

Rachil Lemberg



This is a photo of me when I was a student at the Odessa Engineering Construction College. This photo was taken in Odessa, USSR, in 1947.

I returned from Uzbekistan, where I was in evacuation to Ananiev in 1945. Our house wasn't ruined and there were no other tenants in it. My neighbors told me what happened with my family after I left Ananiev in 1941. The Germans came to the town. They established a Jewish ghetto in Zheltkovo station 15 km from Ananiev. My mother and father were taken to the ghetto, they were killed in the ghetto among other Jews. I don't even know where their grave is. I lived in Ananiev several days. Our Russian neighbor Maria Stepanova, my childhood friend Yevgeni's mother, took me to their home. Yevgeni was at the front during the war and after the war he stayed to serve in Germany. I couldn't stay in the house where I spent my childhood years and where everything breathed with the memories of my family. I decided to leave. I didn't care where to go. All I wished was to go elsewhere. I didn't take anything from my home.

Then I moved to Odessa. I received my college record book from Tashkent. I needed it to continue my studies in the Construction College. However, I was admitted to the second semester of the third year in college in 1946 while in Tashkent I was a 4-year student. I missed a lot and such was their decision. I rented a room. My share of the money I received for selling our house lasted for half a year of my life in Odessa. Food was very expensive after the war and the only place one could buy food products was at the market. A slice of bread cost 10 rubles.

In 1946 my childhood friend Yevgeni Stepanov found me in Odessa. He was still on service in a town in the Eastern Germany. There was a housing area for Soviet military. It was a nice cozy town called Galle. It stood on the Zalle River (Galle-under-Zalle). He wrote me long tender letters every day. Our correspondence lasted half a year. In summer Yevgeni came on leave and registered our marriage in a registry office. He came on a 45-day leave and then he had to go back to Germany. He sent me money. In 1947, after my fourth year in college was over I went to visit my husband. He lived in a 3-bedroom apartment with his comrade fellow family. They occupied two rooms and Yevgeni lived in the third room. I have very pleasant memories about four months I spent with my husband in this town. In autumn I returned to college in Odessa. In 1948 after finishing the college I received a job assignment to Bolekhov village in Ivano-Frankovsk region [550 km from Kiev], in Western Ukraine. My husband submitted a report for transfer to the military unit in Bolekhov. His report was approved. We received a room in Bolekhov and I went to work as superintendent at a construction site. In 1949 our son Anatoli was born. We lived there 3 years until in 1952 my husband was transferred to Lvov. He went there, but since he didn't receive an apartment my son and I stayed in Bolekhov where my daughter Yelena was born in 1955. In Lvov my husband served until 1956.