

Amalia Blank



This is me as an elocutionist with the Kuybyshev philharmonic society during my performance. The photo was taken in 1954. During WWII my husband and I stayed in a small town in the Urals. I cannot recall its name. My husband worked as an electrician. Then I found out from the papers that the Moscow Jewish theater had been evacuated to Tashkent. I decided to go there. I did not want to ask Mikhoels for help. Somehow, we saved money for the tickets and left. We found out in what hotel Mikhoels lived. I called him and said that I was happy to hear my teacher's voice. He invited my husband and me to come over. He asked what he could do for us. I said I had not come to bother him with my problems, but to thank him that he and the theater were alive. We stayed in

Tashkent. I was offered a job in the drama school, where I studied. I taught there. In 1943 the theater returned to Moscow, and I stayed in Tashkent with my husband. My career as an actress ended there. I could not work in Russian theater, as I had a slight German accent; I was not accepted in any theater. I remained jobless and we decided to go to Kuybyshev, now Samara. I tried to go on stage again. I was an elocutionist in the philharmonic society, but it was not what I sought, though I was a success there. My husband found a job as a producer in children's theater. We marked Victory Day in Kuybyshev. It was a happy day. All people were so close. Strangers greeted each other in the street, hugged each other. I could not believe that the following day would be the first day of living in peace. I found out that the Lvov theater was closed down after the war. My husband and I had nowhere to go. We stayed in Kuybyshev, worked and lived somehow. Then in 1948 the campaign against cosmopolitans started. I was aware that they were against Jews. It was not even concealed. The Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, founded by Mikhoels, was divulged. There were incessant processes against Jewish cosmopolitans. There were more articles in the papers, TV and radio broadcasts, where outstanding scientists, men of art and literature were stigmatized. All of them were Jews. All Jewish theaters on the territory of the Soviet Union were closed down. Stalin closed them all. None out of the 13 were left. Of course, the greatest actors were sent to the camps or they were executed.