

Tsyliya Spivak With Her Class



My first class in Tehinka village Kherson region in 1951. I am the one wearing a checkered dress in the middle row.

In 1949 I finished 10 grades with a good certificate. I could go to any higher educational institution like Kiev University, for example, considering its high prestige, but I had to start work to earn money as soon as possible and this made me go to Chernigov 2-year Pedagogical College. In 1951 there was a job assignment distribution. I was prepared to go anywhere since my mother was going to follow me anyway. I chose Zagoryanovka village near Kherson hoping to be able to often go to Kherson. When I came to the regional department of education its chairman looked at me (and I was a thin short girl) and said: 'I don't think it's worth for you, girl, to go to Zagoryanovka. It's not the place a young girl would like to be at. I will send you to Tehinka. There is big construction there. They need teachers with diplomas and this place is better than Zagoryanovka'. So I went to Tehinka. They welcomed me warmly and showed me the school. I rented a room from nice Ukrainian people: Marusia and Kolia who liked me, too. The department of education paid my rental fees and gave me money for wood and kerosene. So I was a desirable tenant. Three weeks later my mother joined me. She lived with me ever since.

Teaching was easy for me. I taught in the 5th, 7th and 8th grades. The 8th grade was the first year of higher secondary school. They were the children who wanted to have a complete secondary education. They listened to me with attention and I was eager to inspire love to the Russian literature in them. As for the 5th grade those children didn't bother to listen to me. Why did they need Russian? They were noisy and caused problems. Once I lost my temper and pushed one of those hooligans. I forced him out of his desk and pushed him out of the classroom. They began to respect me then: 'Hey, she can fight!' and were quiet at my lessons.