

Isaac Gragerov's Family



This is our family. From left to right: my father Peter Gragerov, my mother Raissa Gragerova and our friend Lev Podrazhanskiy are sitting. My wife Zhenia, I, my sister's husband Vladimir Kriksunov, my sister Asia, my cousin Valia, Bertha's daughter are standing. The photo was taken in Kiev in 1948 when we received a new apartment in Pushkinskaya Street. I finished post-graduate school in 1946. I corresponded with Zhenia throughout the war. In 1946 I returned to Kiev and found Zhenia Kriss through her passport. Shortly afterwards we got married. We had a civil ceremony. We didn't even have rings. We just had our close relatives and friends at our small wedding party. Zhenia was born in Kiev in 1920. She came from a Jewish family that wasn't religious. Zhenia finished a Russian secondary school. We were students at the same institute, only in different years. During the Great Patriotic War she was in evacuation in Middle Asia. She returned to Kiev in 1946 and became a senior lab assistant at the Chair of Organic Chemistry of the Silicate Institute. She defended her thesis in 1956. She had many publications and students. They prepared their theses under her supervision. In 1966 Zhenia became a junior scientific employee. Later she was promoted to the position of a senior and then a leading scientific employee. She prepared five candidates of science. She worked in a new field dealing with the development of new medications. My wife retired in 1997 when she turned 77. Her former students still call her and come to see her to have discussions or ask for advice. It took me some time to find a job in Kiev. I don't know whether it had anything to do with my nationality, but this issue was resolved through the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. Alexandr Brodsky, a Jew, was the director of the Academy, and he helped me to get employment. I believe it was thanks to his efforts that the 'campaign against cosmopolitans' and the Doctors' Plot in the early 1950s bypassed our institute. The only thing the authorities could do was to fire quite a few Jews on the basis of an order, which said that no married couples or their relatives were allowed to work with the same company. These campaigns didn't affect me personally. When Stalin died in 1953 I couldn't hold back my tears, although I was a very reserved person. My mother was crying aloud.