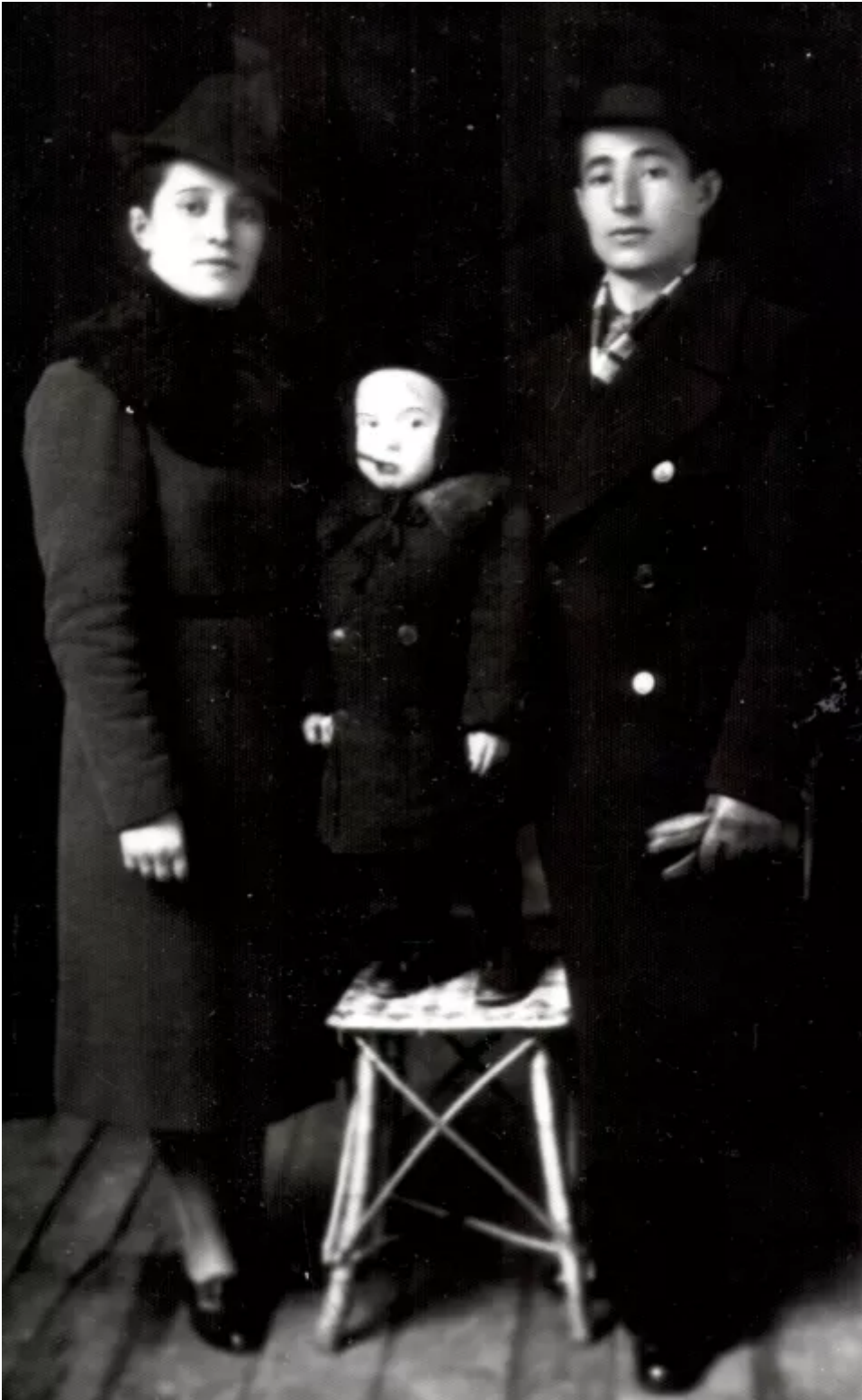


Riva Rybakova, Moisey And Shmil Rybakov



This is my sister Riva Rybakova (left) and my brothers Moisey (right) and Shmil (in the center) Rybakov. This photo was taken in Rezina in 1939. Moisey was born in 1918, Riva in 1924, and Shmil in 1936. He was loved very much and was affectionately called Shmilik. My brother Moisey finished a vocational school in Rezina and worked as a mechanic in Bucharest. Riva studied at school. When the Great Patriotic War began in 1941, Riva, Betia, Shmilik and I rushed to evacuate. There were five of us left: my mother, Riva, Betia, Shmilik and I. Aunt Lida and her daughter had

passed away. One day a woman told Riva to go to Bogdanovka to bury her mother. My mother went to the village the day before, and while she was doing the washing on the bank of the Bug, a policeman killed her with his rifle butt. Riva was eighteen by now. Somebody told her that the situation was better in Odessa and she decided we had to escape to Odessa. It was winter and there was a lot of snow. Betia could hardly stand on her feet, and Shmilik couldn't move at all. I was more or less all right. We decided that Riva and I should go. When my brother heard that we were leaving he didn't want to let us go. I lifted him: he was as light as a dove. He couldn't walk and Riva decided that we should go. I don't know how far away from Bogdanovka we walked, but Riva realized that I couldn't walk any further. We stayed overnight at a farm. I remember the owner: Saveliy Ischenko. Riva asked him to keep me for a few days till she came back for me. If the situation with the Jews was better in Odessa, she would come for me and we would also take Shmilik and Betia with us. She left. A week later Saveliy told me that his neighbors had learned about me and he couldn't keep me in his house any longer. I had to leave. It was January 1942: it was cold and there was snow. Saveliy rode me to Odessa in his sleigh covering me with straw. I knew that Riva was to be in Peisach's apartment and went there. Our neighbor, who was an ethnic German, gave me shelter. It took her quite a while to convince me to go inside: I had lice. My fur collar on my coat was swarming with bugs. She put some straw into a carton box for me to sleep in. I'm grateful she didn't report me to the authorities. She told me that Riva had come to Odessa. It was true that there were about ten days, when Jews weren't persecuted, but it was only a trick that the Romanians played to set a trap for the Jews who had been in hiding. When the Jews came out of their hiding places, the trap closed. I knew these Jews had been taken to Beryozovka and killed. I had nothing to do in Odessa and started on my way back. I was still hoping to find Riva, who was to go back to Saveliy's house for me. I was hoping we would be able to help Betia and Shmilik. When I reached Saveliy's place, he showed me a grave near his hut: 'Riva ran in to ask about you, when their column was passing by. They killed her in the morning and I buried her here'. I said: 'I have nowhere to go. I will go to where Betia and Shmilik are'. He asked, 'Back to Bogdanovka? There is nobody left there. They were all killed'. I had just turned twelve, and I was alone in the world. So, I returned to Odessa where I was captured and taken to the ghetto in Slobodka.