

Leonid Rozenfeld With His Daughter And Granddaughter



This is a picture of my daughter Rina Buriakovskaya (on the left) and my granddaughter Ilona Buriakovskaya and me. The photo was taken when I visited them in Philadelphia in 1990. My daughter finished secondary school and a higher music college where she learned to play the violin. She married Alexandr Buriakovski, a nice Jewish man. They met at their friends' party. They began to live in our apartment. At that time I became friends with my colleague Natalia Berzler. I left my first wife Maria Rozenfeld, nee Lenkova, for Natalia in 1974, when my daughter turned 22. In the same year Rina's daughter Ilona was born. My second wife got along well with Rina. Rina couldn't find a job as a music teacher in the first years after my granddaughter was born. I supported her with money until she got a job as a teacher in a kindergarten. My daughter was under the influence of her husband who became very fond of the idea of emigrating to Israel. I refused to sign her permission to leave. I told her I wouldn't allow her to leave. It wasn't because I didn't like Israel or something. Although I was very happy that Jewish people had their own country, I believed that it wasn't for my daughter to leave. I was a product of the Soviet epoch and Soviet time and couldn't imagine living in a different country. My daughter couldn't leave without my permission, even if she was married and had her own family. It was mandatory that she had my written permission validated by a notary stating that I released her from her duty to support me at my old age or in case of my illness. This was a legal requirement, but I wasn't giving it to her for almost a year. She began writing anonymous letters to my workplace and letters of complaint to the party organizations. We became enemies with her. I could never imagine that my sweet girl, whom I loved dearly, could shout abusive words into my face hurting my wife and me. My director called me to his office. Our human resource manager and the secretary of our party organization were in his office. They convinced me to sign this permission of leave for her. Rina and Maria left in 1980. I was invited to the district party committee and reprimanded for letting my daughter emigrate. In their eyes she was a traitor and an alien element. However, I remained a party member since they were aware that I was against my daughter's departure. Frankly speaking I

didn't care about my party membership. I've never been an active communist. I just paid my monthly membership fee regularly and got bored at the meetings. Rina went to live in America in the late 1970s. She lives in Philadelphia. We parted as enemies, but later we began writing letters to one another as if nothing had happened between us. In 1990 I visited my daughter in Philadelphia. She has a good life. She works as a programmer. Ilona finished college and has a job. Rina left her husband and doesn't want to remarry. I often think about how wrong I was when I didn't allow Rina to leave. I don't think she has fully forgiven me.