

Grigoriy Kagan



This photo was taken for the board of honor at the Liftmontazh trust where I went to work after my retirement from the army. I was chief mechanic of the trust. This photo was taken in Kiev at my working place in 1964.

In 1963 I had to resign from the army due to my health condition. I lived a long time in the severe northern climate and it resulted in my foot artery congestion. The doctors said it might mean amputation of my foot. The doctor said that if I wanted to survive, I had to change the climatic conditions and my job. I resigned and decided to move to my parents in Kiev. By that time the relations between my wife and me were misbalanced. I divorced her immediately after I resigned. I left her everything we had in Arkhangelsk. I left Arkhangelsk having just one small suitcase. I went to my parents in Kiev. I was 43 and had to start life anew. Probably to make my life easier 'Destiny' sent me another wife Asia German. Asia was about to marry Yakov Tsegliar, a composer, but when we met we understood instantly that we were to be together. We got married. We had a common wedding. Of course, a traditional Jewish wedding was out of the question: I was a member of the party and we were both atheists. We lived a happy life together. I moved into Asia's one-bedroom apartment. Asia was a dentist. The doctors she knew saved my leg. I didn't even need a surgery. I jogged in the morning until two years before, when I had to stop jogging in the morning. I jogged 7.5 km on weekdays and 10 km at weekends. I was a hockey and a box referee for many years. It was hard. I used to be referee at 3 hockey matches in a row: children at first, 3 15-minute periods, junior teams, 3 20-minute periods, and then adult games. I was on ice all this time. A referee has to be in the center of the field. Besides enjoying the sport, it also paid well and was a good addition to

our family budget.

I went to work in the 'Liftmontazh' [elevator assembly] trust in 1964. I was chief mechanic. Shvetsov, chief of the trust, employed Jews willingly, particularly as key personnel. Jews are decent employees and do not drink. Unfortunately, drinking at work was quite common. It was not even persecuted. I didn't like my job due to poor organization and lack of order. It depressed me, particularly considering that I was used to the order in the army. I was lucky again: my former fellow comrade Zakharov, who was a lieutenant in my regiment, became a supervisor in the 'Gosradioprojekt' [state radio project] design institute. We met incidentally and he offered me the position of a design group supervisor. Some time later I was offered the position of chief of department. I could not accept this position for financial restrictions considering that I was receiving a military pension already. I went to work as supervisor of a design group for fire safety automation and communication in another design institute. I wanted to retire in 1975, but my management convinced me to keep working. I finally retired in 1995. They occasionally invite me to work and I never refuse. My institute built a cooperative apartment building and I received a two-bedroom apartment in it. This is where I live now.