

Benjamin Ronder



This is my brother Benjamin Ronder, The picture was made in Kedainiai in 1930s.

I was born in Lithuanian town Kedainiai [about 100 km to the west from Vilnius]. In 1920s-1930s it was a small district town. The population was a little bit over three thousands, two thirds out of which were Jews. There were strong Jewish traditions in town.

My father cultivated cucumbers and sold them wholesale. I do not know for sure how my parents met, but I think they had a prearranged marriage. In 1898 my parents got married in chuppah in the main synagogue of Kedainia. There were a lot of guests at the wedding, Jewish musicians. In word, it was a true Jewish wedding.

In a year, in 1899 my eldest brother Abel was born and in 1902 -David, in 1904 - Mordechai, in 1906 - Leibl, in 1910 - Menachem, in 1912 - Benjamin, and in 1914 - the only sister Beile.

The house, where I was born, was one-storied long building made by grandfather Leibl, which was practically out of town, close to the gardens. I vaguely remember that place. When the family was getting larger (practically all my brothers, beside my single brother Menachem, Leibl, who left for Argentine and Morduchai who left for Meriampol) brought their wives in our house. Then started having children, there was less and less room. Then mother sold the old house and bought another one in the downtown. It was kind of angular, two-winged, two storied wooden house like most Lithuanian houses. There were seven rooms, a large kitchen, where the whole family met at dinner in the evening.. Our family was neither rich nor poor. We had a modest living, but had all necessary things my mother and brothers worked very hard. They did not have easy bread.

Benjamin, the youngest brother, was an underground komsomol member. When the Soviets came to power, Benjamin started working as an accountant in one of the soviet organizations. He married local Jew Miriam Ioffe. Miriam got pregnant before the outbreak of war. She and Benjamin were shot during the first days of occupation in Kedainiai. along with other komsomol members.