

Evgeni Chazov's Mother Friena Chazova



My mother Friena Bragher photographed in Krivoy Rog in early 1930s.

My mother Friena Bragher was born in Novovorontsovka in 1908. My mother was the only child in the family. In 1911 the family moved to Krivoy Rog. My mother's family observed Jewish traditions, followed kashrut and celebrated Sabbath. On Saturdays grandfather Moisey didn't go to work. On Friday they lit candles and sat down to the table set for a celebration. I don't know any details about their celebration of holidays, but I know that there was always matzah in the house at

Pesach and grandfather Moisey, being the oldest in the family, conducted seder. On Saturdays and holidays they went to the synagogue in the center of the town. Krivoy Rog was an industrial town and there were many Jews residing in it like anywhere else in the south of Russia. [Ukraine] I don't know the exact numbers, but the Jewish population constituted at least 25%. Russian, Ukrainian and Jewish families were good neighbors and respected each other.

I don't know the name of the street where my grandparents resided. After the revolution of 1917 it was given the name of Karl Libknecht. My mother finished elementary Jewish school before the revolution. During the Revolution and Civil War, the period of pogroms, the family again moved to Novovorontsovka to live through the trying times. It was a small and relatively quiet town. From what I know, nobody in our family suffered from pogroms. After we returned to Krivoy Rog my mother finished a lower secondary school and then entered obstetrics school. She finished it in 1928 and went to work as a physiotherapy nurse in the town hospital in Krivoy Rog. My father was having treatment in this hospital in 1931 and my parents met there.

Both of them came from families of workers and they were a product of the Soviet epoch: they were led by their dreams about socialism and communism, construction of plants and mines and a new life with no exploitation. That was what other Soviet people were driven by. My father fell in love at first sight and my mother returned his love. They met several times after my father was released from hospital and then he came to my mother's parents with a bunch of flowers to ask their consent. Although he wasn't a Jew my grandmother and grandfather gave their consent to their marriage without hesitation. My mother's parents had given up all prejudices associated with Jewish religious life, including mixed marriages. Also, they liked my father as a person. Few weeks later my father and mother had a civil ceremony in the registry office. They didn't have a big wedding party; it wasn't customary at that time. grandfather and grandmother arranged a dinner where my father invited his colleagues and mother invited her friends, about 8 guests in total.

My parents lived in Krivoy Rog another year. They lived in an apartment that my father received at work. In 1932 my older sister Ludmila Chazova was born there. A year later my father was transferred to work in Dnepropetrovsk in 30 km from Krivoy Rog. My mother entered the Medical College there. It was her dream to become a doctor. However, she had to quit the college three years later after my father got another assignment. My mother obtained an assistant doctor diploma.