Jankiel Baran At A Sport Parade

This is one of two photos I have got which shows my first husband, Jankiel Baran, taken in Bialystok, in 1941. It must have been a kind of sport parade, because Jankiel was a football player but I don?t know exactly for which occasion it was organized. Jankiel is the fourth from left. This photo I kept with me throughout the whole war. Even when I was a partisan in the woods. I have managed to save it. I worked in sports. I have the fondest memories of this sports period. I was the vice-president of the Bialystok branch of the Spartak club. I was deeply involved in sports, because I was a competitor. I competed in bicycle racing, I was even the runner-up regional champion. I was practically the regional champion, because the winner was a girl from Leningrad or Moscow. That's youth and young people; it's hard to talk about politics. I organized clubs in the region, we used to go to Hrodna to start clubs there. And that was where I met my first husband. I always had his photographs with me when I was in the partisan troops. He was the best soccer player, left striker, Janek, that is Jankiel Baran. He was a very well known athlete - he was one of the best soccer players in all of Belarus. I only lived with him for a month. I didn't want to have a rabbinical wedding, so I only had a civil wedding and I announced it to my parents. Father was outraged, but I only said that, Father can believe whatever he wants to believe, but he can't force me to do it. I explained that a married couple is a social unit, that this has nothing to do with faith. But my family somehow got involved, somehow they arranged it and organized a wedding for me. And this was a month before the war in May 1941. And then there was the night when the first bombs fell on Bialystok. Because I had survived 1939 walking from Bydgoszcz to Warsaw and then to Bialystok I immediately understood this was no drill, no lightning, but bombs. So I quickly gathered all the tenants on the 1st floor. I took my bicycle, because I rode like mad then, I had an excellent bicycle, semi-racing bicycle that I competed on, wooden rims? I went to the party secretary. He was sitting up there, he lived in the attic of a wooden house. I shouted to him: 'War!' and he replied: 'Are you crazy?' But I was right, it turned out it was a war. My husband and his brother were taken for military training, as conscripts, because there were two military training grounds near Bialystok. One day his brother came back and my husband didn't. He told me - 'don't wait, he's dead.' And that's how I was left alone.