

Sarra Shpitalnik And Her Parents Beila Molchanskaya And Shlomo Molchanskiy



This is me with my parents Beila Molchanskaya and Shlomo Molchanskiy. This photo was taken in Kishinev, in 1937. At the age of six I went to a Romanian elementary school. I had a very good first teacher. Her name was Yelena Bogos and I think she belonged to the local Russian aristocrats. On the first day she called my mother to school and indicated to her that the only thing I could say in Romanian was a greeting. My mother replied, 'Let her stay and then we shall see. Unfortunately, I can't help her since I don't know Romanian, and her father has no time to teach her.' People in smaller towns knew only Moldovan. Grandmother Hava knew Moldovan, but my mother didn't. However, I picked up the language promptly. I was much better at languages than my mother. After finishing the first grade I was awarded for being the best pupil. By that time my father was earning well. When I was seven, we bought an apartment in the building in the yard connecting Yekaterininskaya Street and Chasovennyi Lane. There was running water, electricity and gas in the house. There were 26 apartments in the building and all tenants were Jews by some coincidence. It was a whole Jewish settlement: a real eshuv. There were all classes of Jews: from one who married a prostitute to very intelligent educated families. They spoke Yiddish, but knew Russian and many spoke Romanian. We had an apartment on the second floor which comprised four rooms: two had windows on the ceiling, always dirty. My grandmother, who worked and lived with us, had her own room, my parents had a bedroom and there was a living room. I slept in the living room, and had a desk covered with green cloth in my parents' bedroom. One of our relatives, who later perished during the Holocaust, had made this desk. My parents had a nickel-plated bed decorated with shining balls. The rest of the furniture was plain. We had many books in Russian and Yiddish at home. I had my own collection of books in Romanian and Yiddish.