

Shahne Berznitskiy With His Colleagues



This is a photo of me (to the left) skiing with my colleagues. I do not remember their names. The picture was taken in Vilnius in the 1970s.

After the war I found a job with a state supply company, Gossnab, in Lithuania, where I worked all my life. I had to think of my personal life as well. I liked some Jewish girls. I also had pals, with whom I spent time. None of my temporary girlfriends aroused such deep feelings or affections as I felt for my brother Isroel's widow, Charna. In the postwar years we lived in one apartment and Charna treated me like a brother. She also had suitors. I liked my nephew Aaron, Charna's son. I didn't want Charna and Aaron to leave our family, so I proposed to her. My action corresponded to Jewish traditions: the younger brother should marry the widow of the elder brother. Charna agreed and in the late 1940s our marriage was registered. Charna was two years younger than me.

Charna and I had a wonderful life together. Charna was a housewife as my salary was enough for a moderate, but comfortable living. We had a lot of friends. We went to the theaters, the cinema. Usually the three of us went on vacation to Palanga. Sometimes we were given trade union trip vouchers to the South-Crimea or Caucasus. I was an ardent sportsman, played tennis, skied. In 1970 we got a plot of land. Since that time the orchard, planted by my wife and I, is a comfort and a hobby at the same time. Unfortunately, my Charna died in 2002. I cannot overcome such a loss.

I am old as the hills, but I'm still healthy, energetic and young in my soul. I'm a very active person and I'm not ready for eternal peace yet. Since the time when Lithuania became independent, we - having lost belief in communist ideas, a huge multinational socialist state and many other things - gained independence and the freedom of choice. The most important is that Jewish life revived in our country. Many people found themselves. During the postwar period, I, an active member of the Communist Party, couldn't have thought of marking Sabbath, not working on Saturday, eat matzah on Pesach. I'm currently an active member of the Unified Jewish Community of Lithuania. I sing in the choir of the community. I dance in spite of my age. I take part in all events, mark Sabbath and all Jewish holidays. I'm constantly busy. Apart from social events, I take care of the orchard, planted by Charna and I. I have a lot of friends among the Jews of the community and non-Jews as well.