

Lyudmila's Grandfather's Brother



This is grandfather's brother - I think his name was Nison, but in general they always called him Nikolay Iarkovich Golshmid. He was a student of the conservatory and this photo was taken in 1914. By the inscription on the reverse side, we can say that he sent this picture for memories to my grandfather and grandmother. He lived in Moscow and, probably, had just graduated from the Moscow conservatory. He continued to live in Moscow after the revolution, and after the Great Patriotic War. In this photo he is represented in a theatrical costume - he used to take part in operas as a supernumerary. He had not become a singer, because his wife would not permit him to do so, and he worked for a very long time in one and the same place - as a sales director for one factory. He died in the 1980s in Moscow. He had one daughter Victoria, who had graduated from a

college of law and worked in the Supreme Court.

My grandfather on the mother's side - Leib Meerovich Golshmid [the correct spelling is Golshmid, according to the documents. Most probably, the original surname Goldshmidt was changed in the course of time], - was born in the Ukraine in 1872, in the town of Smele, or Shpole, because he is registered in Mum's birth certificate as "Shpole resident". His family was rather well-to-do. Grandmother Rachel Moiseevna Golshmid (nee Eiderman) was also born somewhere in the Ukraine in 1881. Then it was Kiev province, and now it is the Poltava region. The parents proposed them to each other, before that they hadn't met. As it was customary in Jewish communities back then, they were proposed to each other, but I am unaware about the details. But when they got acquainted, they fell in love with each other from the first sight and lived happily all their life. Grandmother died in 1944, in evacuation, grandfather - in 1947. I haven't been to Shpole, I only now about this Jewish settlement from my mother's birth certificate. I only know that her father was a Shpole resident - nothing else, unfortunately.

They arrived to live in St. Petersburg in 1904. But the first to come here was my grandmother's father. He was registered as a merchant of the second guild. I found it out in the directory " All Petrograd " for 1915. At first Grandfather worked in the Kalashnikov stock exchange, near the Lavra. He was an expert in flour. As a commercial traveler (or commission agent - that is what written in the directory) he bought and sold flour, traveling extensively. And my grandmother, naturally, was a housewife. Then grandfather served in St. Petersburg as an assistant of the manager of Bligken-Robinson confectionery factory, where the managerial position was held by the husband of grandmother's elder sister Vera. All of them together lived in Vozdvizhenskaya Street (nowadays Tyushin Street), not far from Obvodny Channel. They had rather a large apartment there. The family was well-provided for. During the elections before 1917, - as grandmother told me - they voted for the party of Constitutional Democrats (what kind of party it was?)... Before the revolution they used to go for vacations to Dubelnya near Riga (now the place is called Dublty), then - to the village of Martyshkino in the vicinity of St. Petersburg. They hired maids. Children, while they were small, were basically taken care of by the nurse, later - by a governess.

Grandfather and grandmother spoke basically Russian, but Yiddish they also knew well and sometimes spoke this language too. Grandmother Rachel was a fashionable woman and wore beautiful dresses and jewelry. Of course she would not put on a kerchief or a wig. They were not especially religious. And they did not go to the synagogue on Saturdays, even on big holidays. But some traditions they did observe. I remember that grandmother never gave us milk after meat. Kashrut was an inherent feature of Grandfather's and Grandmother's everyday life. But, in other respects they were not religious people - Grandmother didn't wear the wigs, nor did she attend to the synagogue or pray. Grandfather worked in the chocolate factory and I have no idea of his religious life.

The wife of Grandfather's younger brother also had endured enormous hardships in her life. Her name was Eugenia, her last surname was Zolotareva [her last husband's family name]. Mother's uncle left her with a daughter, and a bit later, in 1930s, she married a German engineer, who worked in Leningrad under a contract. But when his contract was over, he left to his Fatherland, and she stayed here and in 1937 she was arrested. Above all, she was a teacher of the German language, and thus they charged her of being a German spy. I think it was in 1938, when Beria

[People's Commissar of Internal Affairs] let people out of prisons, she was released. I do not remember precisely, but I know that by 1941 she was free. And when the war began, she was immediately arrested again and put in the chamber for prisoners condemned to death penalty. But she was a very tough, strong-willed woman and got through all that, although her legs failed her [became paralyzed] there, in that prison camp, and she could not walk. This is what probably saved her life, because she was not able to do that terribly exhausting physical labor. They released her in 1946, and she came to us, to the 2nd Sovetskaya Street in a quilted jacket, looking awfully. And she was officially prohibited from coming to Leningrad, because those subjected to repressions were banned from living in metropolitan cities. She was hiding at our place. One late evening we heard a doorbell, and Aunt Zhenya seized her quilted jacket and rushed to the lavatory and locked the door from the inside - so that nobody could find her. Being a spiritually strong woman she later recovered, received a contract proposal and went somewhere to the North to work. She got married again there, and earned herself a good pension. She died a long time ago, too.

Grandmother's brother David Moiseevich and his wife Eva Abramovna lost both their sons during the Great Patriotic War. Misha was killed in the fights over Nevskaya Dubrovka, though for a long time he was considered lost, his death was not really confirmed. Aunt Eva waited for him until her death. His elder brother Sasha was wounded at the front and died in hospital of wounds.

There was some craving for Ukraine left in Grandmother's soul - she taught me Ukrainian songs, but she didn't teach me Jewish songs for some reason. They seldom traveled to the Ukraine afterwards, only on short visits. My grandfather's parents lived there. He was a manager of some business here, I don't know precisely! When the revolution began, my mother's parents - grandmother and grandfather - lived in Petrograd, but in 1918 famine began here. Therefore they left to the Ukraine to their relatives. I recollect Mum telling me, that when after the Petrograd starvation they found themselves in that family farm of their Ukrainian kin, they were simply astounded: geese, chicken, turkeys, cows ... In the Ukraine in 1918-20 they survived through the onslaughts of Makhno and Petlura bandits, Denikin Army attacks and the related pogroms.

My grandfather's younger brother Yasha Golshmid served in the imperial army and was killed in 1915, during the First World War, somewhere in the territory of Prussia and was buried in a Jewish cemetery.

Another younger brother of Grandfather, Nison Golshmid (but they always called him Nikolay Markovich) was a student of the Moscow conservatory and participated in operas as a supernumerary. He lived in Moscow both after the revolution and after the Great Patriotic War. He had not become a singer, because his wife would not permit him to do so, and he worked for a very long time in one and the same place - as a sales director for one factory. He died in the 1980s in Moscow. He had one daughter Victoria, who had graduated from a college of law and worked in the Supreme Court.

My grandfather's elder brother (I do not know his name) emigrated to America in the 1920s. Grandfather had sisters as well, but I know nothing about them.