

Basia Gutnik's Aunt Frania Gutnik



My aunt, Frania Gutnik. This photo was taken in Kiev in 1946. My father's sister, Frania Gutnik, who was born in 1909, must have studied at the secondary school, but I don't know for sure. After school, she took a course in typing. She was unhappy in her love life. She dated someone in the 1920s, but I know no details. They say she had an abortion, and that her lover then married a rich girl. Frania never married. She worked as a typist before the war at the Vehicle Yard in Kiev. During the evacuation she worked at a Soviet farm, excavated trenches, and was involved in the construction of fortifications. When we were in Inozemtsevo in the Caucasus, Frania went to the front with the SMERSH units. She had an affair with a married man at the front, but terminated their relationships after the war. She didn't want to destroy his family. The war was still going on when Frania returned to Kiev and began to work as a typist at the prosecutor office. She lived with her mother and her sister Debora's family. There was a horrible famine after the war in 1946-48. There were endless lines for flour and sometimes people had to stand there for a whole day. Frania gave everything that she received from her food ration cards to her mother, sister and nephews.

My grandmother used to exchange something from the package for some bread. Frania suffered a lot when her mother died. But she was a very sociable person - she always had guests and parties where she and her friends danced and sang Ukrainian and Soviet songs. She was an atheist. She dedicated the remainder of her life to her sisters' families. She died from a heart attack in 1961.