

Israel Schlifer's Grandfather Idel Shlifer



This is my paternal grandfather, Idel Shlifer in Kiev in 1935 at his 60th birthday.

My father's parents Idel and Basia Shlifer were born in Rzhishchev in 1870s. Grandfather Idel came from a Hasidic family. One of his cousins was a rabbi of the Moscow synagogue. My grandfather was deeply religious and could interpret the Torah and the Talmud. He spent his days at the synagogue. He had a big thick beard and payes. He wore a kippah or a big black hat when it was cold. My grandmother was as religious as my grandfather. She prayed at home, went to synagogue and always wore kerchiefs: she had different kerchiefs for cold and warmer days, for wearing at home or going out. Grandmother Basia was a housewife. My grandparents had six children. My father told me that his family was poor. They lived on what the community provided. Of course, they observed Jewish traditions: followed kashrut and celebrated Saturday and Jewish holidays. Grandfather Idel tried to raise his children religious, but the Revolution of 1917 changed their life. Young Jewish people from poor families got fond of communist ideas. They wanted to leave smaller towns for bigger ones. They became communists and apologists of the new communist society.

In 1918 grandmother Basia died. After my grandmother died my grandfather stayed in Rzhishchev for few years. When in the middle of 1920s struggle against religion began and the synagogue in Rzhishchev was closed he moved to Kiev where he remarried and had two children: daughter Raya and son David. I had no contacts with them. My acquaintances that knew them told me that Raya lives in Germany and David lives in Tashkent. My grandfather's family in Kiev was poor. Grandfather's older children and my father supported them. Grandfather Idel died in 1934.