

Kofman Raikhchin



This photograph was taken in Leningrad in 1980. Several employees of our institution (including me) were asked to have our photographs taken for the special plaque of honor (in the Soviet institutions this sort of plaques demonstrated photos of the best workers). I worked very well and was happy with my family. Here I'd like to tell you about my family.

Among the students we associated with I met a girl whom I fell in love with at once. To my pleasure, she returned my love. She studied at the Pedagogical College named after Gertzen (department of Russian language and literature). We got married in Leningrad immediately after presentation of my degree work. Maiden name of my wife was Ginzburg, her name is Natalia Alexandrovna. She was born in Leningrad in 1929. During the 1st year after our marriage we lived separately: I left for Kharkov to work there, and my wife had to study at her last course. We visited each other on vacations. Later she graduated and moved to my place (to Kharkov). She worked at the Ukrainian school and had a good reputation.

In Kharkov they were obliged to put a room at my disposal, because I was a young specialist. Therefore I got a room in the two-room apartment (the other room was occupied by my young colleague and his young wife). We lived in harmony: no quarrels, no conflicts. I worked in Kharkov 4 years and decided to return to Leningrad, but it appeared to be not so simple. They told me that I worked at the defense industry enterprise and would go on working as long as they needed. The factory manager had a domineering disposition and was very competent. During the war he arranged work of evacuated factories in the Urals and was awarded honorary title of Hero of Socialist Labor. I held him in high respect and did not want to come into conflict. In the meantime

in 1956 some changes were made in the labor legislation, and the procedure of dismissal became simpler. Here I'd like to tell you that I am pleased with the Kharkov period of my life: my work went well, I was valued according to it and people held me in respect.

We moved to Leningrad and settled down in the communal apartment in my wife's room. By that time we were already a family of 3.

The only child of us was our son Alexander; he was born in Kharkov in 1955. He finished his high school having good marks. After school he entered the Leningrad College for Fine Mechanics and Optics. Since his childhood he was very sickly, and I know it from my own experience that a student of the Leningrad College for Fine Mechanics and Optics had to do everything in his power to manage. He had to fulfill strong requirements, study many difficult subjects, make plenty of drawings, etc. Therefore having finished the 1st course, my son decided that he would not be able to pass through exams and left the College. He started working as a draftsman (he had enough time to master it at the College) at the Army Medical College. [The Army Medical College was founded in 1798.] Later he trained for a new profession of repairman of medical equipment and entered Military Mechanical College. [Military Mechanical College in Leningrad was founded in 1875.] He graduated from it studying by correspondence. [Correspondence course allowed students to study and work simultaneously.] On graduating from the College he wanted to remain at the Army Medical College, but to work as an engineer. But they refused, and everybody understood that the reason was the so-called item 5. Therefore he continued to work there holding his previous post, which did not require to have higher education.

In 1990s he decided to change speciality and entered Polygraphic Technical School, which he finished with excellent marks. [Technical schools appeared in the USSR to prepare employees of middle level for industrial, agricultural and other organizations.] Since then he works as a proof-reader at different publishing houses. He is a highly respectable worker: because of his engineering education he can make various scientific texts ready for publication. He is married, but unfortunately they have no children.

We did not bring our son up as a Jew. Certainly he knew that he was Jewish. You see, it is rather difficult to forget about it living in the Soviet Union. As soon as you do, they will remind you.