

Larisa Radomyselskaya With Her Cousin Elena



This is me, Larisa Radomyselskaya, and my cousin Elena during my trip to Israel. The photo was taken in Haifa, in 1992.

I worked as an engineer in a construction trust 20 years. In 1974 I got an offer to go to work at the Uzhhorodpribor plant. I got a position of acting chief of the department of capital construction. After few years of work I asked them to appoint me chief of this department, but director called me to his office and said directly: 'You cannot be chief. Firstly, because you are a woman and secondly, because you are a Jew'. It was stressful for me. This was the first time I faced anti-Semitism. I had never faced any anti-Semitism before. It became difficult for me to come to work, but I understood that I wouldn't find another job. I worked there until I reached the age of retirement and then I continued to work as an engineer. I left work in 1992.

In 1991 my mother's cousin Ghenia Cherchis, her husband and their daughter Elena moved to Israel. Shortly afterward they sent us an invitation. My husband had died by then, and my daughters and I didn't venture to leave. I was afraid of giving up friends, our apartment and work to go to the uncertainty. My daughters were also afraid of such radical changes. Of course, propaganda had its impact on our decision-making. We believed that Israel was another capitalist country where money decided everything and where we wouldn't be able to find our place in life. I wish we had been more resolute then, but it is too late to feel sorry about what we didn't do.

In 1992, after I retired I traveled to Israel once in my life at the invitation of my cousin Elena. Elena has two sons. They work in Israel. One is a rabbi and another was in the army at the time. I don't know where he is now. Of course, Israel made an unforgettable impression on me. It's a beautiful country and every citizen is a patriot of his country. I went on tours to many parts of Israel, met with my cousin Inna, Mark's daughter, and visited my friends. And of course, more than once I felt sorry that we failed to move to Israel. I was trying to find my father's family, but I couldn't,

unfortunately.

After Ukraine became independent after the breakdown of the USSR, I saw that it had an effect on the Jewish life. We became closer to it. At first, I began to work at the synagogue helping to distribute meals to old people. In 1999, when Hesed opened in Uzhhorod, my older daughter Irina and I went to work there. My grandson Igor attends a Sunday school in Hesed. They study Jewish traditions, history and religion, Ivrit and Yiddish. In summer Igor goes to Jewish summer camps. He likes it there very much. My grandson identifies himself as a Jew and he speaks proudly about it. Hesed provides assistance to us: food packages and meals. We got to observe all Jewish holidays in Hesed and often attend lectures and concerts. Of course, our biggest pleasure is to attend the concerts of the orchestra where my grandson plays. I can socialize with friends in Hesed. Hesed has given me and my family a possibility to become Jews and return to our roots. This is very important for me now.