

Anna Schwartzman With Her Colleagues And Her Brother



This is a picture of me with my colleagues. I am second from the left. Fourth from the left is my brother, Khuna Barenboim, who came to visit me on his vacation. The photo was taken in Chernovtsy in 1964. I met my future husband, Iosif Schwartzman, a Jew, in evacuation. After the war we moved to Chernovtsy. During evacuation I befriended a woman from Chernovtsy who had great things to say about this city. We arrived in Chernovtsy in 1946. The city hadn't been damaged during the war, and there were plenty of vacant apartments because local residents fled Romania after the invasion of Soviet troops in 1940. We were allocated an apartment in which I still live today. Chernovtsy was a Jewish town. There were five or six synagogues and a Jewish community. I only went to the synagogue on Pesach because it wasn't free and there was always a shortage of money. I celebrated Sabbath, too. I remember my mother saying that Sabbath must not be disregarded by inattentiveness. I lit candles and tried to prepare some treats, make gefilte fish and boil a chicken. I didn't adhere to the law that forbade to work on Saturdays though. Back then Saturday was part of the official work week, and we were obliged to go to work. All household chores were left for Sundays. I didn't celebrate Soviet holidays, perhaps because I didn't have a chance to get accustomed to them in my childhood. What brought me joy was that Soviet holidays were always a day off. I didn't perceive any anti-Semitism in Chernovtsy. Most people I worked with were Jews as were my husband's and my friends. I tried to observe Jewish traditions, which I have grown up with in my family. Even when money was extremely tight I used to put a little aside over the course of the year to have something for Pesach. We bought matzah, and I prepared the Pesach dishes that I loved as a child. When I was setting up my home I made sure that we had Pesach china. My husband was a lot more neutral in this regard. On Pesach and Yom Kippur he went to the synagogue, but he refused to fast on Yom Kippur. On Chanukkah I always gave my daughter money.