

Alter Ostrover And His Family



This is a picture of my brother Alter Ostrover, his wife Sonia and their sons Michael and Yuri Ostrover. The photo taken in Wroclaw in 1960. He sent it to us in Lvov.

My brother Alter, born in 1908, came of age at 13. He prayed with his tallit and tefillin on and observed all Jewish traditions strictly. He finished the local school and became a very good tailor. He worked at a shop in Kosov owned by a Jew. He was handsome and intelligent. Alter brought home pictures of Lenin and Stalin and was hopeful for a better life. Alter looked forward to the time when Soviet troops came into town in 1939.

In 1945 my brother Alter, who was demobilized after he was severely wounded, found me. He told me that when the war began Maria, a Ukrainian woman from Kosov, hid him. She was in love with him and would have done anything for him. She even threatened to kill her own husband, who was a policeman and worked for the Germans. Alter ran away from her, crossed the frontline and joined the Soviet army. He was wounded several times and participated in the liberation of Ukraine, Poland and Czechoslovakia. In 1946 Alter married Sonia, the daughter of a rabbi from Wroclaw in Poland. I don't know how they met. They had their wedding in Lvov; it was a traditional Jewish wedding with a chuppah and a rabbi. My sister and I made traditional food: gefilte fish and everything else our mother had taught us.

The husband of Sonia's sister was a tailor and my brother became his assistant. In 1946 Soviet authorities permitted the Polish population to return to Poland and my brother and his family moved to Wroclaw. Alter always observed Jewish traditions except during his service in the army. My brother had two sons born there. They moved to the US in the 1950s. They live in Chicago now. I never saw Alter again, and he didn't describe what he thought about his life in Chicago. When my brother turned 80 [in 1988] he decided to have a bullet, which he had had for 50 years, removed from his body. He passed away during the surgery. On the day he died his grandson was born and named Alter after my brother.

In the early 1950s Maria, the Ukrainian woman who rescued Alter, found me to get information about Alter. I told her that I didn't know where he was as my brother asked me to do. She began to cry and said that she would be praying for him.