

Rahmil Shmushkevich With His Wife Ida



My wife Ida and I, Rahmil Shmushkevich, after our wedding ceremony. Photo made in Kiev in November 1946.

In Kiev I went to look for my family. All of a sudden I saw my mother near the water pump in Yamskaya Street where we lived before the war. She screamed seeing me and she was screaming in Yiddish. My mother, her sister and her sister's family were living in a small room with no heating. I moved in with them. We lived a very poor life.

My mother introduced me to a young nurse Ida Gurevich, a Jewish girl. They became friends during evacuation. Ida was born in 1927. Her father perished at the front and her mother (I shall not call her by her name) was such a quarrelsome and hysterical person that Ida could only find warmth and sympathy from my mother and her sister. Ida was a very nice and kind girl. We got married in 1946. We had no wedding party. We rented an apartment in a small house in Goloseyevo.

In 1947 our daughter Julia was born. I got a job at the "Stalinskoye Plemia" newspaper. I was Head of agricultural division. I was a Party member. I believed that life was improving. However, anti-Semitism was gradually growing. And one of its demonstrations was struggle of the state against cosmopolitanism. My name Mikhail Shmushkevich didn't sound like a Jewish name and people didn't suspect that I was a Jew. They spoke openly in my presence and I heard so many anti-Semitic expressions in my life and the Jews that were staying in the rear instead of going to the front, that they were to blame for all misfortunes persecuting the country and that Hitler should have killed more of them, etc. Once I lost my temper and hit one of such orators on the face.

In 1962 we bought a two-room apartment. My wife Ida continued working. She was a very reserved, nice and kind woman. She understood me very well and we had a very warm and close family.