

Sarra Shpitalnik With Her Colleagues From Chernovtsy University



This is me, the 1st on the right in the lower row, sitting, with my group mates of the French department of Chernovtsy University. This photo was taken in Chernovtsy in 1946. First row, from left to right: Bella Melekhzon, Nusia Landa; 2nd row, from left to right: Sasha Groisman, Irina Stavskaya, a young Moldovan poet, Foma Rubinstein, I; 3rd row, from left to right: Betia Pertzovskaya, dialectologist Rubin Woodler, doctor of philological sciences, Nyusia Koifman, Izia Rozenfeld, Esther Grilyuk, she was in the ghetto, and a local Ukrainian from Chernovtsy, Stella Fivchuk. In 1946 I finished the tenth grade and wanted to study languages. I entered the French department of the Philological Faculty of Chernovtsy University. My parents and I moved to Chernovtsy. At the end of the war many Ukrainian families left the town following the retreating Germans and there were vacant apartments available. After the liberation of Transnistria, Jews from the ghetto rushed to Chernovtsy: we were a little late having stayed in Kishinev for a year. Those who came there in 1945 lived in nice apartments. Chernovtsy is a beautiful town. Our faculty resided in the former Metropolitan's residence, in the beautiful building of red bricks. I lived the best years of my life when I was a student. We were divided into two groups. I was in a stronger group where all students were Jews and only two Ukrainians. Almost all students in our group were either veterans of the war or former inmates of ghettos in Transnistria. The political situation was rather severe: there were Bandera gangs in the area. One day we went to the university and got to know that all third-year students had been arrested. The authorities had found out that they had Bandera flyers. At this time the campaign against 'cosmopolitans' began. Ilia Gordon, a Jewish lecturer on foreign literature was sent away from Kiev to work in our town. The Party Bureau taped his lectures to review them later. We felt sorry for him and did our best to study his subject and obtain good marks in it.