

Communella Bunikovskaya With Her Son Pavel Kostyuk



My son Pavel Kostyuk and I, Communella Bunikovskaya photographed before my son went to serve in the army. Kiev, 1978. I met my husband Evgeniy Kostyuk when working at school in Krasnodar region back in 1954. I got married in 1957. In 1959 our son Pavel was born in Kiev where I was staying with my parents - I decided to go to Kiev to have the baby believing there were better doctors and medical services in Kiev. Besides, I wanted to be closer to my mother. My parents were very happy to have a grandson and had no problem that my husband wasn't a Jew. My husband came to see me in Kiev and got a job offer from the Institute of hard alloys. We lived in our damp and cold room in the basement. When I decided to go to work after my son was born I couldn't find a job again. When I came to the district department of education they told me to find a vacancy at school and let them know. I found a vacancy and informed the department. They told me to come in few days, but when I came they declared that the vacancy wasn't there any longer. I went to the district party Committee and said 'Is my son and I supposed to starve to death or what?' They told me to find a vacancy. I found one in an evening school and went back to the district Party committee. I asked them to help me get this vacancy telling them about my previous experience. They helped me to get his vacancy at the evening school and I worked there for many years as a teacher of biology. In 1963 my husband, Pavel and I received a 2-room apartment in Vetrianiye Hills in the outskirts of Kiev since my husband fell ill with tuberculosis and had the right to move out of the damp basement room where we lived before. Shortly afterward my husband and I separated, but I don't feel like talking about it. My mother, Inna and I, raised my son. He was doing well at school, but he never put much effort into his studies. After he finished lower secondary school [8 years] I made him enter Mechanic metallurgical college. He studied at the faculty of installation and set up of control and automation systems. He wasn't doing quite well and I was afraid he wouldn't be able to enter an Institute. He wasn't probably very fond of this subject, even though he was good at mathematic and technically smart and a very handy guy. After finishing the College he worked a couple of months and was recruited to the army. He was sent to the war in Afghanistan. I

asked him how this happened and he said that their unit was lined and they were told to make 3 steps forward those that wanted to go to Afghanistan, but it wasn't the matter of whether one wished to go there or not. If somebody didn't make a step forward he was subject to a penal battalion. And the commandment reported to higher authorities about a high feeling of responsibility of Soviet soldiers and their unanimous striving for performing their international duty. Pavel returned from Afghanistan in 1980. Of 2 years in the army he spent 1.5 in Afghanistan and it certainly had an impact of him. He wanted to enter the faculty of biology at the University - he wanted to study biophysics. He had no problem with his nationality since he is written as Russian in his passport. He was admitted to University. He also composed poems and music. After he returned from Afghanistan he composed a 'Merry song' and sang it playing the guitar.