

Leonid Poberezhskiy's Grandfather Itsko Shehtman At The Anti-Fascist Congress In Moscow



Itsko Shehtman, my grandfather, on the right, Moscow rabbi on the left at the anti-fascist congress. Moscow Metropolitan - in the center.

My mother's father Itsko Shehtman was born in 1872. I don't know where he was born. My grandfather studied in cheder and then he finished Yeshiva. He had been married by that time. They lived in Dashev. After finishing Yeshiva my grandfather was a rabbi in Uman for some time. After the revolution my grandfather refused to be the rabbi. He decided to take to a more useful activity as he used to say. I don't know exactly what he took to. He was always dressed in the same type of clothes. He always wore a black jacket and a black hat. My grandfather didn't wear paces and he had a long beard. His mother tongue was Yiddish. He spoke Russian slowly and with a strong Jewish accent.

Something of an interest happened to my grandfather. Sometime in 1946 he was invited to the Committee for religion and offered a job there. My grandfather decided that it was a liquidation committee [Such committees were established to eliminate an organization, including a religious or cult organization]. My grandfather refused telling them that he knew why they invited him. But they convinced him to take this job, telling him that he would be an active rabbi. This was true: my grandfather was a rabbi at the Podol synagogue until his last day. This was single in Kiev acting synagogue. At first the parish didn't trust my grandfather because he was nominated by the authorities. My grandfather used to say that the thought he was a Bolshevik rabbi. But some time passed and my grandfather enjoyed much love and respect of his parish. In 1951 my grandfather was sent as a delegate from Kiev to the anti-fascist congress of representatives of different religions. There were Muslim, Christian Orthodox, Judaists and many other clergymen. They were

speaking for the peace in the world and signed an appeal to the people of the world.