

Tatiana Tets And Her Father Iosif Tets



This is my father Iosif Tets and me. We were photographed together two months before the war, just for the souvenir. This photo was taken in Riga in 1941.

Nothing changed for our family, when the Soviet rule was established. We had no property, and were not afraid of nationalization. I kept going to school, and my parents kept going to work. The Soviet authorities nationalized my father's pharmacy, but he kept his job. Mama had no private office, but kept working as a dentist at the clinic. We kept living in the same apartment, though it no longer belonged to its owner. It became governmental property. Therefore, the changes that were changing other people's lives had no impact on us.

On 14th June 1941 deportation of Latvian residents began. There was no advance notice that it might happen, but there was trouble in the air. The weather was hot, and windows were open. One could hear the sound of car engines. There were not so many cars in the streets at the time, particularly, during the nighttime. These sounds were troubling. I don't know, maybe adults had some idea about what it was all about. Only in the morning we found out what had happened. There were quite a few students missing from school that day. We were told that they were deported with their families to Siberia, being enemies of the people. A number of my parents' friends and acquaintances were deported. It was so scary. People were discussing what was happening. I remember what my father told us about someone he knew in Ludza. This man told a joke of some political nature, and his friend went to the NKVD office where he reported on this man and gave his own comments. The one who told the joke was deported with his family. He was sent to the Gulag, and his family was sent into exile. There were many such cases. It was enough to report that someone was against the Soviet rule, and there was no other evidence required. Such people were arrested and sent to camps. This was the truth of life, and all people knew this was happening. This might have continued, but on 22nd June 1941, a week after the first deportation, Germany attacked the USSR.