

Sofia Furman



This is a photo of mine; it was taken in March 1957 in Chita (in a photo studio). I send it to my aunts when I studied at the 3rd course of the Pedagogical Institute in Chita. I inscribed on the reverse side of the photo: "To my dear aunts Ghita and Zina from your niece".

My maternal grandfather and grandmother had 7 children.

Mother's sister Ghita Abramovna lived in the corner of Lermontovsky prospect and Soyuz Pechatnikov Street. She stayed in Leningrad all the time of the siege. Her husband worked at a military staff, and he made an invitation to come back to Leningrad for my mum (because she was a wife of a military man).

Ghita Abramovna survived the war and the siege of Leningrad, she died only in 1969. She felt unhappy. One day when she was at home, a shell demolished a corner of her house, but she remained alive, she was only pushed strongly by air-wave.

In 1944 after the end of the war we assisted her in reconstruction of her apartment.

Zlata Shukhman (we called her aunt Zina), who sent her daughter Inna in evacuation with us (where she died), arrived in Gorky region and buried her daughter. Up to the last day she cried over her loss.

All her life she cried and did not marry. Each year she visited her daughter's grave. When she became incapable of doing it, aunt Zlata brought some soil from the grave of Inna to Leningrad and

buried it in common grave, where aunt Ghita was already buried - at an ordinary cemetery, where there were Jewish zones.

Later I buried there aunt Zlata (Zina) and my mum too.

Before the war a husband of aunt Zlata Shukhman was subjected to repression and exiled. Her husband was Pole by nationality, probably Jewish Pole. They both graduated from the Moscow University.

She even worked as an instructor at a District Committee of the Communist Party, and he was a teacher in Sverdlovsk Institute. Later he was arrested according framed-up charges and discharged only after the end of the war.

After her husband's arrest aunt Zina escaped together with her girl. She left all her documents, she left everything. At first she worked at laundries, did hard work during the war, i.e. she went into hiding, she was afraid of arrest. And then she started working in LENENERGO (Leningrad Energy Organization) as inspector.

She retired at the age of 60. After the end of the war, I know that she sent her husband many parcels, but I do not know what happened to him later. Probably he married, or maybe he died. In our family it was a forbidden ground, I was not grown-up yet and I could not speak about it.

I remember, when I was in the 8th grade, how aunt Zinaida and aunt Ghita arranged wonderful holidays for me. They lived together at that time and I stayed with them for my winter holidays. I went to Mariinsky Theater every day. At that time it was called the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theater. I have seen its whole repertoire, all operas.

When I was going to finish school, my mother's brother Naum visited us, at that time he served in Chita; he was a second in command (a pilot-scout). He came together with his wife and invited me to go with him. We lived in need, and he told me that it would be easier for me to enter an Institute [college] there, than in Leningrad. At that time I dreamed to become a teacher, a teacher of history.

In Leningrad it was really difficult to enter an Institute, and we had nothing to live upon, therefore I decided to leave for Chita, to follow uncle Naum's advice. There I entered Pedagogical Institute (Historical Faculty), later we were united with the Foreign Languages Faculty, and later - with Literary Faculty. So I graduated from Historical and Philological Faculty in 1959.

My mother Rosa Shukhman (after her marriage - Furman) was the sixth child, as Naum was the youngest. My mum died in 2000, and she was one month younger 90. During the last 8 years she was bed-ridden - she could not walk.