

Evgenia Shapiro's Father Jacob Shapiro



My father, Jacob Shapiro, on Victory Day (May 9). The photo was taken in Kiev in the late 1980s. There are orders and medals, awarded to him for his combat deeds and labor achievements, on his jacket, including the "Order of the Great Patriotic War", "Order of Glory", the "Medal for the Defense of Stalingrad" and the "Medal for Courage". My father retired from the army in 1959. He got a job as a senior engineer at the equipment department in Montazhspeystroy. This company was involved in the preparation of construction sites. My father worked there until 1994 when he turned 86. My father lived with me and my daughter. In the 1970s many Jews were leaving the Soviet Union. My mother sympathized with them and used to say that she wouldn't mind moving either, but my father was strictly against it. One could see in his eyes that he believed all these

people betrayed their motherland and communist ideals. Besides, he would have never been allowed to leave the country. He dealt with sensitive information at his work. He lectured on the coding of radiograms at the KGB intelligence department. When my mother's sister Alexandra moved to the US my father shouted that she was a traitor and he didn't even want to hear her name. But she wrote letters to us, and he read these letters with great interest. He also listened to Western radio, especially programs about Israel. During the Yom Kippur War in 1973 my parents were stuck to their radio and very concerned about the situation. In the early 1990s, when Jewish life in Ukraine began to revive, my father used to watch TV programs about Israel. He said that he might have done well if he had moved to Israel. We discussed departure but my father kept saying that he couldn't leave his wife's grave. We subscribed to Jewish newspapers and went to Jewish concerts. My father said that he would have attended a Jewish community, but that he was too old for any activities of this kind. He was 90. In his last days he only spoke Yiddish. We couldn't understand what he wanted, but he didn't say a single word in Russian during the last week of his life. A few days before he died he began to sing prayers. My father died at the beginning of 2001. He was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Kiev.