

Tamara Goldenberg At The Moscow Foreign Languages Institute



This is me, the student of Moscow Foreign Languages Institute.

The picture was made in 1937 in Sevastopol, where I came on holiday to see my parents.

In 1931 I went to the closest 7-year school in our vicinity. I was more prone for the Arts than sciences, but nobody was interested in that. At that time engineering sciences were more important, while the Arts were condoned. I finished school satisfactorily.

It was decided that I should enter Foreign Languages Institute as I knew French. One of my father's patients had some connections in Moscow. He was very grateful to my father, who rescued his life, and he got to know all information for the admission in the institute and took all my papers in Moscow.

I was very modest and bashful at that time, and not very prudent. I was always being ashamed of something. I was full 17. I remember the day when I came to the institute wearing a white hat. I did not pass Russian exam very successfully, but my French was pretty good, and I was accepted. I stayed with my father's sister, Adelaida for two years.

Her husband Ivan Chetverikov was exiled from Moscow as a philosophy professor because he underestimated the significance of Marxist theory. In 2 years he was allowed to live near Moscow. He came back home, and I came to live in the hostel.

There were 6 girls in one room from different cities. We were very friendly and helped out each other. We shared food and had meals together. I remember how we bought very expensive dressy shoes for everybody to share on important occasions, like a date or a wedding.

I remember blood shed in 1937 [great terror]. Teachers were lost gradually, especially German language teachers. There were less and less teachers, and sometimes there were no teachers to supply for the missing ones.

I believed everything told at the meetings, things I read in papers regarding condemnation of "peoples' enemies". There was no television at that time, but those condemnations were public. I was overly gullible like the majority of people back at that time. Not very often, but still I heard of the arrests of my acquaintances.

I thought that those cases were errors. I did not have many friends in Moscow. I liked to visit family of my aunt Adelaida's pals. They were very civilized and pleasant people. The host stayed and worked in France for a long time.

He was well-mannered, educated, mild and intelligent. Then all of a sudden I got to know that he was exiled from Moscow.

His wife's elderly parents were left on their own.

I came to see them. My room mate in the hostel also vanished.

But then one could not even admit a thought that it could have been targeted illegitimacy. If injustice was towards pals, it was considered a mistake, but in general the actions of the authorities were deemed as extermination of the enemies of the soviet regime.

Meanwhile the institute life continued. We got together in the conference hall to listen to Stalin's speeches on the radio or to watch modern movies. There were also a lot of circles. I was fond of literature and enjoyed studying in general.

On weekend my friends and I used to go to the cinema, museums theatre. We also went dancing and met with the boys.

I remained timid and shy, and did not date anybody.