

Adolf And Nora Landsman With Their Relatives



This picture was taken in the house of my wife's parents when we came to see them. From left to right: my wife Nora Landsman, my wife's stepfather Isidor Mazur, my mother-in-law Sofia Chestnetskaya, and me.

The picture was taken in Moscow in 1982.

My wife and I lived with Nora's parents. Her mother got married a second time after her first husband died in World War II. She got married to a wonderful man, Isidor Mazur, who became Nora's stepfather. I knew Isidor. He was a remarkable man, who had a very complicated life. Isidor was born in Poland, in Lodz.

He came from a very rich family. Poland was part of the Russian Empire at that time. He went to a German school, where Polish was taught as a foreign language. He had only two hours of Polish language per week. His parents spoke Russian at home.

When Isidor was at an adolescent age, he was keen on revolutionary ideas. After the commencement of the Russian Revolution of 1917, Isidor left Lodz for Moscow and entered the Bauman Institute.

After graduation he was employed at the Ministry of Foreign Trade and he was sent to Germany to purchase equipment with a group of engineers. He was sent with the same assignment to France and Italy.

With the outbreak of repressions at the end of the 1930s the whole group of engineers was arrested. Both leaders of the group were shot, and Isidor was blamed for espionage in Germany, France, Italy and Japan for some reason. He was imprisoned in Moscow.

He was tortured daily and was required to sign a testimony as they couldn't file a suit without a signed testimony. Isidor told me about the interrogation procedure. He stood leaning towards the wall.

Having asked a couple of questions, the investigator struck him strongly on the jaw so that Isidor hit the wall and lost consciousness.

Then there was an 'assembly-line' where the group of investigators interrogated in shifts for 48 hours. Then he was hung so that his arms were suspended to hooks attached to the door post.

After two days of being suspended his skin cracked and blood would seep from the wounds. They gave him a paper to sign; he couldn't even see what it was. His case was in the court now, and he was sentenced to ten years in the Gulag.

He served there for five years only, and then he was sent to some settlement to work as an engineer.

Isidor knew Nora's mother before he was arrested. They were in love with each other before his arrest, and in the year 1945 Nora's mother, Sofia, went to him and they got married.

In 1948 he was released as he had served the full term in the camp; he had been in custody for ten years: five years in the camp, and another five years in exile.

Isidor was conferred the rank of a major of the engineering troops and was sent to Korea. After the Twentieth Party Congress, Isidor was exonerated and the first thing he did was he went to the head of the camp to pay him a 'courtesy visit.'

To his surprise the head said that he owed Isidor an apology. I dwelled on Isidor's life as he became a dear person not only to my wife but to me as well. My outlook was affected by him, he made me see things I hadn't noticed before.