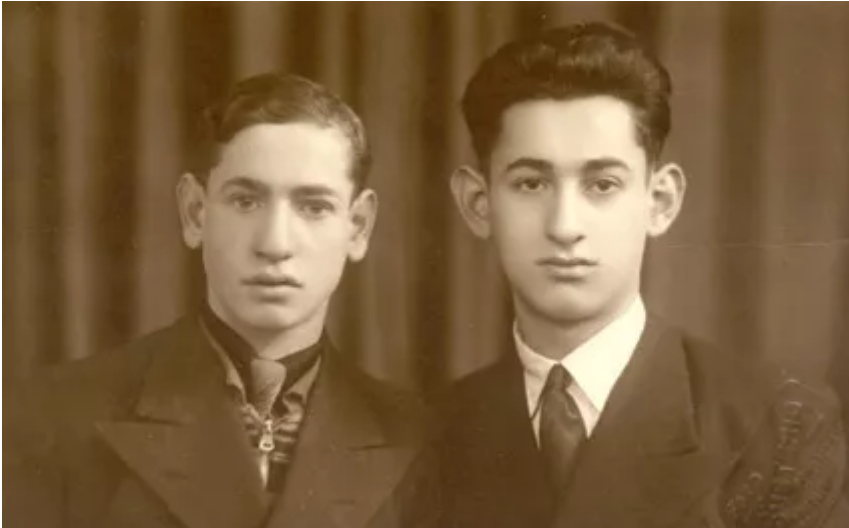


Gutman Smerkovicus With His Brother Itshak



To the left is my husband Gutman Smerkovicus, to the right is his brother Itshak, a Jewish poet. The picture was taken by photographer Shustav in Kaunas, at 4 Nemasa Street, in 1934.

My husband was born in 1916. Gutman came from a very poor family. Gutman's brother Itshak was also an underground Communist. Gutman and he composed wonderful verses, which were published in Jewish papers.

Gutman proposed to me and on 31st December 1940 we got our marriage registered in the marriage registry office. My parents didn't even insist on a Jewish wedding as they clearly understood that we would be against it, so they let us do as we wished. My husband and I moved into our house. We were given a corner in the drawing-room. Our nook was behind a partition. Gutman was loved by my parents and my mother literally adored him. Soon I got pregnant, but I didn't stop working. In mid-June 1941 I went on a business trip to take care of the problems of the local Rokiskis newspaper. I felt anxious and there were talks that German troops were deployed at the border. Late in the evening on 21st June I came back to Kaunas. At 4am the war broke out.

In 1946, Gutman found out that his loved ones had perished in occupation. His mother Leya was executed during the first big action in Kaunas ghetto. His sister Riva, not having found her daughters Rozele and Gitele, who were taken away during the action against children, surrendered for an execution. My husband's favorite brother, Itshak Shmerkovich, a talented Jewish poet, lived to see the liberation. He was very exhausted and famished. On the first day when he ate a lot of food, he died from volvulus. Gutman took the death of his kin really hard.