

## Vera Dreezo With Her Son Alexei Dreezo



I am and my son Alexei, photographed during a troll in the town. Kiev, 1957.

My son Alyosha [full name Aleksei] was born in 1956. We had a common balcony with the family of Sosyura [Vladimir Sosyura (1898-1965): a famous Soviet Ukrainian poet]. About two weeks after

Alyosha was born Maria Gavrilovna Sosyura brought us a baby-carriage. So my Alyosha grew up in the baby-carriage that formerly belonged to the Sosyura family. We had good relationships with them.

My mother-in-law spoke fluent Yiddish. She exchanged words in Yiddish with her second husband. However, they spoke Russian in the family. We kept our good relationships even after I divorced Vilia. She helped me to look after Alyosha. She was a smart woman.

My husband's family didn't celebrate any Jewish holidays. They were a Soviet family. Ida Aronovna was a convinced 'Orthodox' communist. We celebrated New Year, 1 May, day of October Revolution and Victory Day. We had parties and sang Soviet songs. My husband and I had many friends. We went to theaters and concerts. There were jazz bands from other countries coming on tours.

I've never faced any national discrimination; at school, college or at work - never. Perhaps I was lucky to be working with intelligent people. I'd rather not talk about my private life. I didn't have it. My son and I lived in a one-room apartment since early 1960s. I left my theater to look after my son and if I had stayed at the theater I would have returned home late at night. I was a housewife for few years. I didn't get a chance to go back to work at the theater: there were no vacancies. In 1960 I went to work as a consultant at Kiev Institute of advanced training of teachers. I was responsible for making arrangements for conferences, discussions of new school curricula, innovations and school academic plans. I retired from this position in 1984.

My son Aleksei Dreezo went to the first grade of a Russian school in Kiev in 1963. He was always aware of his parents' and his own Jewish identity and had no problems with it. We didn't observe any Jewish traditions. I even didn't know any. We would have been even afraid of coming close to a synagogue. Of course, I cannot turn to religion at the end of my life or observe any traditions or celebrate holidays. We celebrated Soviet and family events and holidays and invited my colleagues and later - my son's friends. Aleksei studied well at school and had many friends. After finishing school he entered the Production faculty of the Kiev College of Culture. He finished it in 1977 and was producer of concerts for a long time. Aleksei married his co-student, a Ukrainian girl. I liked my daughter-in-law and was happy that my son found his second 'half'. Aleksei has a grown up daughter, my granddaughter. She studies in the conservatory in Kiev. They speak Russian and Ukrainian in their family. They do not observe any Jewish traditions. They celebrated Soviet holidays in the past.