

Anna Ivankovitser With Her Sister, Maria Ivankovitser, And her Maternal Uncle, Motl Schigol



This is a photo of my sister Maria, my mother's brother Motl Schigol and me. It was taken in Shargorod in 1939. 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 sister Maria was born in Polonoye in 1925. I was born in 1930 in Shargorod. My parents and sister moved to Shargorod in 1927. We rented an apartment in a very beautiful house in Shargorod. There were wall and ceiling paintings in the rooms. The landlord was a handsome old man, a Jew. His last name was Kipel. The landlord and his family lived in one apartment and the rest he leased out. Our apartment had two rooms, a hallway and a kitchen. It faced the yard. There was a shoe shop in two other rooms in the building. Kipel had a wife and a son. His son was married. Kipel's wife was a teacher at the Jewish school before the war. We were friends with that family. My father and mother lived in the bigger room and my sister and I occupied the smaller one. We had a leather sofa with a high back that my parents brought from Polonoye. My sister and I slept on it. There was a Russian stove in the kitchen that we used for baking bread. We had ceramic pots in which to cook food. There was no running water in the house. At first, water was supplied by a cart with water barrel, but later they installed a water pump near the house. There was a heating stove to heat the rooms. It was built into the wall between the rooms and was made of beautiful patterned bricks. In 1933 my sister began attending a Ukrainian school in Shargorod. In 1938 I went to the first grade at the same school. I don't know why our parents decided to send us to the Ukrainian school when there was a Jewish school in Shargorod before the war. We studied arithmetic, Ukrainian language and literature, calligraphy (I didn't like it) and had singing and dancing classes and physical education. There were quite a few Jews among the children and teachers at school. Shargorod was a Jewish town. The population in the central part of the town

was Jewish. Ukrainians lived on the outskirts of the town. The secretary of the district committee of the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] in Shargorod was a Jew, and all the officials in the town were Jews. There was no anti-Semitism in Shargorod. People spoke Ukrainian in town, but we spoke Yiddish at home. Many Ukrainians spoke fluent Yiddish in Shargorod. My sister and I studied at the Ukrainian school and knew Ukrainian well. In 1932 and 1933 there was a serious famine in Ukraine. My mother's golden jewelry, her wedding gift from her father Isif saved us from starving to death. We could go to Torgsin stores where one could buy food for currency or gold. Mama left all her jewelry in the Torgsin in exchange for cereals, flour or butter. Mama baked our bread herself. The famine was not so visible in the bigger towns, but many people suffered from hunger in the country. My parents had a few Jewish friends. My sister and I also had friends among the school children and neighbors. They were mostly Jews. However, we also had Ukrainian friends. My sister's classmate Gorbenko, a Ukrainian, often came to our home. During the war he brought food for us to the ghetto. There was no anti-Semitism before the war. I believe that if there were any expressions of anti-Semitism before the war, they would elicit nothing but surprise or bewilderment, so strange would they seem.