

## **Biography of Ginette Kolinka**

Ginette Cherkasky was born in Paris on February 4, 1925. Her father, Léon Youda Cherkasky, a raincoat manufacturer, was born in 1883 in Paris. Her mother, Berthe Fairstin, a seamstress, was born in 1889 in Pitesti, Romania. Ginette was the youngest of seven children, including six girls and one boy. She grew up in the 11th arrondissement of Paris, at 8 Rue d'Angoulême, after a brief time in Aubervilliers. She attended school on Rue Amelot and earned her primary school certificate.

In July 1942, to escape arrests, the family crossed the demarcation line clandestinely and settled in Avignon, at 72 Rue Joseph Vernet. Ginette worked with her parents and sisters at local markets. On January 16, 1943, her sister Léa was arrested in Paris and deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau on convoy no. 48, where she perished.

On March 13, 1944, Ginette was arrested in Avignon along with her father, her 12-year-old brother Gilbert, and her 14-year-old nephew Georges Marcou by agents of the Sipo-SD and the Milice. They were detained in Baumettes prison in Marseille and then transferred to Drancy before being deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau on convoy no. 71, on April 13, 1944. Upon arrival, her father and brother were murdered. Ginette was selected for forced labor among 91 women, while Georges was sent to the men's camp.

In October 1944, she was transferred to Bergen-Belsen and, in February 1945, to an aeronautical equipment factory in Raguhn, near Leipzig. In April 1945, she was sent to the Terezin ghetto camp, where she contracted typhus. She was liberated by the Red Army on May 9, 1945.

Repatriated to Lyon on June 3 via a medical evacuation flight, Ginette returned to Paris on June 6, passing through the Hôtel Lutetia. She reunited with her mother and four of her sisters. Upon her return, she weighed just 26 kilograms.

Ginette resumed working at markets and, in 1951, married Albert Kolinka, a former prisoner of war. The couple had one son. Starting in the 2000s, Ginette began sharing her testimony with young audiences and participated in educational trips to Auschwitz.