

Berta Mazo, Her Sister And Aunt



This photograph shows me together with my sister Serafima and my aunt Rachel (my mother's sister). The photo was taken in 1936 in Sestroretsk.

Parents of my mother lived in Ukraine (in Kharkov). They moved there from Krucha of Vitebsk region. My maternal grandfather's name was Afroim Merport. My maternal grandmother's name was Fruma Merport. I do not know where they were born. They both died before the war burst out. They had got an apartment in Kharkov, but I can't recall it very well, because I visited them in Kharkov rarely. When I became a student, I went to Zaporozhye for practical training, and on my way there I visited my maternal grandparents in Kharkov. I remember that grandfather worked: once he came to our place on business trip. I do not remember his profession exactly, but I know that he was engaged in something connected with timber-rafting. And my maternal grandmother did not work, she was a housewife.

Yes, my both grandmothers were housewives: they had got a lot of children and it was necessary for them to cook meals for everyone! My maternal grandparents were less religious, than parents of my father. They used to wear up-to-date clothes, but observed kashrut and celebrated all Jewish holidays. Their neighbors were very good people (not Jews, as far as I remember). Those neighbors had got a girl, whom we made friends with. Unfortunately I know little about my mother's parents: she did not tell me much about them.

My mother had got 3 sisters (Rachel Efremovna, Liya Efremovna, and Mera Efremovna) and a brother Moissey Efremovich. Rachel was my favorite aunt, we were knit together by common

interests. She was killed by Germans in 1941. Liya lived in Sverdlovsk, she had got no children. Mera and her husband Alexander Nezhevenko lived in Novosibirsk, he worked there at some institution as a manager of a household. They had got a son Oleg. Moissey died before the war of stomach cancer. He had got a daughter Bella (her husband's name was Vladimir Karetnikov). Their daughter Elena Vladimirovna lives now in St. Petersburg, and their son Yury Vladimirovich, a doctor lives in the Far East.

So among my relatives only aunt Rachel was killed because of her nationality. Among my husband's relatives we lost his parents and his sister (her name was Rachel, too). They lived in a small town Shpikov [in Ukraine]. In the beginning of the war they were ready to leave, but Germans got them off the train. It happened probably in 1942. We got to know about it only in Sverdlovsk: we received a letter. I read it and hid: I was afraid to show it to my husband. Later he found it by chance and cursed me out for my silence. Several years later we (together with my children) visited cemetery in Shpikov: there we found common graves and a monument. In Shpikov my husband's cousin lived with her family and we often visited her in summer before the war burst out.