

Lazar Gurfinkel



This is a photo of me taken for my passport in Chernovtsy in 1998. In the recent decade Jewish life in Ukraine changed. I believe there are many aspects in this process. We've got in touch with freedom. We can speak our mind without being afraid that we could be arrested. I'm not afraid to speak openly of the past and discuss social or material issues. Jews have recovered their national identity. We can say openly that we are Jews and we don't have to change our names to 'better sounding' ones. Many people have a difficult life receiving miserable pensions though, whereas people could manage with their pensions during the Soviet power. Nonetheless there's more freedom. I attend Jewish concerts and performances. I'm also involved in public activities. As a war veteran I often visit Jewish secondary schools. I'm invited to meetings with pupils on all significant phases of the Great Patriotic War, such as the victory in Stalingrad, Moscow, Victory Day and the liberation of Ukraine. I talk with children, tell them about the war and about the ghetto where I almost starved to death. I'm a live witness of the Holocaust. I just do what I can.