

Esphir Kalantyrskaya's Mother Bluma Persova, Brother Grisha And Iosif, Sister Anna



My mother Bluma Persova and my brother Grisha (sitting). My sister Anna and my brother Iosif (standing) in Pochep in 1930.

After their wedding my parents lived in my grandfather's house. In 1908 their first baby was born - my sister Luba. My father bought a part of a house for his family not far from his father's house.

The children were born almost every year. Ania was born in 1911, Grigory was born in 1912 and I was born in 1913. Clara was born in 1914. My younger sister Fania was born in 1917 and my brother Iosif was born in 1918. My father earned well and we were a wealthy family. In due time he purchased the remaining part of the house for his family.

My mother was fully absorbed in pregnancies, deliveries, children bringing up and the house. My father didn't change his bachelor's way of life: he met with friends, went to restaurants and played in the amateur theater. In this theater he met a young Jewish girl Sophia Kazakova. They were of different age: my father was 43 and she was 18. They fell in love with each other and my father left the house. In 1918 right after my younger brother was born my father divorced my mother and married Sophia. My mother had a very hard time: she didn't leave the house, didn't even go to the synagogue and hardly paid any attention to us, children.

My mother didn't work in the first year after we had left. My grandfather Abram was supporting her. Later she learned to sew and took some work home. She opened a small store. Basically, she got adjusted to life. In 1933 when I met with my mother she didn't work any longer. Older children were supporting her. That was the only time I saw my mother. When the Great Patriotic War began my mother stayed in Pochep. She didn't want to evacuate. Her Russian neighbors gave her shelter for some time, but in 1942 somebody gave her up. Policemen took her to a ravine in the outskirts of the town and shot. All Jews of the town were shot there.

My mother remained religious and observed traditions until the end of her life but all her children grew up to be atheists. As far as I know, none of my sisters or brothers observed any religious laws or rules.