

Basia Gutnik's Grandmother Revekka Gutnik



My grandmother Revekka Gutnik. This photo was taken in Kiev in 1938. My father's parents came from Radomyshl. I don't know why they moved to Kiev. My grandmother Revekka was born in 1885 and my grandfather Iosif was born in 1882. My paternal grandparents spoke fluent Yiddish and Russian. My grandmother was moderately religious and observed some of the Jewish traditions. She was careful about having separate dishes for dairy and meat products. My grandfather, however, didn't believe in God. He just loved fried fat, and my grandmother was very concerned that nobody else should use the same frying pan, especially the children, and she always pushed this frying pan to the farthest corner of the stove. Their children grew up as atheists. My grandmother was a heroic woman. She was a support to her whole family. Whenever they received food during WWII, she would divide it equally among each member of the family. When there was sugar she would give everyone their share and keep none for herself. If one asked, 'How about you?' she would answer, 'I don't like sugar.' She was a very handy cook. She could make cutlets from potato peels or flat bread from sunflower waste. Frania told me that when my grandfather lost his job he was so upset that he kept repeating in panic, 'What do I do now? What do I do,' but my grandmother didn't say anything - she just got some clothes together to take to the village to exchange for food, walking there with her older son. And the rest of her family just sat and waited

for her. She could adjust to any circumstance. And she never knew a life of plenty. Such was her destiny. My grandmother died in 1951.