

Boris Shteinas With His Brother Avigdor



This is I (to the left) with my brother Avigdor during the time when he came for a visit in Siauliai from Israel in 2002.

In 1964 I was elected chairman of Siauliai regional consumers' council. I had worked there for 30 years until retirement. In 1996 I retired. I should say that I met very good people at work. We got along very well and I felt no anti-Semitism. I think with my excellent organizational skills, I would take a higher position, if I were not a Jew. I was not promoted to any other positions within 30 years, and I did not get any offers for a higher position.

I have lived an honest life. Though I was a member of communist party and had management positions, I never broke my principals and remembered that I was a Jew. While mother was alive, we marked all Jewish holidays. After her death Frida and I also bought matzah, marked Pesach, Rosh Hashanah. I always fasted on Yom Kippur. In 1960s during the six-day, Yom Kippur wars I always supported Jewish state. There were cases when I was called in the municipal party committee and asked to hold a speech with defamation of Israel, I also refused doing that. I had not stigmatized myself.

Avigdor married a Jewish lady Luba in 1962. He has two children: daughter Liya, 1963 and son Ilia, 1970. In late 1980s Liya and her husband left for the USA. The rest of the family- Ilia with his family, Avigdor and Luba moved to Israel in 1990. I was seeing my brother in Moscow, I sobbed like a little boy, thinking that I would never see him again. In 1991 I went to him for a visit. At first, Avigdor was a worker at the plant, but Luba found a job in line with her profession, a nurse. Brother and his wife are now living in Petah Tiqwa. My wife and I go to Israel. Brother comes to Lithuania. We write letters to each other and know what is going on in our lives.

In 1988 Jewish community was revived in Siauliai. Dmitriy Tsinovoy became its chairman. Frida and I started being its active members right away. There were about 500 in Siauliai at that time. We got together on Sabbath and on holidays. I am grateful to the founders of the community, who are no longer alive - Leiba Lipshits, Grisha Rafael, Lazar Soloveichik. In 1997 I was elected the chairman at the general meeting of the community. I was still working and did not want to agree to that. My

Frida, convinced me saying if not we who else would take care of the Jewish life. Since that time I am a permanent chairman of Siauliai Jewish community. The municipal council leased the building of the former Volgart hospital to the community and I find the way to get the money to cover the lease payment. I find the sponsors both among the citizens of Lithuania and in foreign countries as well. We help needy lonely Jews, have all kinds of cultural program. We founded the club Gesher for the Jews of middle age. We have an excellent Jewish children's band, who took the first prize at the festival in Vilnius. My Frida helps me a lot. At home I have a real hearth. Now I enjoy what I am doing - reviving Jewish life. Though I am not a young man, I hope I will be useful for the Jewish community.