

Gertrúda Milchová At A Class Reunion



This photo is from the beginning of the 21st century, and shows my former university classmates. During the totalitarian era, most of my classmates actually left for the West. This is why our class reunions are usually organized every second or third year, usually in Vienna, in Austria. In the photo I, Gertrúda Milchová, am in the middle, and am looking at the photographer. In 1969 I was in the West on an internship in France. I was there for three months. Truth be told, nothing there really stunned me, because in Bratislava we used to get Viennese TV, and we had some sort of an idea of what life in the West was like. I was in Grenoble. I worked there in a research institute, and you know what stunned me the most, it's almost funny, that every day cleaning ladies with rubber gloves would come, sprayed something from some tube onto some glass doors, and it was clean. That stunned me. Otherwise nothing. For one, there was a terrible caste system there, and the various social strata didn't associate with each other. I was used to normal relationships, whether someone was a director or cleaning lady, they were all people. There it was precise, castes. The shop windows and the hubbub that was there also made a big impression there. They were very kind to me, I was satisfied, but I was already feeling home tugging at me. They also tried to convince me, whether I didn't want to stay. I was also in Israel. That's not Europe. There life is more fast-paced, varied, but more difficult. Here we lived in peace, and there... We put together some sort of program, it was decided, but right away it was all changed and we did it differently. It's not anything for me, nothing draws me there. Neither did I ever even regret not going with them on the aliyah after the war. It never occurred to me.