

Mikhail Leger



This is me, Mikhail Leger. My school friend took this photo of me near my house. This photo was taken in Mogilyov-Podolskiy in 1958.

In 1953 I passed exams to the Design Faculty of Moscow technical school of the Ministry of supplies. I stayed in Moscow to study in this school. I lived in the dormitory for 3 years. I studied well knowing that I had to be a high-skilled specialist. I finished this technical school in 1956 and had a job assignment to a village in Kaluga region. The local authorities were not very happy to see me. There were hardly any specialists with a diploma. Even director of the enterprise where I was to work only had a certificate of lower secondary education. The local bosses were afraid that I could spoil their careers. One year and a half later I submitted a letter of resignation they approved my resignation, though I had to complete the mandatory term of job assignments of 3 years. I went back home. My parents lived in our prewar house. I went to work at the design office at the machine building plant named after Kirov as design engineer. This is the biggest plant in the town. I still work there, even though I've stepped over the retirement age.

I met my future wife Yelena Kravets at the plant. She was a copy operator at the design office. We got married in 1962. We had a civil ceremony in the registry office, and in the evening mama arranged a dinner for the family. We lived with my parents. My father installed a partial in the room and we lived there for few years. In 1965 the plant constructed an apartment house for its employees and my wife and I received a two-bedroom apartment. In 1965 our daughter was born.

I've never joined the party. I never wanted to join the party and nobody ever put any pressure upon me. My wife and I celebrated Soviet holidays at home: 1 May, 7 November, Victory Day. In the morning all employees went to parades and then we got together at somebody's place and had parties. We drank and talked. On Jewish holidays my wife and I went to my parents. They still celebrated Jewish holidays. I don't think there was the so-called Jewry at that time. The synagogue was closed, and Yiddish was gradually squeezed out of our everyday life. However, we've never forgotten that we were Jews. Besides, non-Jews never allowed us to forget it.