

Rachel Persitz's Father Moshe Persitz



My father, Moshe Persitz, in Kiev in the 1920s. The photo was taken for a document and enlarged later. My father was the same age as my mother. He was born in 1892. He lived with his older brother Abram and worked in his shop. He met my mother in this shop in 1910. My mother worked in the same shop and rented a room in Abram's house. They fell in love with each other. My parents got married in 1911. They had a traditional Jewish wedding, although it was only a small one. The bride and bridegroom stood under the chuppah at the synagogue in Schekavitskaya street [this synagogue is still there]. There was a rabbi, and the closest relatives and friends were there. Abram paid for my mother's wedding gown and the rings. He covered all the other expenses for the wedding, too. This was all his support for the young couple. He probably wasn't very happy about Moshe marrying a poor girl whose parents didn't give her any dowry. My parents, and especially my father, were very religious. On Saturdays and on holidays my father went to the

synagogue in Schekavitskaya Street while my mother and I waited for him at home. Every day he put on his tallit and prayed. On Friday my mother made a festive dinner for Saturday: stuffed fish, chicken broth and challah. In the evening we changed our clothes and got together at the table watching my mother light candles and my father say a prayer. My parents didn't work on Saturday. In the evening we all sat at the table to celebrate Sabbath. We also celebrated all Jewish holidays. I remember my parents buying matzah and bringing it home in big baskets, covered with white cloth. We also had special Pesach dishes that mother took out before the holiday. Mother also did a general clean-up of the house before the holiday. She cleaned the windows and hung fancy linen curtains. She covered the table with white crocheted starched tablecloth. My mother did everything herself and managed fine - we never had any help for the housekeeping. . In 1941, when we went into evacuation, my father didn't want to leave. He was convinced that the Germans were civilized people and weren't going to do Jews any harm. He ignored whatever my sister and I told him and stayed in Kiev. Our neighbors told us how my father perished. On 29th September 1941, when all Jews from Kiev were taken to Babi Yar, my father stayed at home with two relatives. They decided to hide, but the wife of an old Bolshevik, Mikhailov, one of their neighbors, reported on them. At the beginning of October 1941 the police came to take them to Babi Yar.