

Frieda Stoyanovskaya And Her Husband Semyon Gordeyev



This is my husband Semyon Goldfine and me. The photograph was taken in Kiev in 1980. In 1943 we were looking forward to the liberation of Kiev. It was liberated in autumn. We were happy. In the summer of 1944 my family and I returned to Kiev, which was empty, dark and ruined, but so dear to us. There was no electricity, heating, gas or water in our house, but it was not destroyed. We returned home, all of us, but grandmother Chernia. She came to Baskiria with my sister Ida in the middle of the war and died there a few months later at the age of 64. My husband Semyon Moiseyevich returned in 1946, the whole time he was mobilized in military units, and served far away from us. [From the late 1940s] we were covered by the wave of anti-Semitism. It was especially clearly felt in Kiev. This started with the campaign of the Soviet government against cosmopolitans. The intelligentsia suffered the most from it. Arrests began anew in our Writers' Building, but this time they were arresting the Jewish writers. Gofstein, a famous writer, was arrested, and our friend Riva Baliasnaya, a poet. After few years in prison camps she remained an invalid for the rest of her life. Fortunately, I got a job teaching history. That was what I wanted. But Semyon Moiseyevich didn't have any official posts. Nominally he remained a member of the Union of Soviet Writers, but actually he was a free artist. Naturally, free from his salary as well. I became the main breadwinner at home. The change of attitude of the people surrounding me came as a sad surprise. They turned into anti-Semites almost from one day to the next. Many of our Ukrainian friends among writers just pretended they didn't know us and divorced their Jewish wives. The rumor was actively spread that NKVD officers were mainly Jews. I found out that Mr. Shtepa, my favorite professor from the Pedagogical Institute, was at the head of the anti-Semitic press in occupied Kiev. It looked as if the Soviet government didn't blame him for it. The situation became aggravated because the rumors appeared that Jewish doctors didn't give proper care to people. This was the Doctors' Plot - because of it we were afraid to go out into the streets. The Jews in Kiev were actively getting ready to be moved to the remote areas of the Soviet Union. [The interviewee refers to the planned deportation of Jews to Birobidzhan.] Therefore, the establishment of Israel, the Jewish State, went almost unnoticed for us. Besides, even if we wanted to leave, we didn't have

any physical opportunity to do this. In 1990 my husband Semyon Moiseyevich Goldfine-Gordeyev died. It seems to me now that my older son Victor takes after his father. Victor is retired now. He is 67 and he wants to publish a collection of his father's works for his 100th anniversary.