

Rahil Shabad And Her Family



This is my family picture. It was made in one of the photograph studios in Moscow in 1938 when I came back from Kursk, where I studied at Medical Institute before entering Moscow Medical Institute. The top row from left to right: my elder brother Evsey Karpis, I and my sister Esfir'. Bottom row from left to right: my younger brother Naum Karpis, my father Haim-Dovid Karpis, sister Maria Karpis, father's second wife- my second mother Raisa Karpis.

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My parents got married on the 8th of February of 1912. In 1913 the first child was born, Evsey. Daughter Esfir was born in 1915. I was born in 1918. I was named Rahil. My parents were rather well-heeled. Before revolution father got 110 golden rubles per month. It was a lot of money, if not by a coming change - the Revolution as of 1917. In 1917 my father lost his job. Then Civil War was unleashed. Father ought to earn money for the family so he decided to make soap. He boiled soap and cast them in bars. Mother and father sold the bars of soap on the market. Of course they did not yield that much profit, but it was enough to get by.

In 1919 there was a serious unemployment. It was next to impossible to find a job. Father kept on making soap. Then father managed to find a job at the metallurgic plant. We did not have fire wood, and the house was not heated. Mother caught cold. First she coughed and then hemoptysis started. In April 1921 my mother died at the age of 31.

In 1922 my father got married for the second time. His second wife was a Jew, Raisa Slobodkina. Raisa took a hard cross by marrying a widower with three children. She diligently fulfilled her duty. She was a true loving and caring mother. In 1923 our younger brother Naum was born and in 1928 sister Maria. Raisa's single sister Hava also lived with us. There were 8 people in the family and

father was the only one who worked. There was a raging unemployment in our country at that time. Father was on odd jobs. The family was indigent. In 1924 father went to Moscow, as soon as he found one, he invited us in Moscow.

In 1926 we moved to father. We lived in one room of 9,5 sq. m. Father worked very hard. In 1928 he lost job again. Father and Raisa vended cigarettes. Only in 1929 father found a job at the construction site. He worked and studied at the evening department of Moscow construction institute. In spite of the fact that our living was very hard father managed to graduate from the institute. We were friendly, but life was hard on us.

Parents (I considered Raisa to be my mother and was always thankful to that wonderful woman and later on in my story I would refer to her as to my mother - the way I have been calling her all my life) spoke Yiddish between themselves. We, the younger, did not know Yiddish. Parents wanted us to speak pure Russian as they thought it would make our lives easier. I cannot say how religious my parents were. All I know is that they observed Jewish traditions. We marked the major Jewish holidays in our family.

Having graduated school I decided to enter medical institute. I made up my mind to become a doctor because mother's health was feeble and I hoped that I would be able to help her get better. There was a tough competition in Moscow Medical Institute. I did not enter the institute like many other entrants. I went to Kursk and entered Medical Institute there. I lived in the hostel. I was keen on studies. Student's life appealed to me. In a year and a half I got ill. My elder brother Evsey came and took me to Moscow.