

Leonid Averbuch



This is me as a student of Odessa Medical College. This photo was taken in Odessa in 1952. In 1946 I entered Odessa Medical College. Since I was under 16 and didn't have a passport I was admitted as a candidate student and was enrolled only after I obtained my passport. There was no anti-Semitism in college. There were many Jews in college: veterans of the war, mature people. I was an active Komsomol member and a member of the Komsomol committee of the college. In 1949, when I was a 4th-year student I married my co-student Sophia Rudman. In my 6th year of studies I began to specialize in lung diseases. After finishing college in 1952 my wife and I got a job assignment to the village of Malorita in Brest region, Belarus, where we worked as phthisitricians. In 1952 during the time of the Doctors' Plot I got into trouble. Phthisitricians use to get into this trap. I treated my patients with pneumothorax. During this procedure an air bubble may get into a vein. If it gets into a venous vessel it may cause embolism. One of my patients - the agronomist Nikolay Misyuk had brain embolism once. I remember that in his case I had to fix his head in the

lowest position with his feet up to force this air bubble out. I did this and he recovered, but he had hemorrhage in his retina. Nikolay appreciated what I did for him, but his wife wrote a letter to the prosecutor's office complaining that Jewish doctor Averbuch wanted to kill her husband, an agronomist, to cause damage to the socialist agriculture. I was called to the prosecutor's office where they had a talk with me, but at some point of time it all ended. When we were leaving Malorita we already knew that this Doctors' Plot was just that. Stalin had died by then. His death was a hard blow. Besides, we were afraid that the new leadership of the country would strengthen its dictatorship.