

Rachel Persitz



This is me. The photo was taken for my documents in Kiev in 1945. In autumn 1934 I entered the Rabfak, a school for young working people, at Kiev State University to finish my secondary education. In order to enter a higher educational institution I needed to complete my secondary education. During the day I worked at the garment factory in Podol, and in the evening I went to school, which was located in the city center near the university. I finished school and entered the Faculty of History at Kiev State University in 1937. In 1941 I did my last year at university. On 22nd June I went to university to take my final exam. I remember walking in the streets in the morning

when all of a sudden I had a premonition of something terrible to happen. I didn't know that Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, but I walked enjoying the sights of Kiev, thinking that it could all be destroyed because a war was inevitable. When I came to the university building, everybody was listening to the speech of Molotov on the radio. We passed our final exams, but we didn't receive our diplomas. Instead we obtained certificates of graduation from university. I obtained my diploma on the basis of this certificate when I returned to Kiev after the war. My sister's husband, Bencion, was summoned to the army on the second day of the war. Genia and I decided that we had to evacuate. My father didn't want to leave. He was convinced that the Germans were civilized people and weren't going to do Jews any harm. In 1944 we decided to return to Kiev. It was necessary to receive a residence permit for Kiev to go there. It was the period of the beginning of anti-Semitism, and Genia and I couldn't obtain any permit. We left for Kiev without any permit. In 1944, when we returned to Kiev, I went to work at a Russian secondary school in the center of the city. I was a history teacher at this school for 30 years.