

## Sima Perlova



This is my, Alexander Tsvey's mother Sima Perlova. The picture was made in 1920 in Polotsk, which is situated not far from the town of Drissa, where my mother used to live. Mother must have come to Polotsk to take a picture. The photo was preserved in mother's archive.

My mother's family lived in a Jewish town Drissa [now Verkhnedvinsk, Belarus, about 220 km from Minsk. ]. Mother's father Israel Perlov was the most revered man in the Jewish community of the town. I do not know what he did for a living. I did not know my maternal grandmother, not even her first name. Her maiden name was Novik. Grandparents had four children. Haim was the eldest (in Russian Efim), born in 1900. In 1902 my mother Tsilya Perlovà was born. Her Russian name was Sima. After my mother two sons were born: in 1904 Fayvel or Fyodor in Russian and 1907 the youngest Joseph was born. Grandmother died when she was giving birth to Joseph. Of course, it was hard for the widowed grandfather to take care of four small children. When the mourning period was over, he was married to the widow with a child. In 1916 their common child, Mikhail, was born. In 1918 grandfather died. Mother remained a full orphan at the age of 16. She did not even manage to finish secondary school. Mother and her brothers were totally unreligious.

I do not know how my parents met. It was a love wedlock. They had a traditional Jewish wedding. After wedding mother moved to father's house. They lived with his parents. Grandmother used to boss around in the family and had quite a difficult authoritarian character. Mother-in-law was hard on my mom and blamed her in everything. Mother was an orphan and her brothers were far away and there was nobody to stand up for her. Besides, nobody told my mother about father's disease-open form of tuberculosis. Father's kin was aware of it and they found it unnecessary to inform

mother of it. I was born in 1925 in the town Volyntsy. I was named Israel after my deceased maternal great grandfather. I do not know what was the reason of the tiff between my parents. All I know is that they separated in 1927. My father died from lung tuberculosis in 1927. He was buried in Volyntsy. I do not know where his grave is. Mother did not tell me hardly anything about father.

Mother's elder brother Efim finished vocational school. Then he left for Moscow. He must have insisted that mother also moved with him to Moscow. Efim did not have his place at that time, so he rented a room in house where common people lived. They were really indigent. We had a passage room. There was hardly any furniture in our room- 2 chairs, a table, mother's bed and my cot. We had nothing to live on, so mother found a job at sugar mill as a packager. I did not have a baby-sitter, so I went to work with mother. I was in the workshop observing the assembly line with sugar bales. In spite of the fact that mother was lonely and worked hard, she remained brisk and cheerful. Her life was extremely difficult, but I never remember her being despondent. In general, all Perlovs, including my mother were very energetic and vivacious.