

Isroel Lempertas With The Members Of Vilnius Jewish Community



This is me (to the left) with the members of Vilnius Jewish community. The picture was made in 2004. In 1947 I submitted the documents to the Vilnius university, Physics and Mathematics Department. When I was in the third year I was employed by Chair of Marxism and Leninism as teachers' assistant. There was a lack of teachers in social studies Lithuania, who were fluent in Lithuanian and Russian languages. On the third course I was appointed as an assistant to the teacher in Marxism and Leninism. There were 3 students-teachers in the entire university, including me. Upon graduation I successfully defended my diploma and I was not to worry of the mandatory job assignment. They even did not ask what I would like to do. I remained teaching at the university. I had worked in the university by 1989, before the outbreak of perestroika. I had defended candidate theses [Soviet/Russian doctorate degrees]. When the independence of Lithuania was restored I confirmed my title. Now I am the doctor of History. I should say I did not accept perestroika at once. It was hard for me to object all those ideas I was sincerely devoted to- the ideas of socialism and communism. Being the nee of Lithuania I understood very well that Moscow was alien in our country. Now I completely agree with the term 'soviet occupation, when it goes about soviet regime. I support the independence of my country, its membership in European Union. I hope that Lithuania will overcome temporary obstacles and become a flourishing European country. I am happy in my private life. I met a wonderful Jewish girl at the university. Polina Aibinder was the student of the medical department. In 1951 we got married. In 1952 our elder son came into the world. We named him David after my brother. Our second son Ilia was born in 1957. Our family lived the way all common families lived by the soviet regime- from check to check. We did not have any riches, but our life was pretty decent. My wife worked as a doctor. Children, like others, went to the kindergarten, then to school. The most important thing for the Jews is the revival of Jewish life, which became possible with perestroika and independence of Lithuania. Now I came back to the life I used to have so many years ago. I am proud of Israel and I am happy that my son lives there. I do not think of immigration. I cannot split myself for each of my sons and for each of my motherlands. Let things remain the way they are. Besides, my Polina is very sick.

Couple of years ago to had to retire because of her poor health. Now, she rarely leaves the apartment. When I resigned from the university I was employed at psychological laboratory by the university dealing with research of educational issues. At the same time I was offered to teach Jewish history at the Jewish school, which was recently open. It turned out, that I was learning together with my students, being one class ahead of them. In my childhood and adolescence I did not study Jewish history and now I opened that wonderful history world for me. I had worked by 2004 and now I am taking a rest for a year. Though, I cannot call it a rest. Earlier, when my younger son took a keen interest in Holocaust, I started collecting materials on that horrible page in the Jewish history and understood that Jewish life and community appealed to me. Probably it was an inner need to do possible and impossible for the Jewry to be revived. Now I am a member of the Board of the Community of Lithuanian Jews. Now I have the chance to do my best for the community. I did not become religious; my family marks Jewish holidays and mandatory fasts on Yom Kippur to commemorate my ancestors and millions of those who perished. I dote on Lithuania. Now I like things, which I could not accept at once- crushed communistic regime was like a breath of fresh air, something which was necessary for our country to exist.