

Naomi Deich



This is me in 1960. The picture was taken in a photo shop in Kiev. After the war many of my friends got married. I had admirers, but none of them was 'Mr. Right'. Besides, many of them were not Jews, and I wanted to marry a Jewish man. My parents raised me with the conviction that a Jewish woman should only marry a Jewish man. So I decided to stay single. I've never regretted it. We had a radio at home that only broadcast regular Soviet programs. In 1973 my father's friends gave him a multi-channel radio for his birthday, and we began to listen to the Freedom and German Wave stations. We closed the door to keep it a secret from our neighbors. If one of them had reported to the KGB that we were listening to these stations, we might have faced problems and even been

arrested. We got a TV much later than all our neighbors. My mother had poor sight, and my father believed that it would do her no good to watch TV. We read many samizdat books in the 1970s. [Editor's note: the term samizdat comes from the Russian 'sam' for 'self' and 'izdatelstvo' for 'publishing', it was derived from the official Soviet Gosizdat, the State Publishing House.] Samizdat literature was privately and illegally produced and circulated in the Soviet Union after Stalin's death. Before glasnost in the 1980s, this was the only way to publish anything not endorsed and censored by the government. Our parents' friends used to bring those publications to us secretly. When the weather was good we took folders with these books, which were printed on standard sheets, to read them at the bank of the Dnipro River. We read Solzhenitsyn, Bulgakov and many other authors.