

Rachil Meitina With Her Colleagues



This is a picture of my colleagues and I performing a surgery on a dog or a rabbit, I'm not sure. I worked at the Central Skin and Venereology Institute in Moscow, where this picture was taken in November 1946. We were photographed by our colleague. I went to work at the biochemical laboratory of the central skin and veneorology hospital in Moscow. I worked there from 1943 till 1949. I defended my candidate's thesis 'Vitamin B and its influence on carbohydrate metabolism' in 1949. We injected this vitamin into the brain of animals by the method of Lina Shtern and watched how the skin was changing. This work also had practical significance: we offered treatment to patients by my method. After I had defended my thesis I got an invitation from the Academy of Sciences. They said my thesis was very interesting, but that there were too many references to

Shtern and they wanted me to cross out this name. A professor, who used to be Shtern's student, and I sat down to do the corrections. What else could we do? If we hadn't done what we were told the Higher Certification Commission wouldn't have approved my dissertation. A few days later it was approved. Shtern was a world-known scientist. Employees of her institute were her followers and supporters. Later I attended a meeting where an academician grabbed Shtern's books yelling, 'On our Soviet money! On our money they've published these books!' throwing them off the stand. In 1949 Lina Shtern and members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee were arrested. Her institute was closed, employees fired and another institute was created on the basis of the previous one. I submitted my documents to the biochemical laboratory of Vishnevski Institute of Surgery where I became a junior scientific employee. I was employed on 1st December 1949 and on 3rd January 1950 I was fired due to reduction of staff; they explained to me that since I was a new employee it was all right to fire me rather than somebody that had worked here for a long time. However, it was crystal-clear that they fired me because I was a Jew. Other employees felt sorry for me. One of them was acquainted with Bakulev, who was opening a laboratory at that time. He began to study lungs and needed to learn about gaseous metabolism, blood gases. He needed employees.