

Ferdinand Chernovich With His Mother Rozalia Ledskaya And Aunt Ida



The picture was made when mother's younger sister Ida came to see us. The three of us had taken a picture together: my mother Rozalia Ledskaya, I and Ida. We kept one copy, and Ida took the other one. The picture was taken in Moscow in 1927.

I was born in 1923 in Moscow. I was named Ferdinand in honour of my relative. Father left us shortly before I was born. He had another family. Mother made up her mind to get educated during the period of her unemployment.

When I was two, she entered Moscow Pharmaceutical School. In a year she was able to get a job in the pharmacy and to transfer to the evening department.

She worked and studied. In 1928 she got a diploma of a pharmacist. At the beginning of the 1930s she was employed at the pharmacy.

Mother never got married again after she divorced father. She lived only for me. I was the essence of her life. Mother did her best to bring me up.

She tried to teach me how to read and write in Yiddish. But I was not good at it. Either I was a poor student or my mother was a poor teacher. Mother did not tell me about Jewish history and religion. She did not observe Jewish traditions and did not mark holidays.

Maybe it was caused by the struggle of the Soviet regime against religion. Mother understood that I would be raised an atheist at school and she did not want to make my life more difficult.

During the weekend my mother and I used to ski during winter and in summer time we took long strolls and went to the forest to gather berries and mushrooms.

In 1931 I went to the first grade of Russian secondary school. It was the school in the closest vicinity to our house. It took me 15 minutes to walk to school. I was the only Jew in my class, and of course I felt anti-Semitism in every day life. I was teased and hurt.

When I managed to stand up for myself, teasing and hurting stopped. I could not feel anti-Semitism from teachers, moreover I felt their support and assistance. Our teachers were very good. Most of them came from intelligentsia.

I liked learning at school. I was an excellent student since the 1st grade and I finished school with excellent marks in my certificate. I did not learn things by rote.

I had a good memory and it was easy for me to learn things. Chemistry was my favorite subject in senior grades. I also studied chemistry in extra-curriculum classes.

The only mother's relative I knew was her younger sister Ida. She settled in Ukraine, in Melitopol [Zaporizhzhya oblast, Ukraine]. She got married there. When I was six mother got severely ill. She was in the hospital. There was nobody who could look after me.

Ida came and took me to Melitopol. I had stayed with my aunt for a year before my mother got better. In the middle 1930s Ida and her husband moved to Kharkov [now Kharkiv, Ukraine]. When the WW2 was unleashed, Ida was evacuated in Kazakhstan.

When the war was over she tried to return to Kharkov, but her apartment was occupied by other people. She tried to find an apartment, but failed. She came to Moscow to live with us. She did not manage to find a job in Moscow.

She left Moscow for Lvov [now Lviv, Ukraine] and settled there. In 1954 she got married for the second time. Her husband was a very decent Jewish man, whose name I do not remember. I visited her a couple of times.

In 1982 Ida died from cancer. Mother and she were the closest people for me.