

Larisa Shyhman With Her Husband Misha Shyhman



This is me, Larisa Shyhman (nee Trachtenberg), on vacation with my husband Misha Shyhman. This photo was made in Sukhumi (Georgia) in 1980.

In 1945 I went to work as a radio operator in Zhuliany airport. Misha was valued in 'Geophyspribor', he worked there for a long time. He was training instructor at first, it was something different and I don't know any details. Then he got a transfer to a design office department. Misha earned well and received significant bonuses for implementation of his inventions. He was even awarded a silver medal for them. He was a joiner and then electronic equipment specialist. He made tools. My husband's colleagues also treated him well and I don't think he faced any oppression due to his nationality. When he had his both feet on the ground he wanted me to quit my job and stay at home, he said: 'if you want to go back to work, I will help you with employment'. But his mother told me to keep my job since otherwise I would wear an apron and slippers for the rest of my life. I also wanted to stay at work. I liked my collective, I enjoyed it there and my colleagues liked and respected me. So after my second son Gennadiy was born on 17 March 1961 I returned to work at the airport. I worked there until retirement.

On 26 April 1986 there was an explosion in Chernobyl. Well, though they didn't inform people about this explosion, my husband worked with isotopes and had special devices. At first, it was clear in Kiev, but then, when I was standing in this line, the radiation moved in our direction. My husband went to Chernobyl soon. They sent people there, but he went on his own will. He said that

when this unit exploded older people had to go there. They had lived their life and young people should stay away. He went there on 30 April. I was in Moscow and didn't know about it. Misha went there with his devices to measure radiation. Miners were following him. He instructed them where they could walk, where they had to run or step over... Of course, he was exposed to a big dose. And in 1992 he died having melanoma of the skin. Before he died he didn't function, even his speech organs... So I am alone...

After the break up of the Soviet Union in 1991 my life hardly changed, I was already a pensioner. I read and watch TV. I have many friends and we often get together, sort of a 'club for those who are over 30'. We laugh a lot, they respect me well. We celebrate Jewish and other holidays. I get along well with them. I don't care about nationality whatsoever. I have a small pension, but I can manage. I don't go out much. They come from Hesed to help me around. I am optimistic and how can one be otherwise? Life is short!