

Frida Muchnik



This is me on vacation in Vinnitsa, 1967.

In 1948 I went to work in the 'Trud' [labor] cooperative as a cashier. I worked there for many years. I can say that I sacrificed my life to my parents. I realized I would never be able to leave them. If my brothers had survived, my life might have been different: I would have got education and arranged my personal life. I had friends, but I did not meet with young men. We lived in a small room and I knew I would have no place for my own family, if I wanted one. I have no children. My parents were not feeling well and I could not even afford to spend my vacations elsewhere. I only took 10 days off every year to go to Odessa to take treatment for my back: I had osteochondrosis due to the lack of movement, I had to sit at my desk at work. We didn't have an apartment of our own for many years. I kept writing letters to the district executive committee requesting an apartment, but each time they gave apartments to somebody else, who could afford to bribe them. In 1971 we finally received an apartment - a little two bedroom apartment on the first floor. Papa died five months after we moved into it. He died on 2 July 1971. My mother passed away one year later.

After my parents died I felt free and lonely. I could travel a lot all over the country or to recreation homes. I had no problem buying tours: I was a member of the local trade union committee and was responsible for distribution of tours. I had many friends. We celebrated Soviet holidays and went to meetings and parades. In the 1970s, when Jewish mass emigration began, many of my friends and acquaintances moved to Israel. There were fewer and fewer Jews left in Bershad. I sympathized with those, who moved away, and felt jealous about them. I didn't consider moving to live in Israel: I was alone, and if here I had a job and still had friends and acquaintances, I knew that if I went to live in another country without knowing the language, I would just go crazy from loneliness and melancholy.