

Milia Shykler



This is a picture of my younger sister, Milia Shkyler. The photo was taken on her 17th birthday in Putila in 1940. My sister sent this picture to me in Chernovtsy. In 1940 Stalin threatened the Romanian government to start a war if Romania didn't transfer its western regions, Moldavia, Bessarabia, the Carpathian Mountains and Bukovina, to the USSR. Romania agreed and all these areas joined the USSR. I was on vacation visiting my parents in Putila when the 'liberators' came to town. In 1941, ten days before the war, a bigger part of the - not only - Jewish population of Bukovina was deported to the North of Siberia on Stalin's orders. Wealthy and rich people were deported, including attorneys, lawyers and doctors. There were many weird things happening at

that time. But the weirdest thing was that it all happened within ten days before the war. There was a feeling of war in the air, but Stalin was adamant about his policies. My parents, my brother and my sister were also deported. I wasn't aware of it. I visited my family in May 1941 and returned to work in Chernovtsy. My family was accused of being wealthy cattle dealers, and that was sufficient for the deportation to Siberia. I learned about it after the war. I didn't have any information about them before. I didn't get any responses to my requests about them. Besides, they weren't allowed to write letters. They lived in a remote location in Siberia, worked hard and starved. In 1954 all members of my family were completely rehabilitated and returned home. Only my father perished in exile. Later my sister and brother got married and moved to Israel. I visited them in 1994.