

Evgeni Chazov With Uzbek Pupils



I am riding a donkey during the first year of my work in Uzbekistan with my Uzbek pupils. This photo was made in a small aul near Tashkent in 1958.

After finishing school in 1953 I entered the Faculty of Russian Philology in Rivne Pedagogical College. There was no such college in Ternopol and I left for Rivne in 200 km from Ternopol. There was a Jewish girl in my college and we got along well with her. My sister and I were registered as Russian in our documents, so I didn't face any anti-Semitism since my co-students didn't know my mother. Although I identified myself as a Jew I didn't disclose my identity. I lived in a hostel and shared a room with three other students. We supported each other, had meals together and missed lectures together. In summer we had practical training in a school in Rivne and then I went to Ternopol on vacations. We often spent vacations together. My father obtained free trips to the Crimea and Caucasus.

After finishing college in 1958 a group of 16 volunteers volunteered to Tashkent [Uzbekistan, 3000 km to the South-East] to teach Uzbek children Russian. I went with this group. This was a Komsomol call. We traveled via Moscow where we were solemnly greeted. We stayed in a hostel three days and went on city tours. In Tashkent we met at the railway station and I was sent to a school in a small district center. I don't remember the name of this town. I taught Russian literature and language and since there were other teachers missing I also taught history, geography and German. We were treated with respect, but life was difficult there. I rented an apartment with another teachers, the Uzbek Bulat and the Mordvinian Nikolay. They also came to work there and it was less expensive for us to share an apartment. Bulat taught me to speak fluent Uzbek. I worked in Uzbekistan two years. My mother had an heart attack and I obtained a permit to quit work before my 3-year assignment was over [Mandatory Job Assignment in the USSR]. I returned to Ternopol in 1960 and lived here ever since.