

Mark Golub's Brother Lev Golub



My brother Lev Golub on a photo taken in Kiev in 1941. He was 4 years old. Lev was born on 23rd April 1937. My mother spent a lot of time taking care of him because he was very capricious and sickly. My grandmother Enia came to help my mother look after the baby. He wasn't circumcised, because any religious acts were persecuted by the authorities at the time. I was too small when Hitler came to power and don't remember anything about it. But when I was studying in school, I knew that fascism was the main enemy of the Soviet people. This was propagated in the mass media, in literature and at the cinema. I remember the film entitled *If There is a War Tomorrow*. My friends and I watched it several times and sang the song 'If there is a war tomorrow and we have to go, we need to get ready today'. This film was made in 1939 before the non-aggression pact with Germany was signed [The interviewee refers to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.] This was a very characteristic film of that time. It described a war with Germany that would be over within 3 days.

That was what we were convinced of. And that was why first days of the real war came as such a shock. We were prepared for a prompt victory. We were sure that if an enemy attacked us we would win victory within 3 days. We had military training at school. We went to a park where we dug trenches; the boys were snipers and the girls were medical nurses. We were trained to use gas masks and to shoot. There was a very serious militarization campaign going on. The Soviet-Finnish war disillusioned us to some extent. It showed that our army wasn't quite as powerful as we had imagined, and that the war might not be as victorious as we were convinced it would be. Considering all the circumstances, the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was a surprise. It suddenly turned our enemies, the fascists, into friends and allies. I remember very well the first day of the war, 22nd June 1941. I had finished the 6th grade. It was Sunday and we were supposed to go to the country. At that time my father's sister Riva was staying at my grandmother's in Bessarabka in Kiev, and she was to join us for this trip. An alarm was given in the morning, but it didn't concern anybody. People thought it was part of the military training sessions that were conducted rather often. Riva was forced to hide in an entrance of a building on Kreschatik Street, Kiev's main street. She came to us around 10. We understood that the traffic wouldn't work until the alarm was over and that our trip was to be delayed. Then our neighbor told us that a woman in Kreschatik said that the aviation plant in Sviatoshyno was bombed. Then the planes came flying and guns shooting at them. People were used to it, because such trainings were quite often. Molotov spoke at noon announcing the beginning of the war with Germany. The first thing I saw when I went onto the balcony were lines of people at the stores buying up everything they could. The distillery where my mother was working [when the war began in 1941] was not evacuating, and it was difficult to go on one's own because of the panic and the crowds of people at the stations. Therefore, it was decided that my mother, my father's sister Riva, Lev and I would go to Kharkov with the employees of Kiev's Military Hospital as my grandmother's sister Genia and her husband Yakov Schwartz' relatives. We went by boat at the beginning of July.