

Lev And Lubov Ptakul, Children Mera Shulman



This photograph was taken in Leningrad in spring of 1973. It shows my children. I do not remember who took it, most probably it was one of their friends.

Together with my husband we brought up two children. My son Lev Israelevich Ptakul was born in Riga on March 21st, 1949 and lived there with my parents during five years. In 1954 I brought him to Leningrad. There he went to school. He had difficulties in his studies, only in the 8th form he took an interest in sciences and started receiving good marks. But by that time he already made up his mind for leaving the secondary school for a professional one. Unexpectedly for his teachers and for himself he went through examinations in the 8th form having only excellent marks. Teachers persuaded him to stay at school, but he did not want to alter his mind. At the technical school he got a speciality of milling-machine operator and worked in Leningrad at the Zvezda factory, producing diesel electric power stations. He served in the army and later entered the Leningrad Northwest Correspondence Polytechnical College. He graduated from it with speciality of mechanical engineer. Unfortunately my son is single. He left for Germany in 2001. He is satisfied with his life; several times he came to see me. He has no job in Germany: he is a welfare recipient.

My daughter Lubov Israelevna Ptakul was born on April 22nd, 1959 in Leningrad. When a child, she said 'I understood the way you gave me birth on the birthday of Lenin. You are engineers: you first draw and then give birth.' She was very good and clever girl. She has clever fingers as her father and grandfather had. She finished school in Leningrad in 1976 and entered the faculty of primary

education at the State Pedagogical College named after Hertsen. At first she worked as a teacher at primary school, and now she teaches Russian language and literature in senior forms. She did not marry. I blame her father for it. He was always afraid of her early marriage and stopped my slightest attempts in this direction.

We gave no traditional Jewish education to our children. Time, when they were growing was not conducive to it. We never told them that they were Jews, but it was made without us. One day little Lev asked me, who the Jews were and why he was a Jew. I explained him that there were different peoples: Russians, Jews. But he was upset: obviously boys in the court yard had explained him that it was not so honorable to be a Jew. And when my son grew up, he used to say 'And nevertheless it is good that I look like a Georgian.' Certainly we told our children about the war, about our lost relatives, about our life in evacuation. We never celebrated Jewish holidays, never visited synagogue (we even did not know, where it was). We also never celebrated Christmas or Easter.

We did not observe Tradition, but at the same time arranged circumcision for our son. Our children got some idea about Jewish Tradition, when we visited our relatives in Riga. They celebrated all Jewish holidays and some of them happened to be during our stay there.