

Aron Pizman With His Wife Riva Pizman



I and my wife Riva. My younger son took this photograph at our wedding anniversary at our home. We were sitting at the table waiting for guests. My wife and I have lived together 55 years. This photo was taken in Mogilyov-Podolskiy in 2004.

We didn't celebrate Jewish holidays, but we celebrated Soviet holidays at home and at work. We had guests at home. On 1 May and 7 November my wife and sons and I went to parades with other employees of the plant. On Victory Day, 9 May, we went to the meeting with veterans of the war on bank of the Dnestr, near the tank that was the first to enter Mogilyov-Podolskiy on 19 March 1944. We also celebrated New Year and family birthdays. We usually spent family vacations at the seashore in the south.

When in 1970s Jews began to move to Israel in the 1970s, I didn't approve of this. I don't approve of it now either. When Mikhail Gorbachev initiated perestroika in the USSR, I was on his side at first. I liked it, when he said it was time to start telling people the truth. It's true, there have been too many lies, and the lower party staff was the source of these lies. I often spoke against lies. However, later, when I saw what direction this perestroika took, I understood that all these promises were just soap bubbles and that Gorbachev was an carpet bagger. However, I still kept hopping of some good to come, but later I gave up hopes. They say, perestroika gave us freedom of speech and press. This is not true. We had freedom of speech in the USSR before perestroika. I believe that the final step of perestroika - the breakup of the USSR was a crime, and this is what I think it to be. I believe this throws us decades back. In the USSR I, a son of a shoemaker, had the right for education and managed to implement it. And my children got a higher education, while

now many talented children have no such opportunity since their parents cannot afford to pay for their children's education. This is not true that life was bad in the USSR. This whole propaganda yelling about the totalitarianism, fears of this time and arrests - I think it's a lie. They were minor and they were historically justified, but when the USSR collapsed, we lost it all.

They say the Jewish life has revived in the independent Ukraine. This is not true. Yes, a religious life has revived, but I don't know about the Jewish life. Yes, there are performances in Yiddish in theaters and there are newspapers in Yiddish, but who needs them? There are hardly any people, who can read in Yiddish, but cannot in Russian. The former USSR also published works by Jewish classics. Of course, there is a Jewish community now and I must admit people need it. The community provides assistance to old and ill people: they deliver food products and meals and fuel. Community members visit lonely and ill people asking them what they need and providing assistance. This is a very good and necessary cause.