

## Simon Grinshpoon's Sister Polia Sementsova



My sister Polia Sementsova [nee Grinshpoon]. The photo was taken in Kiev in 1945 after she returned from evacuation. Polia married a man from Kiev, Jacob Sementsov, in 1938. Jacob was a Jew, and his real surname was Sohn. Since his father was a NEP-man he decided to change his name to avoid any problems in this regard. Polia and her baby daughter Nelia were in Kiev, and her husband Jacob was in the army. I asked my commanding officer for a truck and drove Polia and her daughter to the parents of my Jewish fellow soldier. On 20th September 1944 I was severely wounded on my right hand and leg in the vicinity of Riga. I was dismissed from the army and returned to Kiev. I went to the address of the Sohns' house. Their neighbors told me that my in-laws and parents didn't go to Babi Yar on 29th September. They stayed locked in their apartment,

but they were betrayed by the janitor of the house that reported them to the police. They were all shot in Babi Yar around 10th October. I was looking for this janitor all around Kiev. If I had found him, I would have smothered him with my own hands. I found Polia in Kiev. Her husband Jacob perished at the front. Polia and Nelia were in evacuation in Syzran, Kuibyshev region. Polia washed dishes there to make a living. Later she became the director of a canteen in a military hospital. When Polia returned to Kiev in 1944, her apartment was occupied by another family. She got a room in an outhouse in the yard. Polia never remarried. Her daughter Nelia graduated from the Odessa Agricultural Institute and got married. She lived with her husband and son in Odessa. Nelia got cancer and died in Odessa at the age of 36. Her son lives in Germany now. My sister Polia died in 1991.