

## Sima Medved



This is a picture of me in the first postwar year in Kiev in 1946. In February 1944 my daughter and I returned to Kiev. My relatives went back to Novozlatopol. They worked at the collective farm: Sonia looked after piglets, Esther was a milkmaid and Iosif, Slava's husband, was a vet. Later some younger members of our family moved to Zaporozhye and either got a job or studied there. Returning to Kiev was a disappointment for me. Although I came back with an assignment of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and had brilliant references from my previous job, I couldn't find a job or place to live. I felt unwelcome. At first I didn't have a clue of what it was about, but then it occurred to me that the reason was that I was a Jew. I managed to get a 16-square-meter room. I went to the regional party committee where I met my former schoolmate. He helped me to get a position at the central committee of the Oil Industry Trade Union for the southern and central parts of Ukraine. Asia began school when she turned 7. She was an intelligent girl and successful at school. My sister Vera returned from evacuation and settled down with me for

a year. Then the owner of the room came back from Germany. He brought a truck full of goods with him. I was at work, and he threw my belongings into a shed in the corner of the yard. I was horrified. He returned with his wife, they had no children and they dared to throw me, a widow with a child, out onto the street! I went to my boss at the Oil Industry Trade Union and told him my story. He was a real bastard. He just said, 'There's nothing I can do for you'. I had a friend, Fenia Demirskaya, and Asia and I went to live with her temporarily. The chairman of the central committee sent me on a business trip to Western Ukraine. I was mad at him. He had no right to send me to a problem area when I had a small daughter whose father had perished at the front. However, I couldn't disobey my management orders, so I had to go. Western Ukraine joined the USSR in 1940. [Editor's note: It was in fact annexed by the USSR after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.] The situation was difficult. There were bandits in the woods who hunted for Soviet leaders. [Editor's note: They were fighting against the communist rule.] Women weren't supposed to be sent to such unstable areas, but I was an industrious employee and went there. I left Asia with my friend. My assignment was to restore trade unions in the oil industry. I moved from one place to another. I had a vehicle at my disposal. Then I returned to Kiev. Again I went to my boss to ask for his help, and again I heard, 'There's nothing I can do for you'. I didn't go to higher authorities, although I had every right to complain. I submitted a letter of resignation. Even now I think that I was an idiot to do so.