

Gisya Rubinchik's Sister Sonya Lapis And Her Cousin Zoya Eidelmant



This is my younger sister Sonya Lapis and our cousin Zoya Eidelmant. The picture was taken in Shklov in 1939. My sister Sonya was born in 1930 and a small, thin, fair, and blue-eyed girl - that's the way I remembered her all my life. My mother had such a hard time with her and my brother, Yuda. They were very often sick, their teeth grew slowly, and they even fainted sometimes. At the outbreak of the war Sonya, who had only turned 11, remained in Shklov with our parents. At the beginning of the war I lost contact with them. I still have my mother's last letter from 27th June 1941. She wrote, 'Maybe we can survive this thunder-storm, as we did in 1918?'. She couldn't imagine what would happen to them, what vile atrocities the Germans would commit. They were all buried alive in Shklov, in the mound between the lake and the Dnieper River, in the very same place, where the mill once stood, where my father and grandfather worked. For three days the

ground was stirring on that spot, and groans of people were heard from under the ground. All my relatives were murdered there: my mother, father, both grandfathers, both grandmothers, my sister Sonya, Aunt Haya and her son Misha; and, thousands of other Jews. I didn't know about it back then. After the war I wrote many letters to official bodies in Minsk and many other places. I was searching for exact information, but it was in vain. I got no answer whatsoever. Later I learned everything about this tragedy from eyewitnesses. Zoya was the daughter of my father's sister Fanya. Fanya was a real beauty. She lived with her husband in Smolensk, and then moved to Lvov. For the first 10 years of their marriage they had no children. Then Zoya, was born. Zoya was in evacuation during the war and survived. She lives in Germany now.