

Irina Doroshkova



I, Doroshkova Irina photographed during an interview in Lvov in December 2002. Photograph of my family and my son are in the background. In 1952 my son Vladimir Penkin was born in Berdichev. Vladimir, when he grew old enough, went to a kindergarten and I went to work as a Russian teacher at a Ukrainian school near the sugar factory not far from where we lived. I also studied by correspondence at Zhytomir Pedagogical Institute. Life seemed to be improving when I faced problems in my family. My husband was a drunkard. I didn't notice it at the beginning: nobody ever drank in our family and I had no idea what it was like. We had rows and he even hit my mother once when she was visiting us. I don't even feel like talking about it. I got a divorce in 1960 when our son was in the 4th form. Vladimir was a success at school and was a smart boy. He finished school in 1969 and we wanted him to go to an Institute. He chose the Polytechnic Institute in Lvov. We were so worried when he was taking his entrance exams. I didn't want him to be in Lvov by himself - he was just a boy. A friend of mine moved to Lvov and I went to visit her. She convinced me to try to move to Lvov. We exchanged our apartment in Berdichev to Lvov. My son and I shared a room and my mother and her husband lived in another room. In February 1976 I met Peter Doroshkov, a car mechanic, born in 1921, Russian. He came from Siberia [Krasnoyarsk region]. He was divorced. I had lost my husband ten years before I met him. He seemed to be a nice man. I married him and changed my last name from Mazor to his last name. He was all right at the beginning, but his character has changed to worse. He knew from the very beginning that I was a Jew and it seemed to be O'K with him. We lived all together: my mother and her husband and my husband and I. We had a modest life and never went on vacation or had nothing else that was more than we could afford. We only celebrated Soviet holidays. But once I read a letter of my husband's ex-wife, although I still pretend that I never read it: 'You've never liked Jews, so how could you marry a Jewish woman?' He didn't reply her, but I can feel between lines that he might think 'Don't you forget I didn't tell you anything when you mentioned to me that you were a Jew' meaning that it was quite an act on his part to marry me. He thinks he would be better off if things turned out differently. At the beginning we had a good life. He loved me, but later we grew aloofness in our relationships. He wasn't an anti-Semite, but he wasn't particularly fond of Jews that is typical for all Russians. He was eager to move to Israel. There is a joke 'A Jew is not a luxury, but

means of transportation'. Many locals, especially ignorant ones, are convinced that they would have a good life if they manage to leave their country for whatever price. By the way, this is an opinion of people that have never been abroad. He was thinking about Israel, and that it is a Jewish state was just a minor nuisance for him. When my mother and her husband decided to leave we were going to follow them, but my mother passed away and my son can't make up his mind about moving to Israel and what would I do without him? I wish I visited a foreign country, but I couldn't afford it before and now I wouldn't travel due to my health condition. Few years ago my neighbors told me about Hesed. They had to find confirmation of my origin since I was Ukrainian by my passport. They did all necessary investigation and now I can attend Hesed. I received food packages, but when I fell ill I was assigned to the daytime center in Hesed. I attend it twice a month. We discuss religious and other subjects. I am interested to know about the history and culture of the Jewish people. We watch films. It didn't even occur to me how many spiritual riches our people have, how many scientists were Jewish and a lot more [The interviewee begins to cry heavily]. I feel myself a Jew and I appreciate all care that I get in Hesed - this is so very important for me. I wish I were I had been closer to my people. I enjoy going there and I have made new friends. It is so important for older people since older people have an only communication with a TV set. I watch every program about Israel. Every terrorist attack is like a knife stabbed in my heart.