

Sonia Leiderman



I am on the right, this is at my working place in the fish kiosk at the market in Mogilyov-Podolskiy. This photo was taken in 1978.

In 1947 I went to work as the seller of a fish. So, I worked as a fish vendor in a kiosk at the central market for the rest of my life. I retired from there. It was hard work. There were no loaders and I had to carry heavy boxes with frozen fish and cut heavy briquettes into pieces. I never had a chance to sit down during the day: there were always customers lining up; I had no breaks. There was no heating in the kiosk: it was freezing in winter, and it was hot in summer. I didn't go on vacation trying to earn more. My customers liked me: I joked and was cheerful and tried to serve them as best as I could. There were 3 fish kiosks one next to another, but there were always people lining to my kiosk. It's a small town where people know each other, and I knew all of my customers.

I got married in 1952. Our neighbor introduced me to her distant relative Semyon Leiderman. After the war Semyon stayed in Mogilyov-Podolskiy. He worked as a turner at the mechanical plant, which was later converted into the plant of agricultural machine building named after Kirov.

We could hardly make ends meet. Besides, I tried to save some money hoping that when my husband and I retired, we would travel and enjoy ourselves. I took these savings to the bank. We had never traveled on vacation. Besides, we didn't want to be a burden for our daughter, when we grew old: old people need medications and doctors and this all requires money. We were hoping that we would manage at our old age having our savings, but then perestroika began, and all our hopes turned into ashes. The material level of living grew lower; our savings decreased in value and then were gone [The disintegration of the USSR in 1991 also resulted in the newly independent states introducing their own national currencies. Soviet Ruble ceased existing. Many people lost their life-time savings]. My husband and I were pensioners at this time. Again we were starving. Our pensions were hardly sufficient to pay our apartment fees and just for the most necessary food.