

Removing Of Ashes Of Rolnik Mikhey (Maria Rolnikayte's Uncle) At The Per Lachez Cemetery



Mikhey was one of my father's brothers. He finished his grammar school and left for Paris knowing nothing about French language. His first letters were very sad and melancholic. Grandmother used to send him black bread and stuffed geese taking a convenient. She thought that it would help him to overcome nostalgia. Uncle wrote 'It was so tasty that I am ready to run home afoot'. But a year later he entered Sorbonne. He was very talented. Later he became a well-known lawyer and all his colleagues were surprised that he was not French: by that time he spoke excellent French. In 1938 he managed to arrive to the wedding ceremony of his sister. He crossed Germany to reach Riga, and we all worried about him, because Hitler was already in power.

When France was occupied, my uncle was taken to a concentration camp. All prisoners held him in high respect. Fascists took him away for execution at night, because they were afraid of prisoners revolt. He was held in respect not only by prisoners: before the shooting executioners offered him to bandage his eyes, but he refused. After the execution the general in command kicked my uncle's body and said 'He was a hundred-per-cent he-man'. I visited France many years later, but my uncle's widow refused to meet me. She said it was too painful for her. People considered me to resemble my uncle very closely.

Before the war our family was rather large. But my grandfather, the grandmother's sister, her husband with two daughters, and my father's cousin perished in Plunge. My uncle (my mother's brother) was killed in a small town Telshe. [Telshe is a town in Lithuania, situated 200 km far from Vilnius.] When Jews of Telshe were carried to the place of execution, he managed to escape. But fascists caught him and shot individually, so to say. They forced him to dig a grave for himself. Later some Lithuanians (witnesses) told us that he had gone mad: he understood that he was digging a grave for himself and went crazy (but it is impossible to be proved). And my aunt (his wife and 2 daughters) were killed in Shaulay ghetto. [Shaulay is a town in Lithuania.]

My uncle Berl (the shop owner) was exiled to Siberia [3](#) together with his family. They managed to get back only in 1956 or 1957. Later my uncle, my aunt and their daughter died. Their son lives in Israel now.

Daddy counted 49 members of our family lost during the war: his and mother's cousins, sisters, children ...

In our family only Daddy (he was at the front line), my elder sister Miriam and I survived. Miriam was in the Vilnius ghetto [5](#), but she managed to survive. After the war she became a student of the Faculty of Law at the Vilnius University.

Now she lives in Klaypeda. Her husband tragically died: he drowned when she was 39 years old. She has got 2 sons and 5 granddaughters. And she still works (notwithstanding her age). Together with her children my sister visits our town Plunge every year on July 18 (the day of execution of Jews in Plunge).