

Berl Idl Gershenovichus



This is my brother Berl Idl Gershenovichus. The picture was taken in Kaunas in the 1930s.

In 1910 Mother gave birth to my elder sister Hanna and in 1913 Rochl was born. On 14th December 1914 I came into the world. I was called Toybe-Rivke. My parents dreamt of a son and fate sent them two. In 1917 Efraim was born in and in 1920 the youngest son was born and named after Grandfather Berl Idl, who had just passed away.

I knew about the existence of Zionist youth organizations. There was Maccabi and some other organizations in Kaunas. I didn't feel like going there. There were other stronger tendencies at our school, namely the Communist ones. There was a free Socialist organization. When I was eleven, I became an underground pioneer and took an interest in Communist ideas. My sisters joined a Communist underground organization before me. First, my brothers were fond of Zionist ideas and joined Hashomer Hatzair. Then they followed our movement. We didn't have pioneer scarves. We were called 'pioneers without scarves.' We were involved in propaganda: spread slogans, distributed flyers praising the Soviet regime, made red flags, wrote slogans on them and then hung them up at night. We were regularly involved in political enlightenment, read the works written by the classics of Marxism and Leninism.

Unfortunately, both of my brothers, Efraim and Berl Idl Gershenovich, were killed in action in the Kursk battle. When we were notified of the death of our brothers, my mother started getting sick. My parents tried to stick to Jewish traditions, even in evacuation. Every morning they prayed for us, our children and husbands.