

Leonid Kotliar With His Wife Ghita Kotliar, Granddaughter Vlada Kotliar And Grandson Anton Kotliar



On the left is my wife Ghita Kotliar holding our granddaughter Vlada Kotliar and me with our grandson Anton Kotliar. Vlada and Anton were spending their summer vacation with us and we were photographed in our yard. Polesskoye, 1982.

Our son Yuriy finished school in 1965, he entered Cinematography College in Leningrad. In 1970 he finished this college and received a job assignment in Arkhangelsk, 5000 km from Kiev. He worked in Arkhangelsk for some time, but nobody needed a producer there and in 1972 he returned to Kiev. For 8 months he couldn't get a job in Kiev and there were no prospects for him. Soon he married a Russian girl from Siberia. Her name was Yelena Paramonova. They moved to Novosibirsk. He became senior editor of documentaries there and Yelena lectured in Theatrical School. In 1974 my wife and I moved to our son in Novosibirsk. In 1975 my son's daughter Vlada was born and a year and a half later their son Anton was born. However, Ghita couldn't live in Siberia due to the climate there and in 1976 we had to leave. When I imagined my problems with the Ministry of education in Kiev due to my Jewish identity I decided to go to Polesskoye (90 km north of Kiev). They remembered me there and offered 5 schools. Ghita went to work as concertmaster in a club. We received a house and a garden and school paid our fees. My son often brought Vlada and Anton to spend their summer vacations with us.

On 21 December 1986 I lost Ghita. She had congenital heart formation and Chernobyl disaster had this impact on her. When we buried her, an old Jewish man came to the cemetery. He said: 'She is a Jew and there has to be a prayer recited'. He recited the prayer. Polesskoye is located within the dangerous 30-km zone within Chernobyl. It wasn't allowed to reside there due to high level radiation, but I couldn't obtain my permission for relocation for a long time. There was no gas

heating. I stoked my stove with wood and breathed in radiation. I lost all my teeth in those years. I can visit the cemetery in Poleskoye on the days of remembrance the deceased. Ghita's grave is there and there is a gravestone on it. I can't go there often. Her father was buried in the Jewish sector of the town cemetery in Kiev. I had Ghita's name written on a plaque on his gravestone and I go there.

I remarried in 1988. My second wife Ludmila Zhutnik was born in Kiev in 1926. In 1991 residents of Poleskoye left the town: there are empty houses with holes where doors and windows used to be. A bulldozer removed my small house due to high radiation. I received a small apartment in Belaya Tserkov (70 km from Kiev). I lived in this apartment two years and then we exchanged this apartment and Ludmila's for a two-bedroom apartment in a new district in Kiev.

Yuriy and his family live in Moscow. Yelena is a pensioner and Yuriy works as a scriptwriter. Anton is an actor in Moscow Theater for young spectators and Vlada is an English teacher. I miss them much and often travel to Moscow.