

Evgeni Chazov's Mother Friena Chazova With A Group Of Medical Employees



My mother Friena Chazova, the first on the right, photographed with a group of medical employees of health center Sokol near Lysva town in Perm region in 1940. Standing beside my mother is doctor Shtabskaya, a Jew, who helped my mother to get a job.

Period arrests [Great Terror] and show trials against so-called 'enemies of the people' began in 1936. People disappeared without any trial or investigation. They were arrested at night. The majority of commanding staff of our division disappeared forever then. My mother told me that

they didn't get together with friends that frequently since a word said at the wrong time or a joke might have caused an arrest. In early 1939 my father had a telephone call. He was ordered to make an appearance in the division headquarters in Zhytomir. They agreed to meet when he finished work, but my father didn't show up on time. Two days later, when my mother called the headquarters they told her that she should come to see her husband, now she was convinced that something terrible had happened to my father.

In the vestibule an officer on duty met my mother and then an NKVD officer approached her and asked her to follow him and he would show her to where my father was waiting, but she was actually taken to be interrogated. They were trying to force her to slander my father and acknowledge that he was an enemy of the people and a French spy. The interrogation lasted few hours, but my mother refused flatly to sign an accusation against the man she loved. During the interrogation they treated her with respect, but when she left the room, two officers took her to another room and from then on she couldn't remember anything. She recovered her conscience in NKVD hospital: her knee didn't bend and her face was injured. We were staying with the nanny and she kept telling us that our parents were in business trip and that there was nothing to worry about and we didn't worry, being small children. My mother stayed in hospital and her doctor was her former co-student at the Medical College in Dnepropetrovsk. One day she asked my mother to come to her office. She closed the door and said: 'Friena, if you want to rescue the children you need to go to a distant place before they arrest you'.

My mother returned to Ovruch and packed within one day without telling us any details. We moved to Lysva Molotov (present-day Perm) region in the Ural, 3500 km from home where my father's aunts lived: Natalia Schipanova and Anna Gluchova. However, we didn't stay there long. Probably my father's aunts were concerned about their own safety and they advised my mother to go to work in the 'Sokol' military recreation center located in the woods near Lysva. They believed she would not be discovered there. I wouldn't judge them for what they did: they feared that my mother might be discovered and they would suffer for giving shelter to the social dangerous elements that we had become. This was what this period was like when people were afraid of giving shelter to their close ones.

In this new place nobody knew our story. My mother didn't talk about her husband and we believed that our father was doing his job and would be back soon. My mother got a job of a nurse in the recreation center. I don't know how she managed to get this employment when our father had been arrested. I know that doctor Shtabskaya, a Jew, helped my mother get this job. Shortly after beginning of the Great Patriotic War in 1941 there was a military training camp organized in the woods near the recreation center to train recruits. My mother and other medical employees went to work in this camp and the recreation center was again transformed into a military hospital. Employees resided in earth houses in this part. My mother and we also lodged in an earth house. Soldiers arranged a small vegetable garden for us where they grew potatoes and vegetables. My mother didn't have any information about my father, but she told us that he was at the front bravely struggling against the enemies of the Soviet power: fascists.