

Evgeni Chazov's Mother's Cousin Bertha Gribovskaya And Her Husband



My aunt Bella Gribovskaya and her husband whose name I do not know. This photo was made in Cheliabinsk in 1953 to be sent to us.

I was born in and raised by a mixed family; my mother was Jewish and my father was Russian. My mother's parents came from Krivoy Rog located in the southeast of Ukraine, 350 km from Kiev. It was the center of coal and iron industry. My mother's father Moisey Bragher was born in the 1880s, was a tinsmith. My grandmother Zlata, whose maiden name I don't remember, was almost the same age as my grandfather. I don't have any information about her family, but from what my mother's cousin sister Bertha Gribovskaya told me my grandmother received common Jewish education at home. My grandmother had a sister named Golda Gribovskaya. She was about two years older than my grandmother. Golda was married to Mark Gribovski. They died before the Great Patriotic War, in 1930s. Their daughter Bertha Gribovskaya was married and had two children. They live in Cheliabinsk, Russia, and we correspond with them occasionally.

In 1977 my sister Ludmila died. My mother's cousin Bertha Gribovskaya came to my sister's funeral. Aunt Bertha stayed with my mother. My mother fell ill after her daughter died. She died a month later. After my mother's funeral aunt Bertha revealed our family secret to me about my father's arrest. Only after aunt Bertha told her story I began to understand many things in our household: that my parents never discussed actions taken by the Party or government and if they did talk about it my father's opinion was always similar to the baseline of the Party. Also, that my mother didn't have Jewish friends and even her relative Bertha never visited us before my sister died. My father wasn't anti-Semitic, but I don't think he appreciated my mother's relationships with her relatives, just in case. I feel very sorry for my mother. She must have had a steel heart to live this kind of life and keep things in secret.