

Fayvel Glezer, His Sister Hanna Yashgur And Their Aunt Riva Stupene



On the left is my father's sister Riva Stupene, in the center is my brother Fayvel, and on the right is my sister Hanna. This photo was taken in Birzai in 1940. My father's sister Riva, who was much younger than him, was an underground movement activist. She was a Komsomol member and later she joined the Communist Party. In the early 1930s, during the rule of Smetona, she was arrested and put in jail for eight years before the Soviet rule was established in Lithuania. Riva was released and married Kodulu Stupas, her Lithuanian friend. He was also a member of the Communist Party. On the first day of the war Riva, who was seven months pregnant, left Birzai, and I was to accompany her. My sister Hanna was born in 1920 and my brother Fayvel in 1921. Hanna became a dressmaker after finishing school. Fayvel went to work in a craftsman's shop in Birzai. In those years young Jewish people took an active part in political activities. Some young people were fond of Zionist ideas related to the restoration of a Jewish state. However, the poorest strata of the Jewish community, suffering from the ruling regime, strongly believed in Soviet Russia. My sister and brothers joined the underground Komsomol. My sister and brothers' friends had frequent gatherings in our home. They also gathered in a nearby forest where they played the accordion and danced, and they also read Marxist books and propagated their ideas. My parents were aware of their older children's hobbies. They couldn't help being concerned about them. By that time my father's sister Riva had spent a few years in jail for her underground Communist activities, and my father was afraid his children might suffer the same punishment. One day before the holiday of the 1st of May young people put red flags everywhere in the town. The following day arrests started, and my parents decided that Hanna had to leave town to escape arrest. Hanna went to Kaunas and worked at a students' diner. When the Soviet army came to Lithuania in June 1940 and the Soviet rule was established, my brothers and sister were just happy. Poor people were happy. My sister Hanna became an active Komsomol member. Shortly before the Great Patriotic War began she joined the Communist Party. She worked in the passport office in Kaunas. My brothers Fayvel and Falk also became active Komsomol members. Fayvel was seeing a Jewish girl from Birzai and was thinking of marrying her.