

Leonid Karlinsky's Family Gathering



Our family gathering before my departure to Kamchatka. From left to right: My mother and father, Rudolf Levitin (the son of Zinovy Levitin), yours truly, Leonid Karlinsky, Rudolf's grandmother and his mother. The photograph hanging on the wall on the right is of Dzerzhinsky. This family photo was taken in 1950 in Leningrad. In 1936 Anatoliy Krugliak, the husband of my mother's sister Hina, was arrested. In 1938 we received a letter from Zina Levitina, my father's cousin, informing us that her husband, Zinovi Levitin, the director of a big plant in Moscow had been arrested. The only message she had received from him was a pack of Kazbek cigarettes that he had thrown out of the window of the barred railcar that was transporting him to the camp. He wrote Zina's address on the pack and a message, 'Zinochka, I'm innocent.' A stranger wearing the railroad uniform placed this cigarette pack near the door to Zina's apartment, rang the doorbell, then ran away. There were no further messages from Zinovi - he perished in Stalin's camps. Zina was a devoted communist and worked as director of the children's home. It was strange, but the authorities didn't touch her. She went on with her work and was evacuated along with the residents of the children's home. I was sent to serve in Kamchatka, although I was supposed to be going to Germany. Recently, I've become more interested in the life of the Jewish community. I read Jewish newspapers and visit the Hesed center. Only when I grew old did I learn about Pessach, Yom Kippur, Hanukkah, etc.