

Zina Kaluzhnaya's Family



This our family photograph. From left to right: I, my granddaughter, Lubov Kaluzhnaya, my husband Alexei Dmitrievich Kaluzhniy and my son Alexandr Alexandrovich Kaluzhniy. The photo was taken in Kiev, in our kitchen, in 1997. Our son Alexander, or Sasha as we call him, was born in 1957. When I got a son, I couldn't afford to leave work for good. There were two months of maternity leave, one month vacation, and one month vacation saved from the previous year. That made four months altogether and then I had to go back to work. Mama arranged for herself to only work one shift. I arranged to work without lunch break. When I came home she had already left. So, mama wrapped my son into a blanket, put him to sleep and placed his pram under the balcony of our neighbor's, right next to her window. Sasha was sleeping and I took him home when I came back from work. And the neighbor watched him all this time. If there was trouble she took him to her place, changed his nappy and the like. Sasha was an ordinary boy. His friend was the neighbor's boy, Kostia, who was also a good boy. Once Sasha came home and whispered to me, 'Kostia doesn't want to be my friend'. 'Why?' I asked. 'I called him zhyd [kike]', he replied. I was paralyzed with horror. I said to him, 'Kostia is a Jew. Only bad people say zhyd. But at least he is a Jew whereas you are nobody.' He asked, 'How come?' and I replied, 'Your papa is Ukrainian and your mama is Jewish. So you are a nobody'. He was confused. Then I decided to draw his attention to this issue. At that time Kuznetsov's Babi Yar was published, so I told Kostia about it all, and then I gradually introduced him to the Jewish history. I got the World History of the Jewish People by Simon Dubnow. I made some notes. As nobody knew about it, I decided to type it. We had a typewriter at home and Sasha and I were typing my notes. As a result, Sasha knew about the history of the Jewish people and their traditions very well. He was raised Jewish, although not religiously, and with all respect to his Ukrainian origin. We all respected and accepted each other. My son's wife is Jewish. Of course, deep down in my heart I wanted him to marry a Jewish girl, but I thought I didn't have the right to decide. So I'm happy he did. My sister had books of the well-known writer Schopenhauer; three volumes. She said, 'Sasha, they will be yours if you marry a Jewish girl'. Of course this wasn't the reason why he got married to a Jewish girl. He simply fell in love with a Jewish girl, but at least he got close to the Jewry that way. My granddaughter Lubov

studied in a Jewish school for five years. She is a 4th-year student at KPI now and studies well. May God give her happiness. As for my son, I only wish him health and lots of it. My family has always been doing okay, but it has always been health that we lacked.