

Isaac Rozenfain In The Odessa Opera Theater



This is me in the Odessa Opera Theater. This photo was taken in 1955. I spent vacation in the recreation center that summer. I shared a room with the man beside me (name unknown). I was arrested at the time of the campaign against 'cosmopolitans', but I don't think that I fell victim to this campaign. The period of the Doctors' Plot started in 1953, when I returned to Kishinev. I heard talks that Jews were bad and would kill, poison people etc., but there were no official actions of this kind. I can't say whether any doctors were fired at that time. I remember Stalin's death well. I cried. I heard it either early in the morning or in the evening, because it was dark, when I was at home.

Our friends felt the same. At war the infantry went into attacks shouting, 'For Stalin! For the Motherland!' I didn't believe what I heard during the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, when Khrushchev reported facts that we had never known about. I don't think I believe it even today. I cannot believe it, it's hard to believe, you know. When a person has faith in something it's hard to change what he believes in. If I had seen it with my own eyes?, but I only know what I heard. It's hard to change what one believes. I still have an ambiguous attitude to it. In 1954 our second son, Oleg, was born. When we moved back from Orhei we received a two-bedroom apartment. We bought our first TV set, 'Temp', with a built-in tape recorder and a wireless. I was offered a plot of land to build a house, but neither my wife nor I wanted it. My mother-in-law lived in a one-bedroom apartment. We exchanged her one-bedroom and our two-bedroom apartment for a three-bedroom apartment in Botanica. My mother-in-law lived with us, helping us about the house and with the children. We hardly observed any Jewish traditions in our family. I entered the extramural Faculty of Industrial and Civil Construction of Moscow Construction College. I defended my diploma in Moscow. By the time of finishing the college I was a construction site superintendent. A construction site included two to three sites. I was in charge of the construction of a few apartment buildings, kindergartens, a shoe factory, a leather factory, a factory in Orhei and a fur factory in Belzi. Occasionally, when walking across town I think: this is mine and this one as well.