

Hana Rayzberg With Her Friend Rokha Feiman



This is me and my closest friend Rokha Feiman. She came to study in Ludza from a small town and stayed in our family. We became very close friends. This photo was taken in Ludza in 1940.

In 1940 Latvia was annexed to the USSR. I remember that the Soviet military were given a warm welcome, at least, in Ludza. There were meetings in the market square. Soviet military walked the streets with accordions singing Soviet songs. Residents of Ludza also sang and danced in the streets. Girls wore red kerchiefs on their heads. There was a wooden stage installed on the square and the Soviet military arranged concerts there. We, the children, joined the festivities and it was a lot of fun. Soviet military were accommodated in residents' houses. Two of our rooms were given to Soviet lieutenants. I remember that one of them came from Sverdlovsk region. His name was Kryuchkov.

The Soviet authorities closed the Jewish school in Ludza. Our gymnasium became a Latvian general education school. We started studying the history of the USSR. My friends used to visit me in the evenings and our tenants joined us for an evening. We were flattered by this attention the officers in their uniforms showed us. They told us about the USSR and their life. Sometimes they sang Russian songs, and one of them played the accordion.

My close friend Rokha Feiman came to Ludza from a small town in 1938. She had finished her studies in a six-year Latvian school and had to move to a bigger town to continue her studies. In Ludza she entered a Latvian commercial gymnasium. Rokha's parents rented her a room from us and we shared our meals with her. She was three years older than me, but this fact didn't affect our friendship. We were like sisters. Rokha helped me with my Latvian. She stayed with us till the end of June 1941 when she went home on vacation.