Gertruda Glasova And Her Son, Martin Glas

This is a postwar photograph of me and my mother, Gertruda Glasova. It was taken in Mom's apartment in Prague in 1956, in the back you can see the door to the front hall. My mother was also very much influenced by her war experiences. She used to say that the only language that she really knew well, German, she hated. Which is, of course, nonsense, how can someone hate a language? A language can't be responsible for something. She was brought up in German, studied in German and didn't learn Czech until before the occupation, and never properly. She also used to say that Germans should be castrated. I understood it, it was an expression of her desperation. My mother actually never enjoyed her life. She saw World War I, then had tuberculosis, then there were worries as to what my father would do when he lost his job, well, and then suddenly the occupation was here, war... Even before it broke out here, there was news about what was happening in Germany, in Vienna, Crystal Night. And finally my mother lived as a widow. Later, when German friends of mine used to come visit, who'd certainly done nothing wrong, because they'd been little children at the time, she behaved very coldly towards them. I'd explain to them that they shouldn't be upset at her, that she simply couldn't deal with it. After the war we didn't return to our apartment. Right at the end of the war, some people that had been bombed out moved into it. My mother was issued this tiny little apartment, one small room plus another one with a kitchenette, about 16 square meters all told. The kitchenette had only a sink and a hotplate, in the other part of the room there was a table plus room for a bed that she had brought over from Terezin. My brother and I lived in the larger room. Then my brother got married and moved out. Then I got married and moved out, so Mother remained there alone.