

Mina Beitler With Her Children Rochel, Chaim And Ruvim



From left to right: my grandmother Mina Beitler, her children Rochel, Ruvim and Chaim, who had just come back from the army. The picture was made in Vilnius in 1946.

My grandmother Mina gave birth to 11 children, out of whom 9 grew up and two died in infancy. Children were born almost every year. When grandpa was alive the family scraped through somehow. When he died in 1930, grandma had to earn for a living. She started selling fish. She and her sons Rubim and my father Leibl went to Klaipeda, Latvia to buy fish and sell it afterwards on our market. When she ran out of money, she borrowed it from people and paid back after her next trip.

During the war y grandmother Mina and her son Iosif were in evacuation in Kirov [about 400 km from Moscow]. Grandmother worked as a warden at selection station, and Iosif was a worker. There was a grief- Iosif died and grandmother got sick from that hard sorrow. She had lobar pneumonia, requiring hospitalization. We had to look after her. Mother got the cuttings from the gloves and made children's clothes from them. We took them to the market, sold and bought butter, honey and wheat bread with that money. Then we walked along the rails across the city to grandmother's hospital. No matter how hard it was, but grandmother Mina recouped. She moved in with us, when she came back.

Father's brother Ruvim was born in 1914. He was a simple man, always doing the jobs that other people were not willing to. He was a stevedore, a janitor, a cobbler etc. During Great Patriotic War he was in evacuation with grandmother's family. When he came back in Lithuania, he married Jewish Pole Lyuba, who came back from Dachau. Ruvim and Lyuba had a son Isaac. He is currently living in Israel with his family 7. He died six years ago, several month before his wife's death.

Father's sister Rochel, who turned 16, when the war started, was enrolled in soviet army as a volunteer. She was a nursing aide, went through entire war and got Red Star Order. After war she lived with grandmother Mina, then married a tinsmith Joachim. She did not have her own children,

so she and her husband fostered a boy Itschik. They left for Israel in late 1970s.

Chaim was born in 1927. He was 5 years older than me. We was my friend and protector when I was a child and I grew up. Chaim and grandmother were in evacuation in Kirov. He worked in kolkhoz, then he was drafted in the army at the age of 17. He was assigned to the 16th Lithuanian division. When the Great Patriotic War was over, he had served for three more years and came back in Siaulia in 1948. Here he met a wonderful girl Dina Levina and married her. She was born in a Polish town Vilnius in 1933. Dina's father survive by miracle during Great Patriotic War and moved to Israel via Asian countries. Father started inviting Dina to Israel. At that time former Polish citizens could leave for Poland. Dina and her husband left there in 1956, wherefrom they moved to Israel. Chaim died in 2004. Dina is currently living in Jerusalem with her children- son Aron and daughter Sophia. Dina has many grandchildren.