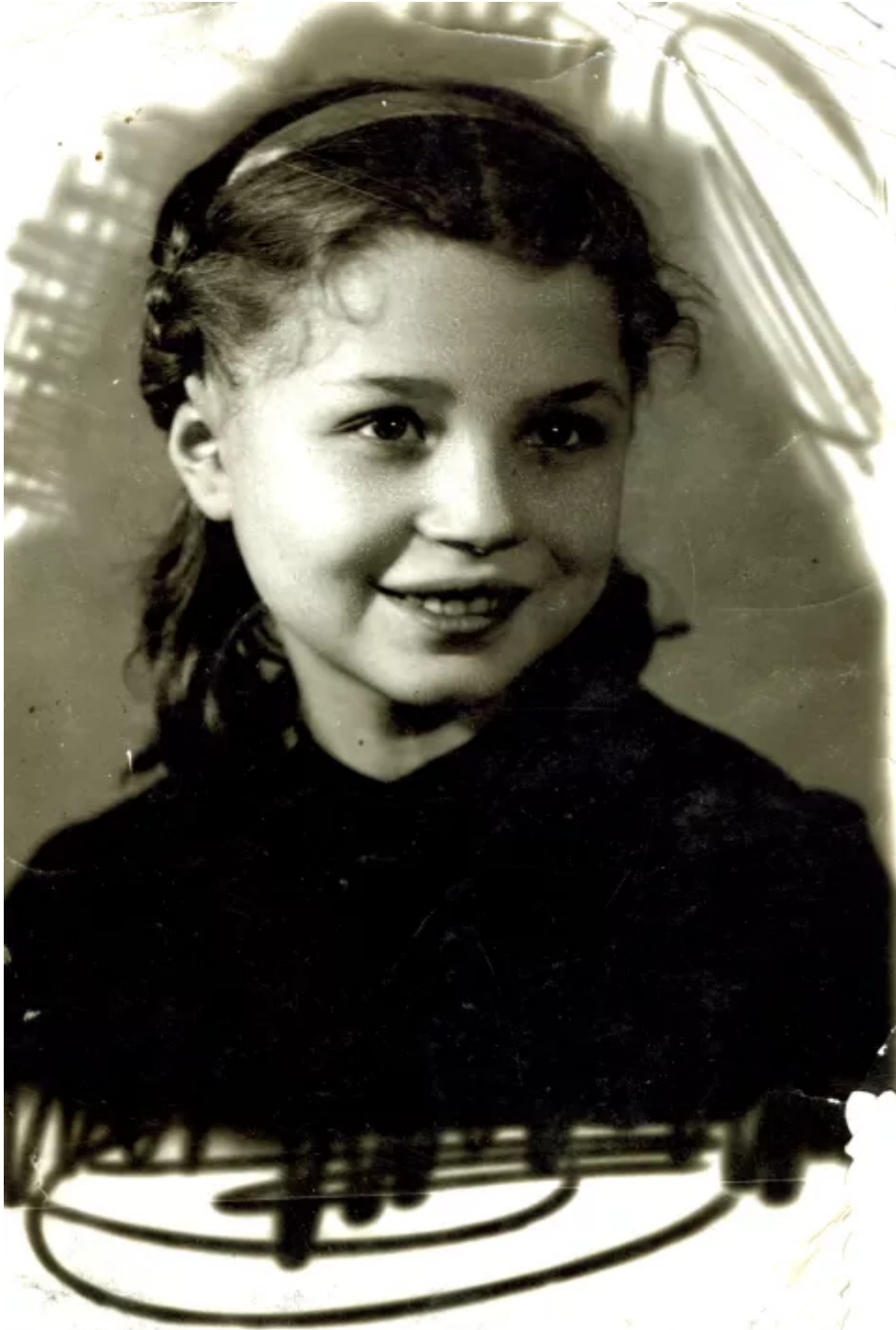


Frieda Portnaya



This is a photo of me - Frieda Waldman Portnaya, in April 1941 in Kiev. I was 13 years old. I was born on 25 February 1928 in Kiev. I had an older brother, Mikhail, who was born in 1923. My mother was a dressmaker and also taught my father to sew. He became a very good tailor ? he learned to make trousers. We had two small rooms in an apartment that we shared with other people. My mother was religious. She always tried to celebrate the Jewish holidays and cooked all the traditional food. There was matzo at home for Pesach. But as my father wasn't religious these celebrations were quite modest. We also always celebrated the Soviet holidays ? May 1 and the Anniversary of the October Revolution. My father loved these holidays. My mother went to a synagogue that was not far from where we lived. We kids often went with her or just ran there

ourselves. We were very curious, but this curiosity couldn't be taken for any interest in religion. My mother often told me what her father had taught her: the history of the Jewish people and the ancient Torah, but frankly speaking, I wasn't interested that much in these subjects. My mother talked to me in Yiddish. I understood what she was saying but I couldn't answer her in the same language. I went to a Jewish kindergarten, whose teachers were Jewish. They spoke Yiddish to us, but we kids communicated in Russian. They celebrated Jewish holidays in this kindergarten, too. This didn't last long, though. By the time I had to start elementary school they had closed the Jewish schools and the kindergarten, so I went to a Russian school. There were children of various nationalities in our class. We never felt any difference in attitude towards the Jewish children. We all got along very well. My father and my brother were killed during the war, but we don't know what happened to them. We survived in the east, in evacuation.