

Rosa Sheyn



This is my mother Rosa Sheyn. I asked her to have a picture taken and send it to me. I put it on the bedside cabinet in the hostel where I was staying while I was studying. Mother is standing by the house, where we lived in exile in Bakhchar. This photo was taken in 1955.

My mother worked at brick plant in the exile. Then we received a message about my father's death from emaciation. He died on 14th June 1942. That news killed my mother, who could hardly stand on her feet. She wouldn't have survived in those conditions, if fate hadn't had pity on us.

The district center of Bakhchar had remained without a dentist for some reason. Mother was called there as there was no other option for them. The chief of the polyclinic was an old lady without any education, but she was a party member. When she looked at Mother's diploma from Tartu University she told my mother, 'You will get the wage of a nurse as we equal that bourgeois university to a Soviet medical college.'

Mother didn't know what to say to such unprecedented boldness. There was no use in objecting. Nevertheless, Mother was very lucky, as she worked in warm premises and in her profession. She wore a white coat and her ragged clothes were hidden and went unnoticed. We were given a place with a bed in a room, where an obstetrician lived with her daughter.

In 1953 I entered the construction institute. I got married, when I was in the fifth year of my studies. I met my future husband, Alexander Kuznetsov, in the hostel. He had finished Tomsk Polytechnic Institute by that time. He came to us with his friend, whose sister was my roommate. We met and shortly after that got married.

We were given a room in a hostel. Then the company where my husband was employed built houses. Those who were willing to have a house were given materials for a wooden house. One construction expert ran the process and the denizens built their houses themselves. Thus, Alexander, along with some others, built a house consisting of eight apartments.

We got a two-room apartment in that house and brought Mother from Bakhchar and took her in right away. Finally, Mother lived in good conditions. I bought her a dress from my first salary. I was happy to give my mom at least that. I went to the construction site in pants and in winter time I was given a fur coat. I thought I didn't need anything else.