

Makhlia Khalzova With Employees



This is a picture of me looking through a microscope when I was trained to do tests in hospital. The photo taken in Krasnodar region in 1942. In summer 1941 we were all preparing for evacuation. My sister helped me obtain permission to evacuate with them. I had no documents or clothes with me. We reached Kharkov where I went to work as an attendant in a hospital and Itta worked in the hospital pharmacy. I did all the hard work washing and carrying wounded soldiers, washed blood stained bandages and cleaned the wards and surgery rooms until they began to shine. We were staying in the hospital since we didn't have a place to live. We had to forget our kosher habits and ate what we could get. We stayed in Kharkov until October 1941. The front was getting closer and the hospital moved to a settlement in Krasnodar region [150 kilometers from Kharkov]. I worked day and night in this hospital. The doctors, nurses and patients treated me well. We often went to the frontline by sanitary train to pick up the wounded. Once we had a wounded German soldier and nobody wanted to help him. I washed him and applied a bandage. When others asked me why I was doing that I replied, 'All soldiers deserve treatment. He must shoot, he has no choice - if he doesn't shoot he would be shot at. You know, he is a German, but he is a soldier and you are soldiers. Hitler is Satan'. I never kept it a secret that I'm a Jew and I do what I think is right. People appreciated my kindness and told me that I would live to turn 100 years. They called me 'Manechka' like my mother did. Nobody cared that I had no education or that I spoke poor Russian. There were representatives of various nationalities in hospital; nobody cared about nationality issues. There were only thoughts about victory over the Nazis. I found it interesting to look in the microscope when I came to the laboratory. One Jewish doctor said once, 'We need to employ Makhlia to do testing in the laboratory rather than wash floors. She must do blood testing'. The

director of the hospital, a major, liked this idea. I was given 20 hours of training. I had to remember everything by heart since I could hardly write. My trainers said that I was smart since I passed my exam successfully. I learned to do blood testing very skillfully. Our patients always asked for me to take their blood tests. There was another nurse that also took blood tests. Soldiers complained that it hurt when she took their blood, but there were no complaints when I did it.