

Moisey Goihberg Performing Surgery



This is a photo of me conducting a surgery. The photo was taken in Kiev in the early 1980s. I demobilized in 1947. I left my well-paying position at the Kiev Military Regiment for the position of a common doctor. I was eager to do scientific research in medicine. I was introduced to my future tutor, Professor Boris Polonskiy, the best urologist in the country. Professor Polonskiy patiently taught me everything he knew and could perform well: the science of urology, and practical skills. Soon I began to perform surgeries and soon I was performing complicated surgeries successfully. At the beginning of 1953 when the Doctors' Plot started along with other anti-Semitic campaigns stirred up in Moscow, I was going through a hard time. Every day I opened newspapers with horror. There were satirical articles with Jewish names (specifying their real names in brackets). Assistant Professor Krisson and a few other Jews were fired from our clinic. The party district committee issued a decree stating that it was difficult for a Christian to get employed because many people of different faiths got jobs. Stalin died in 1953. I cried for him along with many other people not because I loved him, but because I was afraid that things might get worse. In 1954 they found a possibility to get rid of me. There was a party decree about strengthening the villages. I was called to the district health department and ordered to become head of the district health department in the town of Stavysche near Kiev. I had my objections, saying that I was a practicing surgeon doing scientific research and had never been an administrator. But I was told, 'You have worked enough in Kiev. Somebody else will take up your job.' Only I and another Jewish woman were sent to the village from our clinic. I worked for a year in Stavysche and did well. I also performed surgeries at the local hospital. After a year I was allowed to return to Kiev. I don't know whether it happened because I was a talented surgeon, or because my tutor Polonskiy pulled strings for me, or whether it was due to a general improvement of the situation. My life after that was quiet. I defended my candidate's thesis although I was an ordinary doctor-registrar. In 1965 the Institute of Urology was established in Kiev and I was a successful applicant for the position of senior researcher. I worked successfully in that post until 1984. After I turned sixty I went to work as a consultant at the Kiev

Oncological Clinic.