's funeral, there was just a minyan and somebody recited the Kaddish.