

Lev Dubinski's Mother Maria Dubinskaya



My mother Maria Dubinskaya, photographed on her 87th birthday. This was her last photo, taken in Kiev in 1980.

In 1944 my wife Elena, our 3-year-old daughter Irina and my parents returned to Kiev from evacuation. There were neighbors residing in our apartment. They didn't want to move out and Elena, our daughter and my parents had to live with my mother's sister Elia in Institutskaya Street. There was too little space for all of them. They lived in a garret and there was no gas or toilet there, of course. My mother cooked on a primus stove. Elena told me that every evening she rushed home to make sure that a dry wooden house was still there. Elena went to work as an engineer at 'Ukrgiprogas' Institute, my father was a shop assistant in a hardware store and my

mother was a housewife.

In 1946 when the war with Japan was over I returned to Kiev. I had to apply to court to have our apartment back. The court refused us since there were no archives left after the war and there was no solid evidence that the apartment belonged to us. I got a good job of personal assistant to the Minister of Transport. I got a letter of recommendation at work that I was told to take to Rudenko [General Prosecutor of the USSR]. I took all documents from the court, including a letter from my work and a letter of solicitation signed by Maxim Rylskiy, a well-known Ukrainian poet that was a deputy at that time to Moscow. I had to wait for my appointment for 3 days. The Prosecutor was an overpowering man. He was sitting at his desk in a long office and when I entered the office I heard him saying 'Well, and how is the captain doing?' I was wearing my military uniform. I said 'The captain cannot accommodate his family in our own apartment'. - 'How come?' - 'Occupied'. - 'By whom?' - 'Neighbors'. - 'Do you mean to say that a combat officer that came from the war cannot accommodate his family in a normal apartment? Give me your papers and come back tomorrow'. He reviewed all papers carefully. When I came a day later his secretary had all my papers with his resolution. This was how I got back my apartment.

My mother lived with sound mind until the age of almost 90. She was the head of the household until the end of her life. She died in 1983 and my father died in 1987. They were buried at the Jewish corner of the town cemetery.