

Maria Komarovskaya



I, Maria Komarovskaya. The photo was made in evacuation in Orenburg (Chkalov) in 1942. On June 22, 1941, Kiev was bombed at night. For some reason I did not sleep well that night and heard everything. But I thought it was military training. In those years all men were called up to the army for 2-3 months for training. In the morning, when we had our breakfast, our neighbor breakfasted with us because my mother invited him after his family had gone to the village for the summer. This neighbor was a Communist Party member. So, over breakfast some man came to this neighbor, whispered something into his ear - and the neighbor left immediately. We became anxious but did not link his leaving with the bombing. And a few hours later Molotov addressed the nation on the radio and said that the war had begun. Then we listened to the famous speech of Stalin, "Dear brothers and sisters, I turn to you, my friends...". I had just finished 8 grades and was going to Oster to my grandparents. Our life was hard, just like everybody else's life. We received bread for bread cards. We had to stand in lines since early morning, even night in order to get bread. I remember one time I stood in a line since very early morning, but the local women pushed me out of the line and I could not get my bread. They treated me like an enemy. But it was not caused by me being Jewish; I think they treated me like that only because I was not a local resident. I finished school in evacuation and entered university. A branch of the Kharkov Institute of Railway Engineers had just opened there; the main office was in Tashkent at the time. In 1944 I went to Kharkov together with other students of that Institute because Kharkov was already free of the Germans. My parents remained in evacuation. My father was badly wounded during the war so he was an invalid. When the war was over, we all returned to Kiev.