

Sheindlia Krishtal's Sister Fira Krishtal



My sister Fira Krishtal. She sent me this photo from the Far East. Signed on the backside: "To my dear sister and brother-in-law from sister Fira". 79 crossing in Zabaikaliye. 15.2.1952.

My mother had a stroke in 1929 and was confined to bed when she was only a little over 40. Riva and I stayed with our parents - the other children moved to other locations. Riva and I were responsible for housekeeping. Riva used to say: "O'K - I will knit you a hat and you wash the floor." Faina became a schoolteacher in a school near Iziaslav when she was 16. Fira finished an accounting school and worked as accountant at the Wapniarka station - office of Odessa railroad.

The war began on 22 June 1941. Soon evacuation was announced at the plant where my brother worked. My father, Fira, Faina and I evacuated with Samuel's family to Alma-Ata in Kazakhstan [about 4 thousand km from Kiev]. Our trip lasted for about two months. We went on freight train that was continuously bombed on the way. We went through Kuibyshev where Riva and her 6-months old daughter had to stop. Lilia got ill from exhaustion and had to stay in hospital for 6 months. Faina stayed in Kuibyshev with Riva to look after Lilia and Samuel, my father and Fira went to Alma-Ata. Fira worked at the accounting office of the railroad and my father was her assistant.

Re-evacuation was announced in 1945. How happy we were to come back home. There were fireworks on Victory Day of 9 May 1945 - people came out into the streets greeting each other on victory, crying and laughing. We - my father and I, Fira, Faina, Riva, Lilia and Samuel with his family - returned to Kiev.

Our house was destroyed. My father found a small room in a basement in 9, Vorovskogo Street. It was an awful dwelling, but we were glad to have a roof over our heads. Riva's house was ruined during the war and Riva, her husband and Lilia moved to Germany and later - to the border with China in the Far East. Fira and Faina lived in Kiev after the war, but their personal life left much to be desired. Fira lived in Riva's family for some time.