

Zalman Beskin`s Family



This is my grandparents' family. The photo was taken in Vitebsk in the 1920s. Grandfather Zalman Beskin died in 1938 (he is the one in the center with the beard); I don't know when he was born, but he died in Vitebsk. I was three months old when he died. Grandmother Musya died in 1953 (she is the one fourth from the left). She was the head of the family. My father Isaac (Mordukh Idel) Markovich (Motl) Kopelovich (second from the right) was born in 1901 in Dvinsk, and my mother Tsimlya Zalmanovna Beskina was born also in 1901 in Vitebsk (she stands, third from right). They were a handsome couple. They got married in 1922. I don't know any details. They certainly had a chuppah. My father was a follower of Leon Trotsky's at that time. But later he became a big follower of Stalin. And Mother told him, "Stop fiddling about with your Communist Party, I'm expecting yet another baby, who we are supposed to feed!" My brother earned his living by reselling things. He was born in 1924, Lev or Lyova by name (he sits with father). In 1928 my sister Sonya was born, Sofia. Uncle Ierukhim Beskin, Mother's brother left for Moscow with friends in 1925-1926 (he sits second from left). They became porters in Moscow, not having much of an education. And gradually, step by step, they made their way in the world. Some of them returned to Vitebsk, some were killed during the war. The eldest aunt is Anya Bessmertnova (she stands second from left); her husband Khapl Bessmertnov (he stands third from left) died under the wheels of a tram in Moscow. But trams don't gain such speeds in Moscow to run over a man. He was a jeweler, so it was a suspicious affair. Before the war they lived in Vitebsk and owned a big house there. Grandmother lived in Vitebsk with her younger daughter Tsilya Shagalova (she sits first from right). Her husband was called Efim (he stands first from right). Sofia Beskina, my mother's sister (she stands first from left) died in evacuation in Kazakhstan. They lived in horrible conditions and many people succumbed to disease and starvation.