

Polina Leibovich



This is me, Polina Leibovich. This photo was taken in Kishinev in 1971. This photo was taken for the vignette of the tenth grade of school # 7, where I was teaching French.

My husband died in 1962, at 47, from cancer of the pancreas. We buried him in the Jewish cemetery. My mother-in-law invited a rabbi to recite the Kiddush. She sat shivah, but I had only three days off from work and then I had to go back to work, though I wore mourning clothing. I was 38 years old. I never remarried. My son was 13 and I raised him myself. My son and my job were essential to me. Yasha finished school in 1966. I wished he became a doctor, but in Kishinev, due to the state anti-Semitism, it was difficult for Jews to enter the Medical College. He went to Tyumen in Russia, where they have oil fields. He entered the Tyumen Medical College. However, he studied there for one year and then said he couldn't be a doctor. He couldn't stand blood and couldn't work in the dissection room.

After my son's departure work became number one in my life. I worked in two schools teaching French in daytime school #7 and Moldovan twice a week in the evening school. I got along well with my students in the evening school. They regarded me as their friend. They shared their problems with me. In our school there was a Moldovan boy. His name was Boldishor. He tried to enter the fifth grade several times, but failed, and he was already 16 or 17 years old. I bumped into him at the entrance to the school before the beginning of an academic year and he complained that they didn't allow him to go to school again. I felt sorry for him and talked to the school director. I asked the director to let him come to my class where I was a class tutor. He appreciated this so much and tried hard to study better and managed to finish the tenth grade.