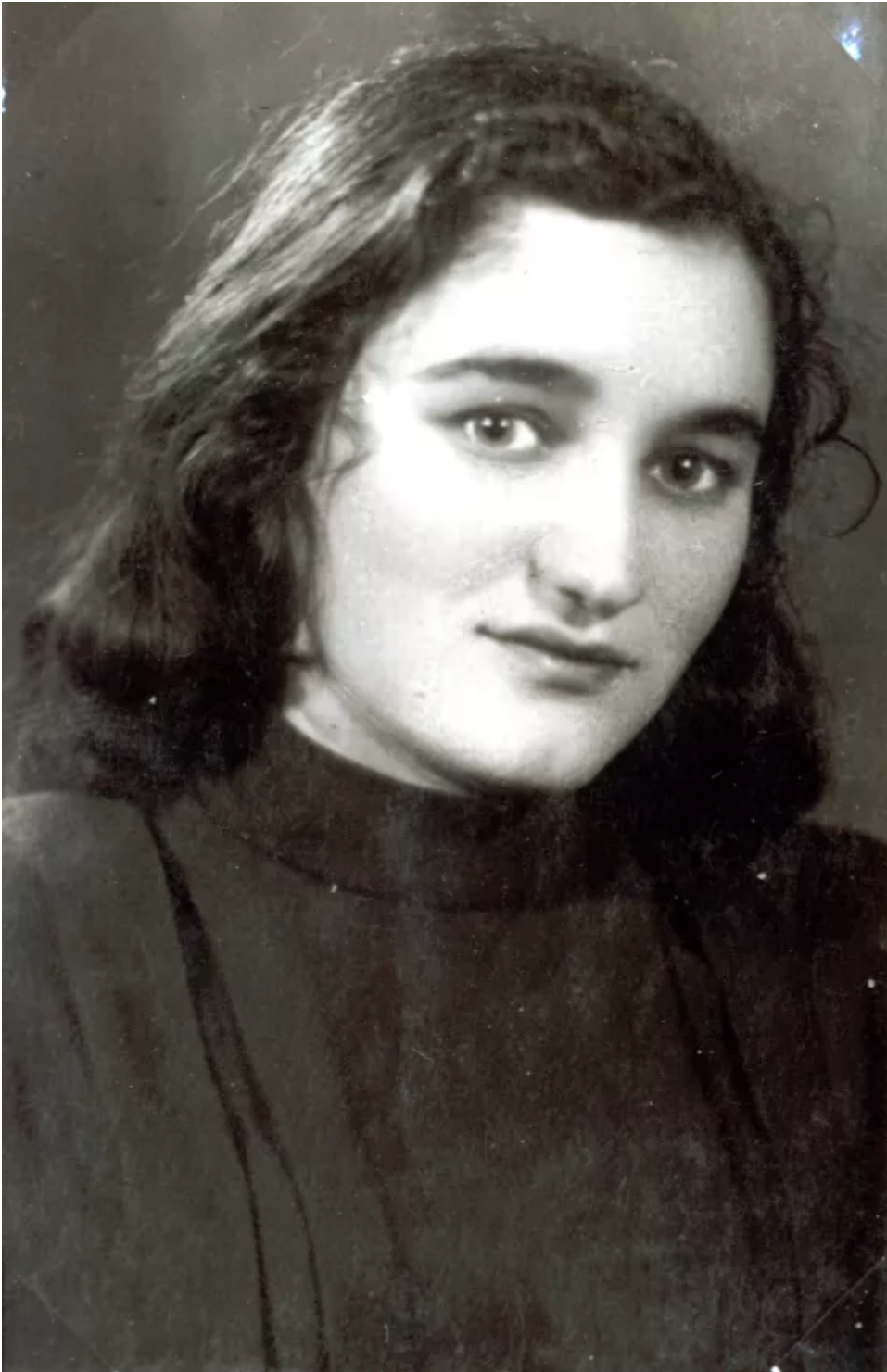# Jemma Grinberg

That's me, Jemma Grinberg at age 20. The photo was taken in 1950 in Kiev. Grinburg is my maiden name. I have never been married. I was born in Astrakhan on 6 January 1930. . My first memories in life date from around 1933, when I was three years old and we lived in Sestroretsk near Leningrad. My mother was director of the children's home and my father worked in Leningrad. We had a nanny. Once, when she was not around, I decided to give medical treatment to one of my dolls, and put it very close to the stove. It started to burn, and so did I. I was on fire when my nanny came in. I spent several months in the hospital. Those are some of my earliest memories. From 1935 we lived in Anapa, in the Caucasus. I faced anti-Semitism there for the first time. The

grown up son of our landlady called me and my sister 'zhydovki' whenever he saw us. Once, when we came back from the cinema we found our door lock covered in excrement. My father wasn't frightened, and sued our landlady's son for hooliganism. There was no law against ethnically based abuse at that time, but still the court sentenced Zhuk to one year in prison for hooliganism and anti-Semitism. After this court case, my father decided to leave Anapa, because this guy's friends were free and might have wanted to take revenge. We went to grandmother Riva's birthday celebration in Kiev and then to the village of Voronok, in the vicinity of Moscow. Although we knew that we were Jews, our parents tried to raise us without focusing on our nationality. Like any other children, we played the same games and didn't give a thought to who we were. We didn't know Yiddish, although our parents often spoke it. They didn't think it necessary to teach us Yiddish, or to tell us about the origin of the Jewish people, their history or religion. Vice versa, they were trying to suppress our interest in the Jewish issue, whenever we showed any. They realized that our life in the USSR would be easier if we were like everybody else.