

Maria Reidman And Her Husband



This is a picture of my husband, Grigory Gutgarts, and me.

I found a part-time job at a school in Kiev in January 1945. I met my future husband, Grigory Gutgarts, there. We decided to get married in 1945. We didn't have a wedding party. We couldn't afford it. Besides, my sister Sonia had died in a car accident on the eve of our wedding. We had a civil ceremony. However, my father was famous for knowing the Torah, and besides we lived near the only operating synagogue in Kiev, so Papa insisted that we had a wedding ceremony in the synagogue, too. We didn't understand much of it, but it was a very ceremonial and strict procedure.

My husband decided to study but he didn't know where. We heard that law students at the law school received a higher stipend and had some more privileges. The competition was high, but he

managed. Besides, he was a war invalid and had a priority. He was a very industrious student. He finished law school and began to study at Kharkov Law University by correspondence. He got a job assignment as an investigation officer in Staraya Sinyava, Khmelnytskyi region. He worked there for almost three years. The term of this job assignment was to be three years, and then he was free to return.

He couldn't find a job as a lawyer for eight months. He was a party member and needed an appeal from the party district committee to get a job. Besides, people were trying to avoid employing Jews. Nobody made any open statements, but it was common knowledge. He got a job at the Human Resource Department at the Ukrcable Plant and worked there for 35 years. He worked as HR manager for two years, and then they had a vacancy for a law advisor. The director of this plant was a Jew. He explained to Grigory that he could take him to fill this vacancy if he weren't a Jew. Otherwise the others would suggest that he only employed Jews for good positions. This was in 1950. Later the Doctors' Plot was a nightmare. However, my husband got the position of a law advisor at that plant and worked there until 1980. He died in Kiev on 20th June 2001.

We lived a happy life, although we didn't have children. We often went to the theater and the cinema. We had a collection of books at home - Russian and foreign literature. All members of our family read them, and afterwards we had interesting discussions about literature. We had many friends of different nationalities. Nationality never mattered to us. We always had lots of guests on Soviet holidays: 1st May, October Revolution Day and the 8th March [International Women's Day]. We took advantage of all occasions to see our relatives and friends.