

Larisa Radomyselskaya's Grandmother Maria Pinchusovich



This is my grandmother Maria Pinchusovich, my mother's mother. This photo was taken in Kharkov in 1920.

I don't know anything about my mother's family. My grandfather died of a heart disease in the early 1920s, long before I was born. My maternal grandmother's name was Maria Pinchusovich. I don't know her maiden name or her place of birth. My grandmother was born in the 1880s. I knew one of her sisters: Sonia, whose last name was Leiberman in marriage. Sonia had four daughters: Fania, the oldest, whose year of birth I don't remember, Ghita, born in 1917, Ida, born in 1919, and Ghenia, born in 1925. I don't know any details of their life.

My mother's family lived in Kherson in the east of Ukraine [500 km from Kiev]. My mother and her two sisters were born there. I don't know my mother's older sister's name. She died when she was young. My mother Ida was born in 1915. Her sister Sarra was a little younger than my mother.

I don't know what my grandfather did for a living. My grandmother worked her whole life. I don't know where she worked. She left home in the morning and returned in the evening. My grandmother wasn't religious and didn't observe Jewish traditions. She didn't go to school and she learned to read and write by herself. My grandmother spoke Russian, but she knew Yiddish as well. In the late 1920s her family moved to Kharkov. I don't know for what reason they moved.

I was born on 20 July 1934 in Kharkov. From the time I remember I lived with my maternal grandmother Maria. My mother was always ill: she had a congenital heart disease. She lived in a small private house in the center of Kharkov with the family of my mother's younger sister Sarra. Sarra had two daughters and we were growing up together. When grandmother Maria went to work I stayed with Sarra. Neither my grandmother nor Sarra were religious and I didn't know anything about Jewish traditions or holidays.

I saw my mother rarely, only when my grandmother took me there visiting. My mother died in 1940. After she died my life went on as before: I continued living with my grandmother and my mother's sister Sarra. My father lived alone. He was provably feeling lonely since he asked my grandmother to move in with him and take me with her. My grandmother kept working and my father's sister Sarra came from Siberia to take to my bringing up. She didn't have children and was happy to take care of me. Aunt Sarra worked as a journalist in a small publishing house and she could take her work home and then she could spend much time with me. She taught me to read and write and before going to school I could read in Russian very well. When my aunt was working I used to sit beside her with a book and I could spend hours reading children's books by Russian and Soviet authors. We spoke only Russian in our family. I didn't hear one Jewish word, I didn't know any Jewish traditions and I didn't know who Jews were.