

Yevsey Kotkov's Mother Taiba-Rieva Kot



This is my mother Taiba-Rieva Kot, in a photo taken in Kiev in 1950. I am one of five children. When we were young, we lived with our parents in a basement in the main street in Rovno. There was some hay on planks that served as a bed for my mother and her children. The remaining area served as my father's shop. He was a tinsmith and made whatever he had orders for, like tins, cups, buckets, cans, etc. They used a bucket for a toilet. Life was not much fun. It was cold, and we didn't have enough to eat. My father was a typical failure. He was a rough and wild man, always dirty. Mommy used to cry a lot in that basement. Father beat us. My mother told him off and cursed him for beating us so hard. She told him one couldn't beat children on the head and face

with wire. He abused the girls, too. He would say he didn't want his children. We had a terrible relationship with him but we loved our mother. She always stood up for us and cared for us. She began her preparations for a Saturday on Friday. . During World War II my mother was evacuated along with her cousin Polia to Chimkent in Central Asia. My father refused to be evacuated. He said that the Germans were cultured people and wouldn't do anything bad to him. He always had this spirit of contradiction, he always did the opposite from what he was expected to do. Well, the Germans, these 'cultural people' shot him at Babi Yar , in September 1941, along with thousands of other Jews. After the war my mother lived with Polia in Kiev, where she died in 1958.