

# Tsyliya Spivak's Stepsister Minna Rozhavskaya



Minna Rozhavskaya, my stepsister on my father's side. This photo was taken before her departure to study in Leningrad in the late 1930s.

In 1940 my stepsister sister Minna finished school with a 'golden medal,' i.e. with all excellent grades. Minna moved to Leningrad where he entered the Industrial College.

During WWII Minna stayed in Leningrad. She became a flak gunner and stayed in Leningrad during the siege. Occasionally we received letters and cards from Minna, cheerful and optimistic. She never wrote about the horrible days of siege. Minna even managed to sent us money: 100 rubles. We received the last card from Minna on the New Year eve of 1943. My sister sent us greetings and wishes of victory. This was the last time we heard from Minna. Later an acquaintance of hers wrote us that on 8 August 1943 Minna got into the fiercest battle for Leningrad. A group of flak gunner girls came out of a theater at noon. Minna was one of them. Many perished. Minna lost her arm, her leg and was severely wounded in her stomach. She died a few hours after. I took this letter out of our postbox and didn't tell my mother about my sister's death for a long while. I went to my neighbors from Stalingrad and had my cry out. A few months later those neighbors received a death certificate for their son and my mother went to support them in their grief. Then they told her about Minna. My mother grieved after her. She loved Minna like her own daughter.