

Minna Birman And Her Colleagues On The 1 May Parade



This is me, Minna Birman, (second from the left) with my colleagues from Chernomorniiproject near the Opera House on the 1 May parade. This photo was taken in Odessa in 1965. The one on the left is my boss Nikolay Pavlovich Zhulinski. I don't remember any other names.

In Brezhnev's epoch [1960s - 1970s] our life consisted of trying to get food and clothes. There was no meat or butter and there were no beautiful clothes. My son and I got up at six o'clock in the morning and went to the market. We stood in two lines waiting for meat to be delivered. If we managed to return home at three in the afternoon with meat we felt happy. My husband was allowed to buy food in special stores for invalids of the war. We called these stores 'thank you, Hitler'. We were allowed to buy 6 kg of miserable meat per month, some other products and clothes.

During Brezhnev regime I didn't vote in principle. My husband and I always had arguments because of this. He was very law-obedient and he couldn't believe it when I told him that somebody else would use my voucher. Once, for the sake of experiment I came to the polling station 15 minutes before their closure. A woman on duty told me that Minna Birman had already voted. I was indignant and they gave me a blank form. So I proved to my husband that I was right and never again went to vote. Our family was always interested in politics. We discussed all political news at home. Our children read a lot and were thoughtful personalities. We often took our son and daughter to theaters and museums.