

Iosif And Sara Raitsykh



These are my grandmother and grandfather on my mother's side - Iosif and Sara Raitsykh (nee Shamesh). The photo was taken either before their departure from Petrograd to Baku, or immediately after their arrival in Baku. Grandfather was photographed in his military service

jacket, and Grandmother providently cut off the part of the photo, removing the shoulder straps. Probably, Grandmother did it in the time when prosecution of all those who had any relation to the White Army was launched in the Soviet Union, even if those people were medical doctors obliged to treat any patient according to their oath.

My grandfather on my mother's side, Iosif Lazarevich Raitsykh, was born in 1885 in Astrakhan. It is a region on the Caspian Sea, near Baku. As a grandson of a Nikolai's soldier he was granted a delay from military service and many other privileges, because a standard term of service in the imperial army was 25 years.

By the age of 22 Iosif finished the grammar school named after Alexander III in Baku. But it took him some effort to graduate, he encountered big problems there. Once he asked why he had received a mark lower than he actually deserved, and he was told that he was a bloody Yid. And he was ready to fight with the offender. He was expelled and had to go to Tiflis [today Tbilisi, Georgia], to some Georgian Duke, who supervised all the education in that region, to ask, to implore, and to submit an application on his reinstating in that grammar school. He had to pass many examinations as an external student, not attending lectures. Therefore his education was a little bit stretched out in time.

However, by 1907-08, all these problems were resolved. He had finished the grammar school, and he was even permitted to go abroad, where he was hoping to obtain university education. The Baku municipal council approved his departure, and the head of administration had signed the appropriate certificate in the Yiddish language, for which you were supposed to pay a tax of 75 kopecks back then.

In 1908, Iosif entered the University in Munich. He graduated from the medical faculty of that university, attended lectures in other universities besides Munich, in particular, the University in Halle and the Berlin University. Among other lectures, he attended those of Professor Virhoff, a well-known scientist in the medical circles. Iosif's thesis was typed and published in German, a language he knew perfectly, and his diploma was a very significant work. And in spite of the fact that he had received his education in a solid European university, Iosif returned from Munich to Petrograd, where he was assigned to carry out medical service in the hospital of Prince Oldenburgsky.

In 1917 he married Sara Yankelevna Shamesh in Petrograd, and left with her for Baku. Therefrom he went to pass examinations in Kharkov to obtain a degree of an ordinary doctor. He later received a rank of therapist in Kharkov, and returned to Baku. There Iosif supervised commodity warehouses, performing the duties of a sanitary doctor, examining the goods that were transported from Baku and back, for signs of any infections. He sometimes went to Persia with his wife. In summer, as a rule, Iosif went for medical practice to Azerbaijan and Khasavyur.