

Leon Kalaora And His Brother Izak With Workers In A Jewish Forced Labor Camp



This is the [forced] labor camp in Klisura village, Tran region. First on the left is Fiko Surojon, next to him is my brother Izi [Izak]. I cannot remember the name of the man next to my brother. I am first on the right. After the Law for the Protection of the Nation came into force in 1941, I was sent to a number of labor camps. I had to work first in the labor camps in the village of Beli Izvor, Ardino region in 1941, and in the village of Klisura, Tran region, in 1942. I have various memories from the different labor camps I have been to. I remember that my stay and my work in the second labor camp were more unpleasant than those in the first one. I was there once again for six months. Everyone in the camp worked very hard and the food was complete rubbish. I remember the hunger. We were hungry all the time. The food was always bean soup with hardly any beans in it. So, we, the prisoners, made jokes over our plates, calling, 'Hey, show up!' to the little bean at the bottom of our plates...It was very miserable. The first three months we wore clothes given to us by the state, but then they made us work with our own clothes, which turned to shreds right away. 42 people lived in one tent. It was raining often. And when it stopped raining outside, it rained for another hour inside our tent. Despite all that, there were some nice people among the commanders, who were all Bulgarians. For example, the commander of our labor group in the second camp was a great lover of music. Unfortunately, I do not remember his name. Thanks to him we managed to arrange for the great violinist, pedagogue and future professor Leon Surojon to be exempt from work. We wanted to spare his hands. He, in turn, became our courier. He went to the village of Klisura, Tran region, to get the mail and learned the political and military news there, which he informed us about. We passed them on to the other groups. Moreover, Surojon was the first to know if the commanders of the camp groups had received an order dangerous for us, he warned us and we were more careful.