

A Group Of Henryk Prajs' Friends



This is a group of my friends from Gora Kalwaria. I knew them very well, but they all were a few years older than me. Second from right in the second row is Mojszele Rawski and at the top standing is Lajzer Benet. Second and third from left in the first row sitting are the Wajnsztok sisters and first and second in the second row are Ewa Zylberszporn and Roza Benet, Lajzer's cousin. Mojsze Rawski and Lajzer Benet were my best friends. They were five to six years older than me. Mojsze Rawski was a shoemaker. He moved to Palestine before the war. I visited him in 1965 in Netanya. Lajzer Benet stayed in Poland and he died during the Holocaust. He was a very good singer. I was told he had sung even in the train to Treblinka. They both were members of Poalei Zion party. Many of my friends left before the war, Mojszele Rawski was one of them. At first before leaving they were Hahalutzim. They formed teams and took up the toughest tasks, trying to prepare for Israel, to build their country. They knew beginnings are always tough, so they learned to farm, to work in a sawmill, they learned the trade of masonry, all the worst drudgeries. There were two kibbutzim in Gora Kalwaria. One belonged to the right-wing Zionists, or Grinbaum's democratic Zionists in other words. It was located in a house on the corner of Polna and

Dominikanska streets. The whole upper floor was theirs. They had many talented people among them - there was a painter for example, she painted landscapes. The other kibbutz was on Ksiedza Sajny Street, the one leading down to the river. I don't remember what group they were. My organization, Right Poalei Zion, didn't have a kibbutz in Gora Kalwaria. If one of us wanted to join a kibbutz, he had to go to the eastern regions of the country. Lots of folks were preparing for that, but I doubt if all of them actually left. It was hard to just leave your father, your mother, your brother, and go. I didn't take part in kibbutzim activities. Neither did I think about leaving for Israel.