

Yuri Fiedelgolts



This is a picture from my personal file after arrest.

The picture was made in Butyrskaya prison in Moscow in 1948.

The inscription on the photo: is my name 'Fidelgolts' and my year of birth - '1927'.

When I was transferred to the 10th grade, I entered preparatory department of the Steel Institute. I met Jew Boris Leviatov and Russian Valentin Sokolov. We were the boys from intelligentsia families.

We used to discuss all kinds of subjects starting from the sense of life and up to the political disputes, Stalin's dictatorship and NKV, subordinated to Stalin or Nietzsche and all kinds of things. Each of the interlocutors was trying to show off his erudition.

After preparatory course we did not keep in touch. Leviatov and Sokolov were drafted in the army and I did not enter the steel institute. In 1947 I entered Theatre Institute, the Department of actor's skill. It appealed to me.

The teachers were happy with me and they said I would have a bright future. I was an avid reader. I was took an interest in the history of the theatre, biographies of great actors. I thought I liked what I was doing. I was happy. I was not interested in politics at that time.

At the end of the first year in 1948 I was arrested. I was taken straight from the classes and sent to the department of the reconnaissance SMERSH, located at Kropotkinskaya street. It is still there. They needed at least a formal confession of guilt for my case to file to court. I was pushed hard in the house of detention.

I was blamed in foundation of the anti-Soviet circle and participation in its activity. Then I found out that Valentin Sokolov was the stooge. At that time I thought that he did it because he was a coward, being afraid of the beating and torture.

In the 1990s I had a chance to look at my case and I saw the reference to be submitted to the martial court stating that Sokolov was the agent of the KGB Secret Service and had the nickname 'Rodionov'.

At any rate, the case was filed against the three of us. Sokolov was the witness at the line-up, both with me and Boris. When the search was made in our house, they found my diaries. They played an important role on the trial and were used as material evidence.

I described all kinds of events in my life in the diary and admitted rebellious thoughts. It was the time when the struggle was actively taken against rootless cosmopolites and the three of us perfectly fit the article.

I would have run amuck if I had been interrogated longer. The sleuths were putting both moral and physical pressure. There were two interrogators- 'kind' and 'evil'. The kind one, captain Demurin, looking very polite and proper, was as if protecting me. The second one was hitting hard on the table and yelling: "You scum, Yid mug!".

He was constantly deterring me, making threats. He also resorted to beating. I was constantly feeling sleepy. It must have been a protective mechanism of my organism to relieve constant strain. I was about to swoon and was ready to fall asleep even standing.

The turnkeys did not let me sleep. I do not know how long I had stayed in that cell in a semiconscious state. Again there were interrogations ...

Then they were sick and tired of me and sent me to the prison for 'additional effect'. Those people framed a mythical anti-Soviet organization from our circle, consisting of three people, and enjoyed awards and promotion.

In accordance with the article 58 we were charged with anti-soviet activity, they also added item 11, group actions. We were sentenced to 10 years in the maximum security camp [Gulag] (we were lucky to be sentenced to 10 years, we might have got 25), and we were bereft of rights for five years, i.e. exiled.

I was also sentenced to hard physical labor as the most malicious criminal. I was sent to the maximum security camp Gulag, located 4000 km away from home. I was sent to work on the automobile repair plant. I had not stayed there for a long time.