

our childhood denied to us because of our father's absence, the way Iren and her sister had? No, our case was not that drastic. After a short period of shock and adjustment to the new male/father figure in our life, we grew to love our father and appreciate his insight and his eagerness to help us in every way he could. Our heads were not filled with a state ideology that might have conditioned us see him as the enemy, had the state considered him as such.

In my search for additional material to complete my father's narrative, one episode remains enigmatic and puzzling. My father told us that before being exiled to the tundra, he was put to work in a chemistry laboratory where his working and living conditions were incomparably better than in the camp north of the Arctic Circle. But one day, he recalled, his stay in that "paradise" abruptly came to an end and he was sent to Norilsk labor camp. He believed the reason was the authorities' realization that he could have blown up the entire laboratory if he had set his mind to it. That was a risky position they had entrusted to an enemy. I couldn't find any reference to that short-lived respite among his writings or chapter outlines. My presumption is that, while evaluating the prisoners' talents and capabilities in the Krasnoyarsk transit camp, as my father mentioned in his memoir, they had learned of his expertise in chemistry, and without thinking of the consequences, simply out of the need for his professional skills, they had assigned him to that position. Exactly where that laboratory was, which according to my father carried out sensitive production, I do not know, probably somewhere in southern Siberia.