

Fira Shwartz With Her Colleagues



My fellow employees from the shoe factory and I (in the center) on the parade on 1st May in 1957 in Kiev. After finishing lower secondary school I entered the Library Faculty at the College of Culture and Education. After finishing college I got a job assignment in the village of Vysokoye, Zhitomir region [200 km from Kiev]. Graduates usually got assignments in distant locations. I became a librarian there, but I had a very small salary - 400 rubles. My mandatory job assignment was to last three years. [This was a standard requirement that was to be followed by all graduates from higher educational institutions]. I rented a room from an old woman and had hardly enough money to make a living. Every now and then my uncle and his wife sent me food parcels. I had to

stay in this village for another half year until they found a replacement for me. I returned to Kiev in 1957, but I couldn't find a job as a librarian there. I couldn't live at my uncle's expenses and thus went to work in a shoe factory. At first I was a laborer at the storage facility, and later I became a laborer at the shop of the factory. I liked my job. The majority of the employees at the factory were Jewish. The director and chief engineer of the factory were also Jews. Of course, there was no anti-Semitism at the factory.