

Mina Smolianskaya With Her Friend



An acquaintance of mine and I, Mina Smolianskaya in Odessa in 1932. I sent this photo to my mother in the village.

In 1928 collectivization began in the Pliskovo village. A group of authorized officers came from the town to make the rounds of the houses in the village. I joined them and we went around to dispossess wealthy farmers. I believed that it was correct to make everything belong to everybody. Members of these families were threatening to kill me. They believed that "zhydovka" was equivalent to a communist. My mother heard somebody saying that I became a boss and that it would be better to kill me and throw my body under the bridge. My mother got scared and asked me to write a letter to her brother Ershl "Ershl, please take care of my daughter. I am afraid that people would kill her." My uncle told me to come and I went to Odessa in 1932.

My uncle Ershl wanted me to do the housework while I was staying with him. I didn't have any intention to become his housemaid. I was a Komsomol and trade union member and had my ambitions. My other uncle Shyka helped me to get employment at the "Red "Cross" factory. I worked at the condom and dummy shop. I was a very dedicated employee and was transferred to the soap pan shop. At the end of the year I became a painter working at the same plant. I participated actively in all public events at the factory. On 1 May my responsibility was to hold a red flag on a platform on a truck. It was a very honorable duty. I didn't observe any Jewish traditions and celebrated no holidays. I threw it off my life like vestige of the ignorant past and was inspired by communist ideas.

My working day at the plant lasted 7 hours. When I came back to my uncle's home I had to clean the apartment, do the laundry and wash floors. I didn't have time to read. Besides, I was not used to reading. I had many friends and admirers. I was cheerful and pretty. I went out with my friends. I had Ukrainian and Russian friends, but I tried to stick to my Jewish friends. I took an active part in public activities. I was Komsomol assistant leader and was responsible for Komsomol meetings, we

propagated communist ideas and worked harder and harder dreaming about wonderful future, awaiting for us, arranged labor competition and amateur concerts on Soviet holidays.

On 1 May 1941 I became a member of the Communist Party. It had been my dream for a long time. I wanted to be in the first rows of builders of communism. It was quite a ceremony at the district committee of the Communist Party. The secretary of the district committee greeted me and shook my hand. However, it took them longer to issue my Party membership card and I didn't obtain it before the war.