

Izolda Rubinshtein



This is a picture of me on my 50th birthday. The photo was taken at the school where I worked in Chernovtsy in 1970. I didn't face any anti-Semitism during my life in Chernovtsy. I worked at a Ukrainian school. It's difficult to say whether I made the right choice back then. My pupils didn't forget me. The good part of my profession was that my pupils remembered and visited me. They were all Ukrainian children, but they visited me. This school was my family, and I gave all my warmth and care to the children. Work at school took all my time. My mother did all the housework. We were very close. We didn't observe any Jewish traditions. We celebrated Soviet holidays. Regretfully, we were always busy. I wish I had asked her more about her life. My mother died in Chernovtsy in 1972. I buried her in the town cemetery in Chernovtsy, which isn't a Jewish

cemetery. In the 1970s many Jews were leaving for Israel. When I heard about the first emigrants I thought they were traitors. I couldn't understand why they were leaving. My friend moved there. Before she left we had a conversation. I didn't call her a 'traitor' but she knew what I thought. I told her that I couldn't understand how she could leave her motherland for a strange country hoping to acquire a new motherland. I said that there was only one motherland. I was a class tutor at my school and a boy from my class also left. We condemned him at a class meeting. Later I changed my opinion about Israel and the people that wanted to live there and build their own country. However, it isn't an option for me - I was born here and will die in my country.