

Lev Belotserkovski And Rachil Belotserkovskaya



This is a picture of my mother Rachil Belotserkovskaya [nee Shukhman] and my father Lev Belotserkovski. The photo was taken in Kiev in 1962 after my father's book, *A Prompter's Notes*, was published. He is holding the book in his hands on this photo. Many Jews, including our family, remember the period in the history of the Soviet Union known as a state campaign of anti-Semitism called 'campaign against cosmopolitans'. Jews were declared to be cosmopolitans. They were fired and many of them arrested. Some were even executed - in the same way people had been back in 1937 [during the Great Terror]. Many employees of Kiev Conservatory, Kiev University, publishing and printing houses fell victim to this campaign. The situation in the theater where my father worked was different. Gnat Yura spoke at a meeting and said, 'Who are cosmopolitans - is it Pruslin or Matvey Drak or Belotserkovski - This is nonsense. I've known them for 30 years and I don't believe anything, but what I see with my own eyes'. [Editor's note: Drak was the chief painter at the theater and Pruslin was a composer and conductor.] I guess Gnat Yura was ordered by the Central Committee of the Party to disclose Jews that were 'enemies of the people', but he was an extremely decent and honest man. I don't know what effort it took him to protect his people, but he managed to keep a warm and friendly atmosphere in the theater. In 1952 we received a bigger apartment. My father worked at the theater in Kiev until 1960. Then, within two years, he wrote a book, his memoirs about the theater and the atmosphere there, and about nice talented people that he was lucky to work with. This book, entitled *A Prompter's Notes* was published by the Publishing House of Art and Musical Literature in Kiev, with an edition of 3,000 copies. When the book came out in 1962 my father was severely ill. He died in 1966. My mother became mentally ill after he passed away. She had schizophrenia. She couldn't stay alone at home due to her suicidal moods: she tried to jump out of the window several times. I had to put her into a mental hospital. I often visited her there, but her illness was progressing and she didn't even recognize me any more. My mother died in 1972. My parents were buried in the town cemetery in Kiev.