

Anna Ivankovitser's Maternal Grandmother Leya Schigol with Two Of Her Sons And Her Grandson



This photo taken in 1925 in Polonoye shows two of my mother's brothers, Motl Schigol (left) and Gershl Schigol (right). My maternal grandmother, Leya Schigol, is seated in the center. Lying on the floor is my mother's sister Esther's little son Erik. My grandfather and grandmother's family was a wealthy family. My grandmother gave birth to 12 children, six of which died in infancy. My

grandmother was a housewife, as was traditional at that time. She also had a housemaid to help her about the house. There was a big orchard in the backyard and a flower garden in front of the house. My grandmother kept a cow. My mother told me that had all the dairy products were made at home. My mother's parents were very religious. My grandfather and grandmother went to synagogue at least once a week, and they prayed at each meal, in the morning and before going to bed. My grandmother always went out wearing a wig. She wore it at home, too. She had long, beautiful silk and velvet gowns. She also wore a golden Magen David around her neck. They always celebrated the Sabbath at home. My grandmother strictly followed the laws of kashrut. They celebrated all the Jewish holidays. My grandmother knew all the prayers. She prayed at home daily. During the Soviet era my mother did not follow the kashrut and my grandmother visited us with her own kosher pot and plate. She cooked her own food and called my sister and me to help her eat it. She was very nice. She didn't wear a wig in those years. She covered her gray hair with a little shawl. She was still beautiful even in old age. She wore beautiful clothes. I remember she had a nice black suit. During the war we exchanged my grandmother's clothes for food. In 1940 our grandmother moved in with us. She was ill at that time. She died in 1941. Later, my mother said that the Lord felt sorry for our grandmother and spared her from all the horrors that we had to live through. My grandmother's funeral was in accordance with Jewish traditions. She was wrapped in a white cerement, a takhrikhim [shrouds] in Yiddish, on the floor. Everybody sat on the floor mourning over her. The rabbi of Shargorod recited the Kaddish over my grandmother's grave. We installed a Jewish monument of granite wood over her grave. I went to Shargorod 15 years ago and saw that her grave and monument were still there. My mother's brother Gershl and another brother lived in their own houses in Polonoye. Gersh perished in Polonoye. He and his family was killed, shot by the Germans in 1941. Motl, my mother's youngest brother, moved to the small town of Murafa near Shargorod and worked at the mill there. From among my mother's siblings who didn't go to America, only Motl survived the war. He and his wife and their children stayed alive. Motl died of cancer in 1957. My mother's sisters moved to America before the Revolution of 1917. Esther was the first to go. She was a communist and was involved in revolutionary activities. The police department became aware of this. My grandfather had acquaintances there and was told confidentially that they were going to arrest Esther. My grandfather told Esther to escape to America. She left in 1915. Esther married a Jewish man in America. I don't remember his name. He was an engineer. Esther was very good at embroidery. We had a few collars that she embroidered. But she didn't like housework and her husband did everything about the house, which he didn't mind at all. They had two daughters and a son named Erik. I don't remember their daughters' names. They lived in California. Esther visited the USSR twice at the invitation of the Comintern [Communist International]. She came on her first visit in 1925. She came with her family and we met Esther's husband and children. Her second visit was to Moscow in 1938. She went with Erik. They lived at the Moskva hotel. Esther's son couldn't adjust to the cold climate. He fell ill and died in Moscow.