

Irina Herman With Her Mother Hova Herman And Sister Polina Korotkova (nee Herman)



From left to right in this photo: I, my mother Hova Herman, nee Nepomniashchaya, my sister Polina Korotkova, nee Herman. This photo was taken on my sister's birthday in Tomashpol in 1951.

In 1946 I went to a local Ukrainian school. Life was improving. My mother began to receive monthly allowances for us. They were peanuts. My aunt Rieva provided the most sufficient assistance to us sending my mother some money each month. We wouldn't have survived if it hadn't been for Aunt Rieva's support.

My mother worked a lot washing floors, doing laundry, whitewashing and cleaning houses for other people. However, she couldn't earn enough for a living and so my mother began to sell things. She went to purchase goods in Vinnitsa. She bought soap and paints and sold them a little more expensive in our village. It was against the existing laws and my mother was often arrested. I already knew that if my mother didn't come back home in the evening I had to take her some soup or boiled cereal to a militia office. Sometimes she was released a few days later and once she was sentenced to a year's imprisonment.

During this year my sister and I lived on what Aunt Rieva sent us. We also were provided free lunches at school for being orphans. I remember us taking turns to go to school in winter having one pair of winter boots. When my mother was released Aunt Rieva took my sister to the Far East and my mother and I remained at home.