

Evgenia Ershova's Uncle Wife Bertha Gutianskaya With Her Family



The family of my father's younger brother, Veniamin Gutianskiy: his wife Bertha Gutianskaya (right), her mother (left), the couple's older daughter, Luba (standing behind), and younger daughter, Maria (center). This photo was taken in Semipalatinsk in 1954 and sent to us in Kiev. Veniamin was born around 1907. He graduated from the Faculty of Literature in Moscow and became a writer of Jewish children's books. He lived in Kiev. In the middle of the 1930s a few books of his poems and stories for children in Yiddish were published. During World War II Veniamin and his wife Bertha were evacuated. Veniamin wasn't recruited into the army due to his lung disease. Their daughter Luba was born while they were in the evacuation. After the war Bertha worked at the Institute of Literature in Kiev and Veniamin continued his writing. However, he wasn't published then. He was arrested in 1949, during the outburst of anti-Semitism, on charges of propagandizing for Zionism. His wife Bertha was also arrested on fabricated accusations. Their younger daughter Maria was born in jail. Some time later they were exiled to Semipalatinsk, in the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic. Bertha's mother and Luba went there, too. Veniamin didn't live long. He fell ill with tuberculosis in jail and died in Semipalatinsk in 1953. In 1956 Bertha and her children returned to Kiev. They had received documents regarding the rehabilitation of her and her husband Veniamin. Bertha and her children lived with us for some time, because they had lost their previous apartment. In 1957 Bertha received a small two-room apartment. Bertha died in 1972. Her daughters live in the USA.