

Iosif Yudelevichus And His Family



This is our family picture made after father's death -to the left is my brother David, mother Taube, embracing Dalia Pagirskaya - her brother David's daughter. She had lived with us until early 1960, I am next to her in this picture. The picture was made in Kaunas in 1957.

After WWII our family did pretty well, father worked as a lawyer and made pretty good money. Brother was given the certificate of secondary education in evacuation. He finished school pre-term. I had studied for a year in Kaunas and finished school. That year I joined Komsomol, I was not eager to be involved in social work, but I had to do it for me to enter institute. I was not attracted by communistic ideology. I was always fond of art and could draw pretty well, so I entered Kaunas construction institute, the architecture department. Later on the institute was reformed into polytechnic one. I got the specialty of the architect. I worked with layouts. During my first years after graduations I made designs for agricultural arrears in Lithuania. I traveled a lot and communicated with people.

In 1955 my father died. His death was easy and sudden, but too early- he was only 60. He was buried in Jewish cemetery in Kaunas without any rites. I had lived with mother since that time. In 1957 my mother managed to get a permit for guest visit in Israel. Mother was issued a visa 1957 and she spent two months in Israel. She saw Isaac, father's brother and all her relatives. Upon return from Israel, mother started marking some Jewish holidays. We bought matzah on Pesach, lit candles on Chanukkah the way it was before war.

My brother graduated from institute, drama department and became an outstanding drama critic. He married Lithuanian lady Laima. They have two children - son Leon and daughter Irma. My brother is a famous man in literature and theater circles of Lithuania, the member of the council of Lithuanian writers, the author of several books. Brother lives in Vilnius. His son is an entrepreneur. He has his own house out of town and spends half of the year there with his wife. His children have their own families. Both of them are successful both in private and professional life.

I always got along with my brother, but mother had always been an only true friend. Maybe that was the reason why I had always compared her to women, who came across in my life. I remained a bachelor. I do not regret it. I do not like answering question regarding my private life in the sense that I do not have it. Believe me, my private life was rather boisterous, but I had not met a woman with whom I wanted to live together. I was not interested in social life. From the very beginning I took Soviet power with irony.

I always had different interests. Being adult I learnt how to play accordion and I played classic repertoire pretty well. Music was my passion. I attended all opera performances. Another passion of mine is art. Having some penchant for that I have always painted some pieces, mostly landscapes of my native Kaunas. I have always traveled a lot. I was in many cities of former Soviet Union. I liked old cities most of all, where I enjoyed architectural masterpieces. Gradually I came to liking bells and I started collecting big, small and diminutive ones. Collectors are crazy with their hobby. I remember one story about it. I went on a tourist trip to Czechoslovakia in order to meet my friend collector who lived in Austria and give him some of my exhibits. In Soviet times KGB agents were in every tourist group being on vigil to follow the morale of Soviet tourists. I had to exert my every effort to slip out from the group and to meet with the guy. Fortunately, the meeting with my friend was not noticed.