

Hana Gehtmann With Her Co-Student



This is my sister Hana Gehtmann photographed with her co-student after they passed their winter exams. The photo was taken in Kiev in 1938. They are 3rd-year students on this picture. My sister Hana is the one on the right, wearing a hat. In spring 1936 I received a telegram from Kiev. My sister had tuberculosis and was in hospital. I went to Kiev immediately. My sister got treatment in hospital and in a recreation center in Kiev. Then she came back to study in college. Each year in summer she got a free trip to the tuberculosis recreation center in the Crimea. She got better and began to see her fellow student Sasha Goldberg, a Jew. They planned to get married after finishing college, but life had its own rules. On 22nd June 1941 the Great Patriotic War began. We didn't know anything about the war in Europe and it came as a complete surprise to us. My sister

defended her diploma a few days after the war began and got a mandatory job assignment to Kryukov-on-the-Dnieper, a small town near Kremenchug [250 km from Kiev]. There was a railcar repair plant there. I quit my job because I decided to go with my sister. In February 1942, after staying in hospital in Kuibyshev for several month, Hana asked me to take her home. A doctor, an elderly Jewish woman, told me that Hana would die within a month and a half. I took her to our room. Her condition was getting worse. A month later Hana, who was confined to bed, asked me to take her back to hospital. She probably didn't want me to see her dying. She was taken to another hospital, not far from us. My sister couldn't walk and was carried on a stretcher. Hana died at night, on 14th April 1942. Some workers made a coffin and I and a few men got on a truck to go and bury my sister. We didn't bury her in the cemetery because the road to the cemetery was impassable. There were a few graves of people that had died on their way into evacuation near a forest. I buried my darling sister Hana, my closest and dearest one, near the forest.