

Arkadi Yurkovetski With His Family



Our family was photographed during my wife Raisa's mother visiting us in Uzhhorod. From left to right: my father Efim Yurkovetski, his second wife Zelda Yurkovetskaya, my wife Raisa's mother Anna Gitman, my wife Raisa Yurkovetskaya, my brother Igor's younger daughter Marina Yurkovetskaya, I, Arkadi Yurkovetski, my brother Igor's older daughter Svetlana Yurkovetskaya, my brother Igor's wife Rosa Yurkovetskaya (nee Babiak), my brother Igor. This photo was taken in Uzhhorod in 1983.

In 1969 my first wife Ria and I divorced. We happened to be different people. It had nothing to do with nationality issues. I remarried in 1976. I met my second wife Raisa, a Jew, in Vinnitsa when I was visiting my mother's sister Ulia. Raisa was born in Kryzhopol Vinnitsa region [270 km from Kiev] in 1938. After finishing school Raisa enrolled to the Faculty of Industrial Economy at the College of Finance and Economy in Kishinev. After finishing this College she worked as an economist in Kishinev. She got married and had a son Michael. In 1970 Raisa divorced her husband and came to visit her parents in Vinnitsa. Aunt Ulia introduced us to one another and we began to meet. When I returned to Uzhhorod I understood that I couldn't live without Raisa. I called her in Vinnitsa and just said one word 'Come here'. She came with her son. I was renting a room. We received two rooms in a hostel and later we received a two-room apartment. This is where we live now. Raisa's son lived with us. My sons liked Raisa and I tried to make a good father for her son. Michael got married and went to live with Raisa's parents in Vinnitsa. After they died he stayed in their apartment with his family. Now Michael is going to move to Germany with his family.

My mother died in April 1953. My father remarried a year after my mother died. His second wife's name was Zelda, of course. I understood that my father and brother needed some support at home and I didn't blame my father. Zelda was a very nice and kind woman. I lived in Uzhhorod with my family and continuously asked my father to move to Uzhhorod. In 1965 my father and his second wife came to live in Uzhhorod. They bought an apartment in a small house near where we live. My father was a pensioner. He spent much time at home reading the Torah and the Talmud. My father and his wife celebrated all Jewish holidays and I joined them at such celebrations. I often went to see them. My father went to pray at a prayer house in Uzhhorod.

My brother successfully passed his entrance exams to the Mechanical Faculty of Zaporozhie Machine Building College in 1954. When he finished it I asked him to arrange for a job assignment in Uzhhorod. I wanted him to be near. My brother came to work at the machine building plant in Uzhhorod. Igor is a skilled employee. He was promoted to Deputy Technical Manager and then he became a Technical Manager. He met Rosa Babiak, a Slovakian girl. They got married shortly afterward. My father was more indulgent to their marriage than to mine. They had two daughters: Svetlana, born in 1970, and Marina, born in 1974.

My father liked Raisa immensely. He was happy that I married a Jewish wife. He enjoyed talking Yiddish with Raisa. We had a civil ceremony and then a chuppah at home at my father's request. There were only closest family members at our Jewish wedding. In 1980 my father's second wife died and my father came to live with us. At Sabbath Raisa lit candles and prayed over them. We began to celebrate Jewish holidays at home. My father conducted seder at Pesach. Every morning my father prayed at home with his tallit and tefillin on. My father also spent a lot of time reading the Torah. On Sabbath and Jewish holidays my father went to prayer house. I joined him on Jewish holidays. One year before he died my father stopped going there - he was too weak for this activity. My father died in 1993 at the age of 92. We buried him according to Jewish traditions at the Jewish section of the town cemetery. I recited the Kaddish on my father's grave. Then I went to recite the Kaddish for my father at the synagogue and I will do it for a year, as required.