

Zinoviy Rukinglaz With His Wife Gitl Rukinglaz



I, Zinoviy Rukinglaz, and my wife Gitl. This photo was taken on our wedding in Kherson in 1947.

During evacuation in Kustanai in November 1941 I became an apprentice of electrician at the 'Bolshevichka' tailors' factory and half a year later I began to work independently. I worked at the factory throughout the war and joined the Komsomol there. In spring 1944 we heard about the liberation of Kherson and my father began to prepare to go back home. In early June 1944 we returned to Kherson. I went to work as an electrician at the shoe factory. My father died in December 1946, my mother died in 1944.

I was alone my father's niece Grunia, her children, uncle Ilia and aunt Rosa often invited me to visit them. Once, when visiting uncle Ilia, I met a lovely Jewish girl. I liked her at once. She was Rosa's niece. The girl's name was Gitl Berman. Gitl and I fell in love with each other and I proposed marriage to her. I bought a big bed on my savings. Grisha wife's brother gave Gitl a wedding ring. He was a dentist. We had a civil ceremony in a registry office in autumn 1947. We had guests in the evening: Rosa brought apples, Grunia brought cookies, and I had tea and sugar. These made for our wedding party.

In December 1948 our older son was born. I named him Igor after my father. My wife didn't work. My salary was 500 rubles per month. We starved with her. We could only afford to buy kishke and fat at the market. Our son stayed 5 days in the kindergarten, because he could have meals there. Gitl had finished 5 forms in a Romanian school and 2 forms of a Soviet school. Uncle Ilia taught her accounting and in 1952 Gitl went to work at a storage facility. Her colleagues treated her well, even during the period of anti-Semitic campaigns in the early 1950s we didn't face any prejudiced attitudes, though there was terrible routinely anti-Semitism. In 1960 our younger son was born. We named him Mikhail after my father-in-law.

We couldn't afford much. We didn't travel on vacations. Actually, I spent my vacations trying to earn some additional money. We didn't have many friends and socialized mainly with my relatives and my wife's relatives. My wife and I tried to observe Jewish traditions, whenever possible. Of course, we had to go to work on Saturday, when there was a 6-day working week. We were generally not religious, but we celebrated Pesach, Chanukkah and Rosh Hashanah as a tribute to traditions and to the memory of our parents. We had festive meals and talked about the history and traditions of the holiday. We tried to teach our sons to respect Jewish traditions, and I can say, they grew up to be real Jews.