

## Ferdinand Chernovich With His Wife Mariam Berman



This is me with my wife Mariam Berman. The picture was taken shortly after our wedding. I gave this picture to my mother and her younger sister Ida.

The picture was made in Moscow in 1958.

In 1950 I graduated from the Moscow Institute of High Chemical Technologies named after Lomonosov, the faculty of chemical engineers. Scientific research and post-graduate studies was my dream, but it was unrealizable for me.

Jews were not admitted to post-graduate studies. I was given a mandatory job assignment to the closed plat of ministry of defense, located in the outskirts of the city. I had to agree.

The plant was 60 km away from Moscow and I had to take a commuter train to get to the plant. I could not go back and forth every day and I was given a room in the hostel by the plant.

I had worked for three years at that plant. My job was very interesting. Besides, I got the opportunity to acquire quite a good qualification. The working conditions were hard for me, because it was difficult for me to walk at that time as I was trying to get used to the artificial leg.

The territory of the plant was huge. There was no transport, and the village, where I lived was far from the plant. At that time Saturday was a working day. But we did not work full time, so I managed to visit mother on Sunday.

I longed for coming back in Moscow. In 1956 I left the plant and came home. It was hard to get a job. I had been to over 40 places before I found a job as an engineer at a design institute.

My salary was much lower, but I was in Moscow, at least I had home and in the evenings a loving person was waiting for me, cooking dinner and doing laundry for me.

My aunt Ida, mother's younger sister was really worried because I was single. She lived in Lvov, but she had a lot of acquaintances in Moscow. Aunt came to Moscow and started passionately looking for a bride for me. She had couple of girls in view, and one of them became my wife.

Mariam was born in Moscow in 1923. Mariam graduated from chemistry department of Moscow State University. She was not admitted in the post-graduate department, but her mandatory job assignment was in Moscow.

She was employed at the chemistry laboratory. It was the time of campaign against cosmopolitans. They started firing Jews. Luckily the head of laboratory was a decent and brave man and did not allow firing any Jew from his laboratory.

We got married in 1958. We had an ordinary wedding. We got registered in the state marriage registration office, and in the evening we had a modest wedding party in Mariam parents' house.

We invited only the closest people. Mariam and I lived with her parents. Our family life was very happy. The only thing that made us sad was not having children.

At home we marked birthdays of our family members and such Soviet holidays as May 1, November 7, Soviet Army Day, Victory Day, New Years Day. New Year's day and Victory Day were our favourite holidays.

On the 9th of May my wife and I went to the tomb of Unknown Soldier, to the monument of eternal flame. We brought flowers to the tomb, met front-line soldiers. In the evenings we went to see some of my front-line friends or invited them to our house.

We had drinks to commemorate those who perished, sang war songs. There are very few front-line soldiers Moscovites left. One of two of them is bedridden, another one cannot talk as a result of apoplectic stroke. I do not know anything about front-line soldiers from other cities.

The rest of the holidays were taken by us an extra day off. We had the opportunity to invite friends and have fun. Mariam's parents were atheists like my mother.

They did not mark Jewish holidays at home. My wife and I often went to the cinema, and to the theater. We liked to go to the seaside on vacation. I was often given vouchers to the sea resorts for being disabled.