

Samuel Birger



This is me in Jerusalem, Israel by the Wailing Wall in 2000.

In 1954 I found a job rather quickly as I was the candidate to KPSS which was rare in Lithuania. I was hired as a locksmith -assembler by electric welding equipment plant. I did very well. I was raised in my class and made pretty good money. When mother turned 55 I insisted on her retirement. I was admitted to the communist party and again I was offered social work. Soon I became the party officer of the second workshop, where welding machines were produced.

I got married in 1957. Now I was married, had children, therefore I ought to earn more. I left the plant and went to work at furniture factory, where the salary was higher. I was also involved in social work. I was in charge of brigade, which daily patrolled the streets helping militia with detecting sots and hooligans. I was involved in civil defense. In a word I was an active member of society. At the factory I acquired the skills of sanitary technician and took up that profession. It was rather lucrative as I started having odd jobs in school and at the factory. I provided a rather good living for my family. I was one of the first who bought a Lada car. Now I have a German car and make some money as a driver

I have wonderful children. Elder daughter was born in 1957. She was named Raisa. At home we call her Raya to commemorate grandmother Haya as those names are euphonic. The second Marina is eight years younger than the elder one. My mother helped us raise daughters. She plied them with love to Yiddish and Jewish holidays. Our family had a pretty good living. Of course, at first it was hard for young family, but I always worked hard and never found it disgraceful to make money from odd jobs. After retirement I kept working in several places. Every year we went to the resort in

Palanga with our girls. Sometimes we went to the Black Sea.

Marina and her husband Gennadiy Zaher immigrated to Israel in late 1980s. I visited my younger daughter in Israel four times. I like Israel very much. My wife and I agreed - if we were to immigrate, our choice would be Israel. We are still not thinking seriously of that.

As soon as Lithuanian got its independence in 1991, my wife burnt my party membership card. Now we feel freer than we used to in the USSR. We can travel to any country. I am a Jew and I feel no anti-Semitism. Moreover, only now in Jewish community of Lithuania we started feeling ourselves true Jews. We mark Jewish holidays, try to come back to Jewish traditions. At any rate, we do not eat pork, on Sabbath I try not to do hard physical work.