

Evgeniya Shein And Her Pal Zoya Klyukova



To the left is my mother with one of her exiled pals. I only know her name -Zoya Klyukova. Mother sent that picture from exile, Tomsk oblast, Bakhchar district, settlement Vavilovka. The photograph was taken in 1949.

During the war, we were in exile. Nothing changed for us when the victory came on the 9th of May 1945. Men were sentenced for a certain term. Father was sentenced to six years of Gulag, without trial, and in 1947 his term was over. He was released from the Gulag camp and went to Estonia. In 1948 there was a decree of the Soviet government to exempt from exile those who were exiled being minors. I was also given an exemption. Only mother stayed in Siberia. She was on permanent exile and could only hope for a miracle.

I and another Estonian girl, Leya, who was six years older than I, went to Tomsk. We walked to Tomsk in deep snow, covering a distance of 250 kilometers. There was Taiga along the way. There was an old man with a sleigh in front of us. A wooden case with our clothes was on that sleigh. We couldn't go on the sleigh all the time, as the horse was lean and it wouldn't have been able to bear the extra load. From time to time, when we were too weary, he let us go on the sleigh.

Liya is still alive. We keep in touch via the phone. Her acquaintances lived in Tomsk. We stayed at their place for a couple of days and then went to Novosibirsk. It was easier to get home from there. When we were leaving, we left some money on the table for accommodation. But they found us at the train station and returned the money. So we reached Novosibirsk. The train station was huge, but there were throngs of people, and there was no space. Many people were coming back from evacuation. There were no tickets, but my fellow traveler managed to get some for us somehow. We reached Moscow by train and from there we went to Tallinn. This happened on 4th February 1948.