

Igor Lerner At The Victory Day Meeting



This photograph shows celebration of the 60th anniversary of Victory over Germany. Here I'd like to tell you about my life after the end of the war.

After my second wife's death in 2000, I consumed away with grief. And now it is very difficult for me to speak about her. Don't hold it as a grievance against me, but I still cannot speak about her, it still hurts me.

Almost every year we together with children went to the Black Sea to spend summer vacations. We used to rent a room at the same owners. They said that we became more than their relatives.

I always worked much. Besides during my life I had to go through 2 periods of great starvation (I guess the worst ones in the history of mankind): starvation in Ukraine and blockade of Leningrad. Of course they had an effect on my health: I had problems with my gastrointestinal tract. I started treatment in sanatoria. At first I went there alone. When I became older, I asked for 2 permits: for me and for my wife. After sanatorium I always felt much better. In addition to it we had got a dacha near Leningrad. Now I sold it: without my wife it was unbearable for me to stay there. I also sold my car: at present I want to go nowhere.

I'd like to tell you about my granddaughters separately. I think that they saved my life. After my second wife's death I was completely confused, I did not know how to go on living. My son took me to his place, not listening to my objections. When the girls were born, my life gained sense. My heart went out to these children, and they loved me too. During celebration of my 80th anniversary I said that Oleg and his wife took care of me, and my beloved granddaughters made me happy. It's

true!

Here I'd like to tell you about my attitude to events in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. In fact during the war I was in both countries, and in Czechoslovakia I left a very close friend. We gave up so many lives for liberating of those countries from fascists and I agree with reaction of the USSR to events in those countries. I was often asked about my attitude towards fall of the Berlin Wall. [Berlin wall was erected in 1961 to divide Western part of Berlin from the Eastern one. It was demolished in 1989. It was symbolical that its concrete was used to construct highways of the united Germany.] I'll tell you the truth though it will sound indecently: I have no respect for the Germans. I think that fascism in Germany is ineradicable. If I were in charge, I would have not pull out our armies from Germany.

As far as Perestroika is concerned, I guess it was not necessary to break communistic system abruptly. I think that we would have come to democracy anyway, but it would help us keep moral, intellectual and other values. I always remember that by the end of the war there was no country in the world stronger than the USSR. We could have occupied the whole Europe easily.