

Klara Dovgalevskaya's Sister, Sonya Dovgalevskaya



This photo of my sister Sonya Dovgalevskaya, taken in 1936, is from the graduation album of the Medical Institute in Kiev. After our family moved to Kiev Sonya studied at the Medical Institute. She worked part-time at night as a nurse at the hospital and studied during the day. She very much wanted to become a doctor. Right before the war the atmosphere was disquieting because of talk about Hitler. I did not read newspapers, so I don't remember now if there was any information about Hitler's negative attitude towards the Jews. I think my mother knew about it from newspapers and was very anxious. Sonya was mobilized even before the war. She was a doctor.

Sonya was killed in Kiev. A neighbor from our yard told me how it happened. Sonya served in the army and took part in the defense of Kiev. When the Germans were already in Kiev, she came to our house. She was not wearing her military uniform, but a light Ukrainian blouse. From her friend Manya she took the keys to our flat that I had left for her, went into our flat, and began to look for some clothes. It was late September, rainy and cold. She asked Manya for a coat, but Manya said there were no clothes there, that the Germans had probably stolen everything. But Sonya should have had her own keys! So, Manya went out of the yard behind Sonya and pointed her out to the Germans who were passing by. They caught up with Sonya and took her with them. The neighbors said they saw that Sonya and other Jewish women were led out of the Gestapo gates on Vladimirska Street and put on a truck. Rumor has it that they were taken to Babi Yar and shot there.