

Zina Kaluzhnaya And Her Husband Alexei Kaluzhniy



This is a picture of me and my husband Alexei Dmitrievich Kaluzhniy. The photo was taken in Kiev in 1956. The 1950s were a difficult time. My father was in prison and my mama didn't work and was hiding away. I didn't eat enough. There had to be something to keep me alive, and it was my future husband, Alexei Dmitriyevich Kaluzhniy, or Alyosha as I call him, who supported me. He came to the classes, and during the first break he stated that he hadn't had breakfast yet, unwrapped a huge package and said, 'Zina, let's have breakfast'. I accepted it, and we ate his huge breakfast. In the afternoon I walked to Volodarskogo Street for dinner at his aunt's. As for dinner - I

cannot remember whether there really was any food though. I was a thin girl. As for mama - I don't know what she was eating. Later, after the court hearing, mama took a job at some dressmaker's shop; she was sewing underwear. In the evening she brought home bras and we sewed buttons onto them. Alyosha helped us sewing on buttons. Mama thought nicely of him. After my father's arrest they stopped people coming close to our home and interrogated them. We were spied on. So all my admirers disappeared immediately. I valued highly how my husband treated me then. My mother liked Alyosha very much, but such a 'present', that is a second 'goy' in the family because he's Ukrainian was terrible. She was very afraid of papa's reaction. So, she said to me, 'You know, Zina, you will graduate from the institute, go on your [mandatory job] assignment and you will get married there. Then I will tell papa that I had nothing to do with it'. But everything turned out to be much easier when papa returned because he accepted Alyosha. Alyosha comes from an intelligent family. His ancestors were Cossacks. On his father's side they were a well-to-do family. And their grandparents on his mother's side were well-off, too. When the dispossession of the kulaks began, they left their village for Dnepropetrovsk. His mother got higher education there. She was a candidate of Chemical Sciences at the Academy of Sciences. Her second husband was also a teacher; he worked in a military college. They didn't want Alyosha to marry a Jewish girl. They didn't accept me and we didn't keep in touch. Alyosha left his home before we got married. He stayed away from home for a year, we finished our studies and got married. Life was difficult, we hardly had anything, as our belongings had been confiscated. [Editor's note: if a member of the family was arrested, the Soviet authorities also confiscated the family's possessions.] Alyosha took nothing from his home. We bought a mattress and placed it on four chocks. We had to start from scratch.