

Evgeni Chazov's Mother Friena Chazova



My mother Friena Chazova, photographed in Ternopol in early 1950s. My father had this photograph to order a big portrait of my mother painted in oil.

In February 1946 my father was appointed as deputy chief of political department of the regional military registry office in Ternopol in the West of Ukraine [450 km from Kiev]. It was a high position at that time and was promoted to the rank of colonel soon. When he received a one-bedroom apartment in early fall our family joined him in Ternopol. Shortly afterward he received a two-bedroom apartment with big rooms with much light and a kitchen. My father bought the first furniture in his life at the age of 46: a sofa, wardrobe, a table and coaches for my sister and me. My sister and I went to school and my mother went to work as a nurse in the surgery department of the railroad hospital.

My parents had many friends. They were usually my father's co-officers and their families. They got together in our home to celebrate Soviet holidays: 1 May, October revolution Day and the Soviet army Day. On weekends my father and mother went for a stroll. They went to the park where a symphonic orchestra was playing. It was a tradition.

Our family was an exemplary Soviet family. My father and mother supported any actions initiated by higher authorities. My father devotedly believed in Stalin.

In 1977 my sister Ludmila died. My mother's cousin Bertha Gribovskaya came to my sister's funeral. Aunt Bertha stayed with my mother. My mother fell ill after her daughter died. She died a month later. After my mother's funeral aunt Bertha revealed our family secret to me about my father's arrest. Only after aunt bertha told her story I began to understand many things in our household: that my parents never discussed actions taken by the Party or government and if they did talk about it my father's opinion was always similar to the baseline of the Party. Also, that my mother didn't have Jewish friends and even her relative Bertha never visited us before my sister died. My father wasn't anti-Semitic, but I don't think he appreciated my mother's relationships with her relatives, just in case. I feel very sorry for my mother. She must have had a steel heart to live this kind of life and keep things in secret.