

# Natan Shapiro With His Collective Of The Military Shop Agency



This is a picture of the collective of Voentorg (military shop agency), photographed on 1st May 1953. I, Natan Shapiro, am the third on the right, in the first row.

In 1949 I was sent to Moscow to take an advanced course of management. It lasted four and a half months and I finished the course with excellent results. I returned home to Korosten and took the position of director of the manufactured goods association. I was the director of this association for over 30 years.

In the early 1950s quite a few audits were arranged by higher authorities. They were commissions from higher state and party authorities. There were also representatives of the audit department to inspect our work, receipt of raw materials from storage facilities and shipment of ready products. They also audited our financial documents.

This was the period of anti-Semitism on the state level and they were looking to find mistakes or drawbacks in my work to have a reason to fire me. However, they couldn't find anything - I did my job well and our association always took leading places in the socialist competition.

Stalin's death in 1953 was a real tragedy for all of us. It felt like the state wasn't going to survive without him and like life had stopped. The Twentieth Party Congress, denunciation of the cult of Stalin was a big surprise for us. We were all crying when a letter of the Central Committee of the USSR was read at the party meeting in our department, about the denunciation of the cult of Stalin, but at the beginning it was only disclosed to the party members - that was why it was called 'closed letter' meaning 'sensitive.' We were stunned to hear that Stalin was to blame for the death of dozens of thousands of repressed and executed people.