

## Dora Nisman



This is a photo of me taken in the ghetto in Chernovtsy in 1941, during the occupation. This photo was required for the process of registration of highly qualified specialists. In July 1941 announcements were put on buildings, ordering Jews to move to streets that were specifically marked for their residence. We started moving our belongings. A German soldier told us to leave everything behind. He said that we were only going to stay in the ghetto temporarily. A few streets were enclosed with wooden fencing. The street with the sauna was also enclosed in this ghetto. All dwellings were overcrowded. We lived in a laundry room and slept on the floor. I felt very ill. We didn't have enough food and exchanged everything we had managed to take with us for food. After a few months somebody told us there were announcements on the walls. We read that the Germans were selecting craftsmen if one had any document to prove his professional capability. I had my diploma and went to the registry office. They put down the number of my diploma and the authority that had issued it. I was allowed to live in Chernovtsy and could take my family with me. I saved their lives. Before the war I began to make dresses for a Romanian client. Her last name was

Bakulinskaya. Her husband worked at the city council. This client and her husband were looking for me in the ghetto. I don't know whether she felt sorry for me or if she just wanted to have her dresses, but they found me and brought me a loaf of bread. She asked whether I could finish the dresses and suggested that I work at her place. She had a sewing machine and gave me food. The inmates of the ghetto were allowed to leave the ghetto wearing a [yellow] Star of David on the left side. My father made a star from carton, I sewed it into a piece of cloth, we attached it to our clothing with safety pins and went out. We were supposed to be back in the ghetto before 6 p.m. We strictly observed all rules and survived. I went to this client of mine to work. She was kind to me. She told her friend about me and that friend wanted a gown, too. Then she recommended me to somebody else, and this was how I started to earn my living. On 25th December 1941 my daughter Maria was born. Life in the ghetto was hard. We were aware that every day might be the last day of our lives. Some of our neighbors vanished every night. It became particularly frightening in 1944 when it was clear that the enemy was retreating. We didn't turn on the lights at night.