

Semyon Ghendler With Construction Workers



This is me photographed with construction workers, my subordinates, during a parade on 1 May in Ternopol in the late 1960s.

There were no perspectives in Zhitomir in this regard and in spring 1953 moved to Cheliabinsk writing my friends there. It was easier to find a job in Cheliabinsk. I went to work as a construction electrician at the Cheliabinsk metallurgical plant. Later I became a foreman, site manager and then was promoted to assistant manager of the ventilation shop. I had many friends. They were workers of various nationalities and we got along well.

In 1967 I sent a job request to Vinnitsa construction department. They sent their response with a job offer. I already had a reputation in my branch of industry. When I came there to be employed their manager seeing that I didn't have special education, was a Jew and was no member of the party refused to employ me. A man from a higher level organization came to my help. He knew my qualifications and said that my qualification was rolling mill 2300, tube mill in Cheliabinsk that I constructed was better than any college education and then I got employment. My job was construction of a roll bearing plant in Vinnitsa. This site was in a poor condition when I came to work, but then I handled it and we became one of the best sites. My wife and children were waiting in Cheliabinsk. It was difficult to get an apartment in Vinnitsa and I decided to go back to Cheliabinsk where we at least had an apartment, but this time my manager didn't want to let me go. He assigned me site manager of a construction site in Western Ukraine, 370 km from Kiev, in Ternopol. It was construction of a big cotton factory. I received a room in a communal apartment. My family joined me and there were five of us living in one room. I went to talk with first secretary of the regional Party committee and told him that if they didn't give me an apartment I would go

back to Cheliabinsk where they would be glad to have me. First secretary ordered me to complete construction of a school within two weeks and if I managed he promised to give me an apartment. I went back to talk to my crew. When they heard what it was about they worked day and night to complete this construction. In August 1968 I received a two-bedroom apartment. This is where I live now. Later I finished the extramural department of Construction College in Mogilyov-Podolskiy. Some time later my wife's mother Sheina moved to Ternopol. She lived separately from us. Sheina was religious, and she celebrated Pesach and we visited her at her request. We didn't observe any traditions or celebrate Jewish holidays in our family.

We had many friends. We celebrated 1 May and 7 November. My crew members and I came to my place after parades. Natalia cooked and we had parties. We often had outings with shashlyk [barbecue]. In summer we took our children to the seashore and when they grew older we sent them to a pioneer camp and spent vacations together, just the two of us.