

Mira Dernovskaya's Maternal Relatives, The Etkins



This is a photo of the Etkins, my mother's family.

In the first row from right to left sitting: my grandfather Avraam Mordkhe Etkin, his wife Hana Lea Etkina, and their distant relative, maybe my grandfather's brother's wife.

In the second row from right to left standing: my mother Haya, her older sister Nekha-Dina with her husband, and younger sister Dveira with her husband.

My ancestors on the maternal side, the Etkins, came from Lithuania. My grandfather was born in the 1860s in the village of Yanovo, near Kaunas. He was born into a religious Jewish family.

He finished the Kaunas yeshivah and served as a rabbi of Porkhov town in Pskov province from 1914, though in his documents he was registered as a craftsman, a foreman in the bookbinding business.

Mum told me that grandfather, apart from his religious duties, was very much interested in engineering. In his last years, when he was already a very sick man (he had a bad heart), he asked his daughter, my Mum, to take him to town to listen to the radio.

The only loudspeaker hung in the central square then. Grandfather performed his duties as rabbi until his death in 1926. I was born later, therefore I never saw him, only heard stories about him from my mother.

My grandmother was born in the 1870s in Yanovo, also to a religious family. She married my grandfather, and their three daughters were born there: the eldest Nekha Dina in 1896, Haya, my

mother, in 1899, and the youngest, Dveira, in 1901.

Grandmother was a housewife, the wife of a Porkhov rabbi from 1914. Grandmother died in 1936 and is buried like grandfather, in the Jewish cemetery in Porkhov. All Jewish traditions were strictly observed in their family and their native tongue was Yiddish.

Nekha Dina - or as we called her by her Russian name, Nadezhda - was married, and her son was born around 1926,. Her husband worked in a warehouse and she was a housewife. They lived in Leningrad.

Dveira - whom we called Vera by her Russian name - was a beauty. A musician from an orchestra had fallen in love with her, he had a nickname 'Koppel-pipe', and his surname was Pasternak. He was very persistent courting her, and eventually she married him.

He finished a construction school, and later an institute, and became a builder. They lived in Ashkhabad, Turkmenistan. There, Dveira's husband first became site supervisor, then rose to chief controller of civil construction in Turkmenistan, and later worked in the Ministry of the State Control [this supervised state enterprises all over the country].

Dveira was a housewife. She had a sick heart. They didn't have children. Dveira died rather young, at the age of 45, in 1946, right after the war.