

Esphir Kalantyrskaya Together With Reposing Recreation Home "Belaya Dacha"



I, Esphir Persova, at the resort in Kislovodsk in 1939.

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. I was there cured and reposed. There was much people from different

cities of USSR, different nations. All well pertained to one another,

was not no discords.

I still lived with my father and Sophia before WWII. Clara lived with her husband and Grigory went to the hostel. I could go to the hostel, too, but my father fell very ill. He had cancer and was ill for a very long time suffering great pains. I couldn't leave Sopha alone with him. Father died in 1938. Sopha didn't remarry.

In 1944 I went to work at the Kiev meat factory. They paid good salary. I had a difficult task to bring up Manya. I realized that I wouldn't cope alone. I had met Grigory Kalantyrskiy a Jew before the war. He was ten years older than me and was at the war from first to last day. He had a wife (Lisa) and a daughter (Sima) before the war. Lisa and Sima stayed in Kiev and shared the fate of thousands of Jews - perished in the Babiy Yar. Grigory proposed a marriage to me. I didn't love him at all, I didn't even like him, but I agreed. He was a butcher at the market, he earned a lot of money and he treated Manya and me well. I agreed for the sake of Manya who I loved with all my heart. She loved me, too, and sometimes she called me "Mummy". In 1946 we registered our marriage. We didn't have a wedding party. My daughter Faina was born in 1947. There were four of us living in one room in Podol.

I will soon turn 90. I am constantly thinking about the life I have lived. My daughter is at work and I am alone at home. I can't watch TV due to my poor sight. So, there is only one thing left for me to do; and that is - to think about the past. I have lived my life without love. Perhaps, it is not good. But what is love if it causes so much suffering as it did to my mother and us.