

Esphir Kalantyrskaya



I, Esphir Persova in Kiev in 1932.

In 1932 I went to work at the knitting garments factory of NKVD (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs). My job was to wind the yarn onto huge bobbins. In 1933 I went to Pochep for my first vacation. I met with my mother for the first time in 11 years. I spent there almost a month. It was a happy and sad reunion. One night my mother came to my bed, adjusted my blanket and kissed me. I cried for the rest of the night. I felt mother's care for the first time in many years.

In summer 1933 I visited my mother in Pochep and in the autumn of this year famine began in Ukraine. I remember dead bodies near the buildings and at the entrances in Kiev. I saw them in the morning. During the day they were removed from streets. I received a food package at the factory where I was working. Of course, I shared it with my father's family. They had 3 children. Later I got a job at shoe factory #6. They paid more.

I wasn't a Komsomol member and didn't take part in public life. But I had many friends: Jews, Russians and Ukrainians. Nobody cared about nationality at that time. To be a good person was sufficient. My friends and I went to the cinema in Podol, to the beach and for walks. We always celebrated Soviet holidays: 1st of May, October Revolution Day, etc. We went to parades. Several times the factory trade union committee granted me a free trip to a recreation home. I rested at the Belaya Dacha recreation center in Irpen near Kiev. I felt very comfortable and equal to other young people staying there. I also rested in Kislovodsk, Caucasus, and went to the sea.