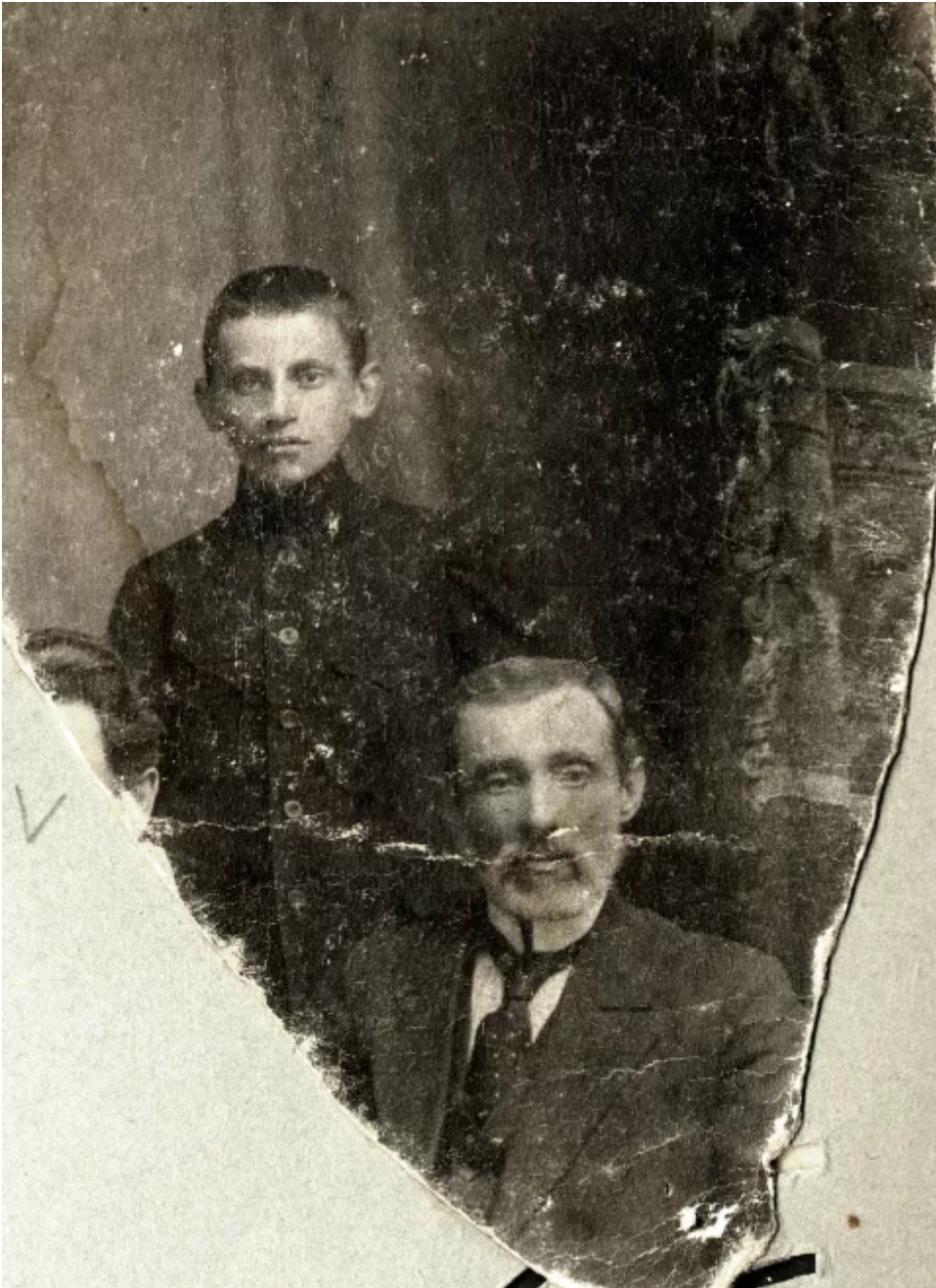


Marina Shoihet's Uncle Israil Reznik



Israil Reznik, my mother's brother, photographed in 1917 in his school uniform in Gaisin. I don't know the other person. Israil died in 1919 during a pogrom. Israel, or as we called him, Srul, studied with my mother. He was a very smart boy and they decided to send him to school. However, the exams to school were not easy and besides, it cost a lot of money. He passed all exams and was admitted to the school. He was 17 years old in 1918. This was a time of pogroms. Their house was on the outskirts of the town. In case of an emergency people ran to their house thinking that the bandits would probably not reach this remote spot. And my grandmother always hid them all. One guy in town suffered from asthma and when he was hiding in their house, my grandmother always gave him some food and lumps of sugar, and begged him to make not a sound or cough. There was one story, funny and sad at the same time. My grandmother was at home alone, and my grandfather took his revolver with him when going to work. People were allowed to have weapons then. All of a sudden some bandits came in shouting, 'Give your gold to

us'. She got so scared that she kept saying, 'You just wait - there's gonna be a shot!'. She probably wanted to say that her husband was coming home and that he had a revolver. And then grandfather came in and shot from his revolver. The bandits got scared and ran away. One evening Srul went out and met a fellow student of his, a Russian guy. He started asking him who was at home at the moment and where they kept their valuables. Srul talked with him suspecting nothing and went home. Suddenly three people broke into the house demanding money and valuables. And Srul saw that acquaintance of his taking out his revolver and directing it at his father. Srul shielded him. The bandit shot his revolver and wounded Srul in his stomach. After the shot the bandits got scared and ran away. His parents called a doctor and took Srul to hospital, but it was a deadly wound. Srul lived for three or four more days and then died. This was a big tragedy for the family. It happened in 1918. There were many pogroms at that time. My grandmother said that those bandits were mostly Petlura soldiers. Once Petlura units occupied the town, got all men together and locked them in the sauna building threatening that they would burn them. Then the local rabbi and the Orthodox priest collected some money from the rich people and paid ransom for all the hostages.