

Riva Smerkovicene With Underground Communists And Komsomol Members



This picture was taken in early 1941 at the reunion of all underground Communists and Komsomol members, who were in exile. When the Soviet regime came to power, we became free and happy people. I am sitting on the floor on the left, my friend Mira Danayte has a white collar shirt. She was a partisan and died during the Great Patriotic War. I don't remember the rest.

In summer 1940 I was exiled to Onuskis. Of course, I had things to do when I was in exile. I even managed to establish a Communist group. We held demonstrations against the Smetona regime. Here in Onushkis, I found out that the Red Army came to Lithuania. We were delighted by the event and went out with the welcoming slogans. There was a lot of work apart from that: we had to organize accommodation for the Soviet military. I was eager to do that and organized accommodation for the Soviet soldiers. We were so happy to see them. We held them tight. In a while I came back home. Here I was met by my friends and family. My sister Hanna was set free from imprisonment. She worked in the nationalization committee, dealing with expropriation of the property of the rich and capitalists. I was appointed to the editor's department of the Jewish paper *Dir Enes - Pravda*. That paper was published illegally before the Soviets came. Now it became the leading Yiddish Communist press for the Jewish population of Lithuania. I was often on business trips and collected materials for my articles.

We had a wonderful life. We lived to see things that we'd been waiting for for years. The power in Lithuania belonged to the poor. It was an overall euphoria. We went to the cinema, enthusiastically watched Soviet movies, walked in the parks and squares of our native town.