

Sofia Ryzhevskaya With Her Son Lev And Mother Olga Gitina



This is my mother Sofia Ryzhevskaya, nee Gitina, (to the right) with her younger son, my brother Lev Ryzhevskiy in her arms, and my maternal grandmother Olga Gitina. The picture was taken shortly before my grandmother's death, when my mother and Lev went to see the relatives. The picture was taken in Ingulets in 1926. My mother's family lived in the small town of Ingulets not far from Krivoy Rog, which belonged to Dnepropetrovsk oblast. There were several Jewish families in Ingulets, but most of its inhabitants were Ukrainians. My grandfather's name was Morduh Gitin, and grandmother's name was Golda, but Ukrainian peasants called her Olga. Grandfather rented a plot of land from a landlord and grew wheat on it. When the children had grown up a little bit, they started helping out their father. My mother's family was neither rich, nor poor. Grandfather built a nice, spacious house. The family was large, and I don't remember the names of all the children. My mother was born in 1892. My parents got married in 1913. The first-born of our family, Mikhail was born in 1914, and named after my paternal grandfather. I was born in 1919 and in 1925 my younger brother Lev followed. Mother worked the hardest. She got up earlier than anybody. When we woke up, the bread had been baked and the food had been cooked. Mother managed to do all the things. First she helped Father with the field work. When the kolkhoz was founded, she worked there full time. She also had to raise four children. Except for her main job, my mother did odd jobs as well, as there was a need of money. She was teaching a few schoolchildren to cram them for the studies in the city. Mother was also a good seamstress. She had a Singer sewing machine. It was her dowry. Mother sewed things for our family, and besides she took orders from our neighbors. Some people paid her with money, others with food. All house chores and husbandry was in my mother's hands as well. Mother never showed that it was hard for her to do all those things. She was always smiling and joking. We, in our turn, tried to help her out as well.