

## Rosa Freisond



I visited the school where I worked before retiring and my colleagues photographed me for the memory. This photo was taken in Mogilyov-Podolskiy in 2004.

In 1945 I was employed as a primary school teacher by a new Ukrainian general education school in the very center of the town where I worked for almost 40 years. I retired in 1975, but I could not lie without my school and I returned to work. I finally retired in 1990.

I didn't have a private life. My school and pupils became my life. I taught my pupils from the first till the 4th forms. Starting from the 5th form they had different teachers in all subjects while in primary school I taught all subjects, but physical culture and singing. My schoolchildren were my children. Parents wanted me to teach their children, when admission to my class started. I was very pleased, I must confess. Then my former pupils brought their children and then - grandchildren to my class. It was wonderful, but also sad - a reminder of the flow of time. Teachers got low salaries in the former USSR, and I didn't have any additional earnings. However, we were used to living a modest life and it didn't cause any disturbances to me.

The Jewish life began to revive during perestroika. A Jewish community began to work in Mogilov-Podolski, there are Jewish newspapers and magazines. The community supports older people. This is the first time in my life, when I feel well provided for. I receive a pension and the community helps me. When my sister Lisa died in 1994, the community made all arrangements and payments for the funeral. Lisa was buried near our mother's grave in the Jewish cemetery in Mogilov-Podolski. My sister Lubov's husband Aron Geisel died that same year. We decided it would be better if she moved in with me. My sister is weak and needs care. The community helps us a lot. They deliver hot meals to us. A visiting nurse takes great care of us. The community celebrates Jewish holidays. I used to attend them, but now it's become difficult. My friends and former pupils visit me. Many of them live in other towns and countries, they write and call me, but when they visit Mogilov-Podolski they always come to see me. The only disturbing thing is my developing blindness. I have retina deformation and there is no cure of it. I hope I will die before I grow blind. God forbid living longer than having the sight... Reading has always been so important for me. It's hard to read now, and I am eager to learn so much! There is so much interesting in life. I don't

understand it, when people ask: 'Why do you need it?' And I wonder that people much younger than me ask this sort of question. Don't they find things interesting? I tried to do things at home so that our visiting nurse gets more time to read us something. I receive the 'Yevreyskiye Vesti' [Jewish News] newspaper and like listening to her reading this newspaper for me. They publish many interesting and new things. At times I think - long life is God's gift or punishment? I don't know, but I know one thing for sure. When I was a child, my mother used to say frequently: 'One can find a bit of happiness even in the serving of routine'. I find my bit every day.