Roman Barskiy With His Sister Elena

My sister Elena and I, Roman Barskiy in 1955 in Kiev. The photo was taken during a visit to Kiev Nizhne-Tambovskoye village, when I was on furlough. Elena was born on July 22, 1940. She graduated from the faculty of mathematics at Kiev University. She married Yuri Bochkaryov, a non-Jewish artist-designer. They had a son, Mikhail. My sister is a talented woman. She worked at the computer center. In 1991 they moved to Israel and my mother went with them. She was very ill and died in 1993. She is buried in Israel, our ancestors? land. I finished school in 1953. I tried to enter Kiev Polytechnic Institute, but it was impossible for a Jew to study there. The situation at home also was difficult. I understood that I had to leave. There was too little space for all of us and

my sister was growing up. I heard that they were opening a new Institute of Railroad Transport Engineers in Gomel, Byelorussia, and I went there. When I arrived, the entrance exams were over. I went to the hostel and began to live there. One day a captain from a military college came to the hostel and suggested that I entered their college. I agreed. There was another Jewish boy, Leonid Kogan from Chernobyl. He joined me. He lives in New York now. We are still friends and write letters. It was a radio engineering college. I didn't tell my parents that I went to Gomel. I came back home to pick up my clothing. My grandmother said 'Good boy, independent.' My parents didn't mind it either. Stalin died in 1953. I didn't care. People around were crying, but I didn't have any feeling for him. There was no anti-Semitism at college. There were five Jews. I lived in the barracks for three years. The barrack had hectares of floors to be cleaned, bunk beds to be made. We got poor meals and studied. My assignment was at the Far East air-defense headquarters. From Headquarters, I was sent to Komsomolsk-on-the Amur (Far East) and from there to the post in Nizhnetambovsk, a big village up the Amur.