

Samuel, Anna And Helena Fajner



The first picture was probably taken in 1907 at a photographer's studio in Lodz.

I don't know the name of the photographer. I have this photo from my uncle Adolf Fajner, he sent me this photo after World War II, from England.

When I returned home from the Soviet Union, in 1946, I was in touch with my uncle Adolf Fajner, the one who lived in Manchester.

After the war he played the role of a link between the family members who were still alive.

Everyone would ask him to find out about the others. In this photo there is my mother's oldest brother Samuel Fajner, my mother Anna Fajner (later, after she got married, Anna Mintz.) and the youngest sister Helena Fajner, her married name was later Eichner.

And this photo was taken before the departure of Samuel. He took these pictures. As a keepsake.

My mother's maiden name was Fajner, she was named Anna, but everyone called her Andzia, Anele. My mom's documents said she was Chana vel Anna. She was born in Olkusz in 1891.

Her parents' names were Maurycy and Roza Fajner, but I don't know the maiden name of my grandmother.

Later her family moved to Lodz. There were very many of them.

In my father's family there were three brothers and two sisters [my father's siblings], but here there were as many as eight children [my mother's siblings]. Her sisters: Bella and Helena; and her brothers: Samuel, Jakub, Maksymilian, Adolf and Jozef. Eight altogether.

The eldest was Samuel Fajner, who served in the tsarist army and was involved in the social-democratic movement.

As you know, this was an illegal party in Russia, and right before the revolution of 1905 he was warned by some officers who were his friends, that his name was on the proscription list - as one of the people to be shot. He ran away from the army with his friend Roghovy, a native Russian.

They stopped at home for just about half an hour, they were so scared of the tsar's security forces following them. They emigrated to the USA, through Germany. And from about 1906 onwards he lived in the United States.

Up to about 1922 Adolf worked for my father. My father had an electro-technical establishment. Adolf learned the profession while working for him, but then things got difficult in Poland, so he emigrated to Germany [in the 1920s], to Dortmund in the Rhine region. He lived there until more or less 1938, working, among other things, as a taxi driver. Then he moved to Manchester in England.

He was struggling financially and he believed things would work out better for him in America. And just before the war he was planning to join his brother Samuel in Cleveland, he even sent all his belongings out there.

Then the war broke out and he stayed in England, in Manchester. He survived the war, just as Samuel's family in Cleveland did.

My mother's younger brothers, Maksymilian and Jozef, both took part in the 1905 revolution - they were on the barricades as young boys.

My uncle Jakub Fajner was quite an active member of Poalei Zion-Left.

The brothers of the husband of Helena, my mother's younger sister, that is Wolf and Jakub Eichner, were activists in Bund .

My relatives [in Poland] were so numerous, that when I arrived in Cracow after completing my high school finals in 1939, I had a difficult time stopping by and visiting each of them, to collect my presents... It was a family of about one hundred people, maybe more than that.

My mother was killed probably in Treblinka in 1943. My aunt Helena died in 1939 or 1940 - she had cancer. And uncle Samuel who had emigrated through Germany to the United States, died in 1950s.

In USA financially he was doing quite well: together with his friend Rogovy they were running this big construction company, which was well anchored in the market, and existed for many years.

He had three sons, and all his sons were educated, and during the war between the USA and Japan they were all commanders of American sea units.

They were captains of these small units and after the war they were decorated.