

Roman Barskiy's Mother Bertha Kazakova



My mother Bertha Kazakova in Kiev in 1947. We lived in a communal apartment with nine other families. 39 people, one toilet and one sink. There were many children in the apartment and we were friends. There were Jewish, Russian, Ukrainian and one Polish family in the apartment. We didn't always get along. The five of us ? my grandmother, my parents, Elena and I ? lived in a 14 square meter room. We didn't have running water. I used to fetch water from Bolshaya Zhytomirskaya Street, quite a long way. There was no heating, so I cut wood to take it to the 5th floor. We made a stove with a stack through the window. My grandmother cooked on this stove. The rats were as big as kittens. There was no furniture except two old and shabby beds tied together with a wire. I slept on the chairs. My sister slept on a box. When my parents' friends began to return from evacuation they stayed with us until they found a place to live. We got gas and running water in 1947.