

Mikhail Leger With His Daughter Klara Leger, And Wife Yelena



This photograph was taken at the school prom of my daughter Klara. From left to right: This is me, Mikhail Leger, my daughter Klara Leger, my wife Yelena. This photo was taken in Mogilyov-Podolskiy in 1983.

In 1958 I went to work at the design office at the machine building plant named after Kirov in Mogilyov-Podolskiy, as design engineer. This is the biggest plant in the town. I still work there, even though I've stepped over the retirement age. I met my future wife Yelena Kravets at the plant. She was a copy operator at the design office. We got married in 1962. We had a civil ceremony in the registry office, and in the evening mama arranged a dinner for the family. We lived with my parents. My father installed a partial in the room and we lived there for few years. In 1965 the plant constructed an apartment house for its employees and my wife and I received a two-bedroom apartment. In 1965 our daughter was born. We named her Klara after Yelena's mother. Yelena entered the extramural school of librarians in Soroki town in Moldavia. After finishing this school Yelena organized a technical library at the plant. She started from just one bookcase of books and in few years their number grew into few thousand books. Yelena became director of this library and worked there till she retired.

I've never joined the party. I never wanted to join the party and nobody ever put any pressure upon me. My wife and I celebrated Soviet holidays at home: 1 May, 7 November, Victory Day. In the morning all employees went to parades and then we got together at somebody's place and had parties. We drank and talked. On Jewish holidays my wife and I went to my parents. They still celebrated Jewish holidays. I don't think there was the so-called Jewry at that time. Te synagogue was closed, and Yiddish was gradually squeezed out of our everyday life. However, we've never forgotten that we were Jews. Besides, non-Jews never allowed us to forget it.

When my daughter was at school, I noticed that her Jewish classmates had Jewish friends and Russian children had Russian friends. This was at the time of Brezhnev's rule, when anti-Semitism

became a part of our life. My wife and I wanted our daughter to enter a college in Vinnitsa, but we realized that she did not have a chance to enter a higher educational institution in Ukraine. Klara went to Moscow and successfully passed her exams to the Faculty of Industrial and Civil Construction of the Engineering and Construction College. After finishing it she got a job assignment in the Moscow region. Three years later she came back home and went to work at the construction department. In 1994 Klara married David Roif from Yampol. He was a veterinary. In 1995 their son Ilia, our only grandson, was born. Regretfully, my daughter's marriage fell apart. She divorced her husband in 1998. David and his parents moved to Israel. Klara and her son live in Mogilyov-Podolskiy.

I've been eager to move to Israel, but it was not to be. At first my wife and I waited till our daughter finished her studies. Our daughter did not want to move to Israel, and we were reluctant to leave her alone here. And now it is probably too late to start a new life.