

Gerasim Dembo



This is my father, Gerasim Dembo, photographed for his pass, which he used at Oktyabrskaya railroad in Petrograd, where he worked.

My father is 20 years old here. This photo was taken in Petrograd in 1920.

My father was born in Riga in 1900. In 1918 he moved to Petrograd with his mother and sister Cecilia because of Cecilia's illness. He finished a classical gymnasium located on Vosstania Street and

met my mother there.

My father's family lived in the center of Petrograd, on Grechesky Lane. My mother's family lived nearby.

After finishing the gymnasia my father started to work at the Oktyabrskaya Railroad as a stoker to earn a living.

My grandmother and her daughter returned to Riga and Gerasim stayed in Petrograd.

My parents got married in 1920: my father was 20 and my mother Frida Dembo, nee Sivashinskaya, was only 19, she was studying at the Live Word Institute (former name of the Drama Institute) at that time.

My father continued working at the Oktyabrskaya railroad after their marriage. First he worked as a stoker, then he moved further up to the position of train driver assistant.

At the same time he entered Polytechnic Institute and combined work and studies. It was rather complicated as it fairly exhausted him, which worried his mother a lot. She lived with her daughter in Riga at that time.

Relatives decided that his parents should go to Paris, where my father should continue his studies at the Sorbonne. The Government of the USSR allowed it at that time. The sister of my mother's father, Rakhil, lived in Paris at that time and agreed to accept my parents.

In 1924 my parents left Petrograd and my mother had to quit her wonderful institute.

They lived for several months in Riga, where my mother was introduced to all my father's relatives, and after that they left for Paris.