

Liza Usherenko's Family



From left to right: my father Moisey Usherenko, my nephew Tolia Elizarov, Sonia Usherenko (his mother), Lyolia Usherenko (my brother Yakov's wife), Yakov Usherenko and Lusia Usherenko, their daughter.

In 1940 I finished school and entered philological department in Kiev State University. My father wasn't very happy with my decision. He was 64 and wanted me to go to work as soon as possible. But my mother was very happy. She wanted me to get good education and was ready to sew day and night if necessary. Although the competition was high I managed to pass my entrance exams. I didn't face any anti-Semitism before the war. There were few Jewish girls with Russian names: Petrakovskaya, Okun and I, Usharenko and few with Jewish names: Fogel, Varelman. But at that time nobody took any notice of the nationality.

I wanted to get my parents to where I was. Our neighbors Karevs that evacuated to the same place where I was told me that they were trying to convince my parents to escape. My mother said "no" and my father joined her, although he wished to evacuate. All of them perished in the Babiy Yar: my parents, my father's sister Surka, my father's younger brother Berl and his family. Berl and his wife Malka had two sons: Hatskel and Boruch. My mother probably thought that she had to stay where their relatives were staying. She wrote me "Don't worry about us, we have lived our life". She was fifty five and my father was sixty seven.

I'm very proud of my family. There have never been any scoundrels or traitors in our family. There have been no executioners or informers among our kinship. My life is incomplete without children, but I couldn't have any. I have many relatives abroad. Uncle Haims children Boris, Sonia, Matvey and Lilia and the children of Semyon Grinberg are in Baltimore. Naum Bernadskiy, Hai-Ginesia's son and his children are in Israel. My father's grandchildren do not identify themselves as Jews.