

Boris Slobodianskiy With His Wife Dora



Here you can see me and my wife Dora Slobodianskaya at our golden wedding in Chernovtsy in 2002. On my suit you can see the orders and medals awarded to me for my combat deeds and labor achievements, including the Order of Great Patriotic War, Order of Glory, medal for defense of Stalingrad, medal for Courage, etc.

When perestroika began we saw the difference immediately. Mikhail Gorbachev, the new Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, was the first Soviet leader in a long time that began to build up relationships with Israel. There were associations of friendship and cultural ties with Israel established.

In 1987 an association of the Jewish culture was organized in Chernovtsy. I became a member of the council of this association. I took a great effort in the revival of the Jewish culture by arranging lectures and concerts. At that time some people were in opposition to these activities. My wife and daughter were concerned about my safety. They feared that I might be attacked or there might be a pogrom during a lecture, but there were no such incidents.

Later I became leader of the group of the International Ukrainian Union of War Veterans and Ties with Israel. A year ago I was elected as a member of the Presidium of the Jewish Council of War Veterans of Ukraine. I work with all Jewish war veterans.

The most important work is renaissance of the Jewish identity. I have established a radio program in Yiddish – ‘Yiddishe Wort.’ It’s a monthly program and we do not pay for its broadcast. About once in three months we broadcast a Jewish program on TV. There are about 400 generals of Jewish nationality, the Minister for Armaments during the war was a Jew. There were many outstanding design engineers and we identify their names.

This is what I call renaissance of the Jewish identity – that we call them by name. We make programs with outstanding Jews: design engineers, professors, heroes, etc. This program is dubbed in Ukrainian. People write us letters. The broadcast has spread to Chernovtsy, Ivano-Frankovsk, Lvov, Ternopol and Khmelnytsk regions.

I can't say that I am a religious man. I worked on Saturday and we didn't observe Sabbath, but nowadays my wife and I celebrate Sabbath with our friends in Hesed. I go to the synagogue on Jewish holidays and on the death dates of my relatives to say prayers for them. My wife and I celebrate Jewish holidays sometimes at home and sometimes at Hesed.