

David Wainshelboim In Kishinev



This is me, David Wainshelboim, photographed in the 1960s in Kishinev. The house where I spent my childhood is in the background; this is the very first house where my family lived. This is where I was born.

In Kishinev I went to work at the trachomatous clinic. I was a doctor and often went to Moldovan villages to visit patients with trachoma: it's an eye disease resulting from lack of vitamins. It's common in poor countries. Later I went to work at the Kishinev ophthalmologic hospital. I was a surgeon and worked there till I retired. I got along well with patients and colleagues. I performed the most difficult operations and my opinion was important. I earned well. At least I managed to support myself and my sister. Then I received this one-bedroom apartment. At that time it was a luxurious dwelling with running water and a toilet.

I've always remained a Jew, though I am not religious. However, I celebrated holidays and fasted on Yom Kippur. On Pesach my friends – by the way, most of them are Jews – brought me matzah. I sometimes go to the synagogue on holidays, and I always go to the synagogue on Rosh Hashanah. I sort of see all of my loved ones there, I develop the feeling of quietude... I went on vacation every three-four years. I was fond of my work and always felt reluctant to leave it. I spent vacations at the seashore or in the mountains, or traveled around the country. I've never considered Soviet holidays as such, they were just days off for me. I visited my sister or friends to sit at the table together and socialize.

I've always been interested in everything going on in Israel. I listened to the forbidden radio stations 'Radio Europe,' 'Free Europe' to hear the words of truth about Israel. I never considered departure, probably because I've been alone, and it's hard to overcome difficulties if you have no family. Remembering my failed marriage, I never considered marriage again, and so I am single.