

## Frida Muchnik



This is me. This photo was taken in the Podolie hotel in Bershada in 2004 during the interview.

In 1948 I went to work in the 'Trud' [labor] cooperative as a cashier. I worked there for many years. I can say that I sacrificed my life to my parents. I could travel a lot all over the country or to recreation homes. I had no problem buying tours: I was a member of the local trade union committee and was responsible for distribution of tours. I had many friends. We celebrated Soviet holidays and went to meetings and parades. In the 1970s, when Jewish mass emigration began, many of my friends and acquaintances moved to Israel. There were fewer and fewer Jews left in

Bershad. I sympathized with those, who moved away, and felt jealous about them. I didn't consider moving to live in Israel: I was alone, and if here I had a job and still had friends and acquaintances, I knew that if I went to live in another country without knowing the language, I would just go crazy from loneliness and melancholy. However, in 1988 I received a letter from an acquaintance of mine, who was in Israel. I met him at the recreation house in Odessa. He invited me to Israel and proposed to marry me. He offered financial support. I did not love him and wrote back refusing him. My friend wrote again until I finally made up my mind to go to Israel. However, I told him honestly that I would travel to Israel, but I didn't want to stay with him. In 1990, having overcome all obstacles, bureaucracy and bribery of Soviet organizations I moved to Israel.

Israel is a wonderful country where I felt at home at once. I received a nice apartment and had a very good life, but... I felt very lonely and missed my homeland. I wanted to visit the graves of my dear ones. Every year I've come to Bershad. I go to my parents' graves. Few years ago I returned to Ukraine for good. I am a Ukrainian citizen and have a permanent residence in Bershad. I've bought a nice apartment and I receive a significant pension from Germany, being a former prisoner. I am doing very well. I like it that there are great opportunities for the Jewish community life after perestroika and after Ukraine gained independence. I am an active member of the community and a client of Hesed, it gives me material and moral support. Here in Hesed I've found new friends. We celebrated Sabbath and Jewish holidays together, study the religion and history of Israel. I have no regrets about having been to Israel or coming back to Ukraine.