

Ihil Shraibman With A Group Of Jewish Writers



This is me (sitting first from the left) with a group of Jewish writers. This photo was taken in Chernovtsy in 1976. Second from the left sitting is Sidi Tahl, an actress of the Jewish theater, third from the left sitting is chief editor of the 'Sovietische Heimland' magazine Aron Vergelis.

Khrushchev's thaw was truly a thaw. Since the 1960s the situation in the country and the attitude toward people was changing. The 1960s was a good time. The situation of the Jewish writers in the country was improving. The 'Sovetskiy pisatel' [Soviet writer] publishing house was publishing books in Yiddish: five books per year at the most. In 1961 the 'Sovietische Heimland' magazine was established. Its chief editor was Aron Vergelis. My miniatures were published in the first issue on 1st August. Three-four years later I was assigned to the editorial board of the magazine. Members of the editorial board were to gather twice a year in Moscow. Besides, other writers were involved in editorial board meetings to reach a wider audience. Manuscripts of new books were sent to members of the editorial board for review and references, so to say.

I wrote a lot in the 1960s and often went to work to the Creative Houses of the Union of Writers of the USSR. One of the most popular of these was located in Maleyevka near Moscow. I went there for a few years in a row in March. Each writer could have a room on his own. There were nice

doctors in these centers. I met many famous writers from Moscow and other Soviet republics. I have many bright memories and books in many languages that the authors gave me. In summer I worked in the writers' creative house in Yalta. I also went to Dubulti near Riga. In the Creative House in Pizunda I met Arkadiy Raikin, he stayed in the House for Actors nearby. I often walked with him and his wife. He liked to speak Yiddish to me. He was a wonderful person. I wrote most of my works in Creative Houses. My three novels were written there: the trilogy 'Zibetsnyorike' [The Seventeen-year-olds], 'Veyter' [Further] and 'Zibn yor mit zibn hadoshim' [Seven Years and Seven Months]. They are based on my biography. You know that every writer writes about himself. Whatever he composes it's still about himself. In other words, if he doesn't have himself in his mind, he has nothing to write about. And if he has his life inside, all events and details, they make material for his works. So, the main material for a writer is his life. Even if he narrates it on behalf of his characters.