

Faina Minkova



This is a photo of me as a 2nd year student. The photo was taken in Leningrad in 1969. I mailed this photo to my parents. I started primary school in 1956. I faced direct anti-Semitism from my very first days at school. It was demonstrated by my teacher. She gave them lower grades and never found any excuse for our minor misconduct. It continued in senior classes. Our tutor, a Jew, continuously reminded us to have teachers put our grades in our record-book, because if we didn't, we might find lower grades in our class registers some time later, and we needed to have our record-book as proof. Of course, Jewish children were the best students. By the time of graduation there were only Jewish children who would get medals for their success. The school management

couldn't stand this situation and teachers began to give Jewish children lower grades intentionally. Other children got higher grades than they deserved. I finished school with a silver medal. Entering university in Chernovtsy was out of the question. None of the Jews stayed in Chernovtsy if they wished to continue their studies. Most of them were going to Russia where anti-Semitism wasn't so strong. I went to Leningrad where our distant relatives lived. I had to pass an interview to be admitted to a higher educational institution. I entered the Faculty of Automated Telecommunications at the Leningrad Polytechnic Communications Institute. There were many Jewish students at our Institute. Most of them came from Ukraine. We didn't have any problems in the course of our studies at this Institute. Upon graduation I got a job with the telephone agency in Leningrad. At work I constantly faced blatant anti-Semitism. People told me to my face that Jews were a people of traitors and hucksters. I visited Leningrad recently and thought about dropping by my former workplace, but I changed my mind. I recalled the past and realized that such a visit was probably not going to be fun.