



Faye Schulman
Lenin, Poland

Jewish Women in the Partisans

“I want people to know that there was resistance. Jews did not go like sheep to the slaughter. I was a photographer. I have pictures. I have proof.”

– Faye Schulman

Faye Schulman was born on November 28, 1919 in Lenin, Poland. Lenin was a town of about 10,000 people, and nearly half of the population was Jewish. Faye was one of six children. Her father was a businessman and was very generous to the poor. Her mother worked as a cook, selling food to Polish officers in town.

Faye's older brother Moishe began teaching her to assist him in his photography business when she was ten years old. Faye learned to mix the chemicals for his darkroom, and at 16 years old she left home to run his studio in Luniniec. These photography skills would later save her life.

After Germany broke its non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union in 1941, Lenin was occupied by the Nazis and a ghetto was established. On August 14, 1942, the Nazis killed 1,850 Jews from the Lenin Ghetto, including Faye's parents, sisters, and younger brothers. They spared only 26 people that day. Among the survivors was Faye, saved for her photographic abilities. The Germans ordered Faye to develop their photographs of the massacre.

During a partisan raid, Faye fled to the forest and joined the Molotava Brigade, a partisan group composed mostly of escaped Soviet Red Army POWs. She was accepted because her brother-in-law had been a doctor, and the partisans were

desperate for someone who knew anything about medicine. Faye served the group as a nurse from September 1942 to July 1944, even though she had no previous medical experience. The camp's doctor was a veterinarian.

During a raid on Lenin, Faye recovered her photographic equipment. During the next two years, she took more than one hundred photographs, developing the medium format negatives under blankets and making “sun prints” during the day. On missions, Faye buried the camera and tripod to keep it safe. Her photographs show a rare side of partisan activity. She is one of the only known Jewish partisan photographers.

After liberation, Faye married Morris Schulman, also a Jewish partisan. Faye and Morris enjoyed a prosperous life as decorated Soviet partisans, but wanted to leave Pinsk, Poland, which reminded them of “a graveyard.” Morris and Faye lived in the Landsberg Displaced Persons Camps in Germany for the next three years and immigrated to Canada in 1948.

Faye lived in Toronto, Canada, and shared her experiences with diverse audiences. She had two children and six grandchildren. She passed away, surrounded by her family, on April 24, 2021. She was 101.