

Isabella Karanchukw Ith Her Son Victor Karanchuk, Granddaughter Anna Karanchuk And Brother Roman Lerman



I, Isabella Lerman, on the left, my brother Roman Lerman is beside me, my son Victor Karanchuk is on the right and I'm holding my older granddaughter Anna Karanchuk. This photo was taken at my home in Kiev in 1997. In 1950 I entered the All-Union Extramural Construction College. There was an academic center of this college in Kiev and I attended classes every evening. I also went to work at the Giprozdrav design office responsible for development of designs of health care institutions: hospitals, recreation centers and polyclinics. I worked there as an engineer till I retired. I joined the party here and this was a contentious move of mine: I believed in communist ideas and like my father I believed it to be my duty to join the first rows of its builders. Many of my colleagues were Jews, but I still did not segregate people by their nationality. I believed in good attitudes all my life. In 1961, when I was over 30, a colleague of mine introduced me to an interesting young man. He had divorced his wife few years before. We saw each other for some time before he proposed to me. We got married in 1962. My husband Vladimir Karanchuk, Russian, was born in 1934 in Kiev. His parents were workers. They received me well in their family. We never discussed any nationality-related issues. Vladimir finished a technical school. He was a talented engineer and a very handy man. He worked in a laboratory of Kiev Automobile Road College and developed many experimental applications that were successfully implemented. We had a small wedding party in his parents' home. After the wedding Vladimir moved in with us into our communal apartment. We could not stay at Vladimir's home since his younger sister was growing up there. My brother was in the army at this time. When he returned, we lived together for a long time. Vladimir and I slept behind a screen in the room. In the middle 1960s I received a one-room apartment from my work in Darnitsa, a new district in Kiev then. We moved into this apartment with one suitcase: this was all we owned. Then we gradually renovated the apartment, polished the floors and bought furniture on installments. This apartment seemed paradise to me. I remember opening the door coming from work and standing in the threshold admiring my room. We earned sufficient for the two of us and could afford to buy crockery and clothes, but of course, we couldn't even dream about a car, for

example. In 1968 our son was born and we named him Victor - the 'winner'. In 1969 we received a two-bedroom apartment. We were very happy together: we went out of town, in summer we rented a dacha near Kiev, and often went to the cinema or theater. My son Victor finished the Radio Electronics Technical School. He is a cable TV specialist now. Victor's wife Yelena is Ukrainian. She is an accountant. My granddaughters Anna, born in 1996, and Olga, born in 2000, are sweet little girls. I live with my son and his family and will share my life with them. If he decides to emigrate - and he is thinking of moving to Germany, I will go with him. My husband Vladimir, a nice and kind man, died suddenly from cancer in 1982. Since then I've been alone. I retired in 1990. Now I have an opportunity to watch my grandchildren growing up and take part in their education. We've never observed Jewish traditions or celebrated holidays in our family. After Ukraine gained independence there were conditions for development of the Jewish self-consciousness created and I began to celebrate Jewish holidays. I am a client of Hesed. I like its cultural programs. I watch Jewish programs, read Jewish press and enjoy it. However, I am probably a real cosmopolite: I dream of traveling to other countries despite my old age, meet new people and cognate other cultures. I hope I will have a chance.