

Icie Kuczer



This is the only family picture I have which was taken before the Holocaust. It is my eldest brother Izaak Kuczer whom we called Icie. The photo was taken in Warsaw in 1938. I got this photo from his widow, Anka, when I visited her in Israel in 1961. My eldest brother, Icie [his official name was Izaak] rented a studio flat on Miedziana Street and had a reading room. I used to go to his place. I remember he had a funny washstand. It was concealed, in a kind of small cabinet, and on top of it there was something that looked like a shelf with books. When you opened the cabinet, there was a washbasin inside. Icie passed his high school finals before the war. As I calculate it, he was born in 1911. Uncle Ber helped my brother set up his reading room. It was the Jewish reading room called Parnas on Nowolipie Street. When the war started, he brought the book collection to our house and deposited it in our basement, where the workshop was located. I learned to read from that book collection myself. At that time I didn't go to school, and I recall reading in Polish: Little Jack's

Bankruptcy [by Janusz Korczak], The Heart of a Boy by Amicis, Korczak's King Matt the First. So there must have been Polish books, too. I remember Icie had such a beautiful tan - he used to spend time in Zakopane, in Sopot [Polish mountain and sea resorts], he was like a bit of a stray from the rest of the family. He wore bright clothes. He was certainly Mother's favorite. More of a dainty, compared to, for example, Rafal who was brawny, strong, made for physical labor. Icie was cut out for books. During the war my family was in hiding in the Warsaw ghetto. After the Great Action we remained in hiding and Rafal, Icie and Chaim, my brothers, were building a bunker. I don't know where they had found the people who gave the money for the construction of the bunker. The bunker was on Zamenhofa Street. We moved into the bunker in January 1943, I think. We had stocks of provisions. Between January and April, my brothers, would go into the sewer to explore the Aryan side. Every day Icie made notes on our life in the bunker; but all of that was destroyed there, nothing was saved. The marriage of Icie and Anka took place in the bunker before the Uprising in 1943. My father led the ceremony. At that time he didn't wear a beard anymore because the Germans had cut his beard in 1939. They tracked us down in the bunker in September 1943. Icie was killed in the fall of 1943.