

Nina Kohut

In the city [the peasants] would buy corn, in order to bring it home and save their families. The militia would take it away. One girl was crying so much, I came home and asked, "how can this be? Why? It's hers. She bought it. Why are they taking it away from her?" My father said, "You have to be quiet, don't say anything, because the walls have ears and eyes. Because of you we can all end up in Siberia." At that time, a truck would drive around and pick up the dead. Some of the corpses were thin, skin and bones, others were bloated. And I would hear that they had died of hunger. And I asked, "how can they die of hunger if there's so fat?" My mother told me, "I don't know why, but they would fill with water." At the time, they would cover the truck filled with corpses with a canvas tarp. When I came [to Canada], in 1950 I was already living in the house where I live now. I was standing near the window and saw the garbage truck; I wasn't paying attention, but one day I was standing. My son was about one year old and had just started walking, and was walking on the couch in front of the window. I began to shake. My husband said, "What happened? Are you ill?" I said, "No, I remembered how when I was young, during the Famine, and people were falling, and they would put them on the truck and cover them with canvas." It was the same way the garbage here was covered.