

Mikhail Katsenelson's Son



This photograph was taken in Leningrad in 1960s and shows my son Boris.

Here I'd like to tell you about my children and about different political events which impressed our family.

I'd like to tell you about my children in more detail. My wife and I are proud of them.

My son Boris was born in 1951 in Leningrad, and my daughter Alla was born in 1956 in Lipetsk. My wife always worked (in contrast to many other wives of professional soldiers), therefore my children attended kindergarten.

Later in Lipetsk they studied at a mathematical school. They both were excellent pupils and finished school with gold medals. Being schoolchildren, they were twice awarded with permits to pioneer camp Artek and Orlenok. [Artek was the All-Union and international Young Pioneer camp in the Soviet Union.

It was established in 1925 near the Black Sea in Crimea. Destination Artek was considered to be an honorable award for Soviet children as well as internationally.]

Having finished her school, Alla entered the 1st Leningrad Medical College. She successfully graduated from it and became a doctor. In 1990 together with her family she left for Israel.

Boris decided to follow in my footsteps and entered the same military academy which I had graduated from many years ago. But he chose a profession which we knew nothing about in our

time: a cyberneticist.

After graduation he became an officer, a cyberneticist in the army (military-space troops). He served near Ussuriisk. Six years later he was sent to a military unit near Leningrad. In 1990s he was demobilized. At present he is a businessman.

When Stalin died, our family was in deep mourning. My wife sobbed violently, and I also was close to despair: I thought that our life was over.

I interpreted Hungarian and Czechoslovakian events like all other Soviet people, i.e. like we were ordered to interpret it. I supported Perestroika, because it was initiated by Gorbachev, the CPSU Secretary General. I can tell you that I always supported authorities, I never was their opponent.

Till now I consider some events of that time to be positive. I'll never reconcile myself to paid education and paid medicine (I guess we are going to have both). Besides I am oppressed with increasing influence of religion in our state which is secular according to Constitution. And I do not like the so called freedom of debauch. I

n the streets I hate advertising of the American film Sex in the City. Sometimes I see terrible magazines and I am afraid that they can fall into children's hands. I hold our President in high respect.

[Vladimir Putin is the President of Russia.] But it seems to me that he should pay more attention to the army. You see, a boy (a son of my acquaintances) graduated from my Academy, arrived at his destination (in Urals) and got a poor salary of 8,000 rubles (about \$320).

I visit Hesed Avraham Welfare Center only when my wife receives food packages there (I am a porter). As for me, I refused to receive food packages there: I guess there are a lot of needy.

I often visit the Veterans Organization [Petersburg Organization of Jews - war veterans, disabled soldiers, former ghetto prisoners, partisans and citizens of the besieged Leningrad]. Sometimes I celebrate Sabbath there.