

Gerasim And Frida Dembo



These are my mother Frida Dembo, nee Sivashinskaya and my father Gerasim Dembo.

It is an amateur picture and it was taken in Latvia, in Saulkraste, a Riga suburb, in 1924, not far from a dairy-farm, owned by the family of my father's mother, Sara Dembo, nee Bugg.

This photo was taken right before my parents left for Paris, where father was to study at the Sorbonne. On their way to Paris they stopped in Riga for several months, where my mother was introduced to my father's relatives.

It was a bright summer day, father and mother are resting in lawn chairs in the woods. Mother is wearing a white dress with short sleeves and father is smoking a pipe. They are sitting in the sun talking.

My parents got married in 1920. My father continued working at the Oktyabrskaya railroad. First he worked as a stoker, then he moved further up to the position of train driver assistant.

At the same time he entered Polytechnic Institute and combined work and studies. It was rather complicated as it fairly exhausted him, which worried his mother a lot.

She lived with her daughter in Riga at that time. Relatives decided that his parents should go to Paris, where my father should continue his studies at the Sorbonne. The Government of the USSR allowed it at that time.

The sister of my mother's father, Rakhil, lived in Paris at that time and agreed to accept my parents. In 1924 my parents left Petrograd and my mother had to quit her wonderful institute.

They lived for several months in Riga, where my mother was introduced to all my father's relatives, and after that they left for Paris.

They lived in Paris for ten years with mother's aunt, first at one place and later they moved to Rue de Prague, 8 - it was the Rothschild foundation building. Aunt Rosa assisted them financially; besides, they earned money.

My father studied at the faculty of applied mechanics of the Sorbonne affiliate in the town of Nancy and worked at the Worthington machine-building plant.

He attended some course at university, did an exam, went back to work, attended another course, passed the exam, went back to work and so on.

That is why he studied at university for such a long time, for ten years. My mother worked as a seller in a store and did some other jobs.

I was born in 1931 and was the only child in the family.

When my father obtained a Sorbonne diploma in 1934, they had to decide what to do next.

My mother loved her parents and siblings very much, she missed her family a lot when living in Paris. Besides, Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933 and his speeches worried the neighboring countries.

So in 1934 we all moved to the Soviet Union, to Leningrad, which had already been renamed after Lenin's death in 1924.