

## Faina Sandler's Family



This is a photo of my family. From left to right are: my mother Golda Sandler [nee Abramovich], I, my father, Semyon Sandler, and my brother, Mihail Sandler. We were photographed in Chernovtsy in 1946. My father was on the front during the Civil War. My parents got married after he returned. I don't know whether they had a wedding party. They got married in 1925, and my brother Mihail was born in 1928. The newly weds lived with my mother's parents. Mama was a housewife and looked after my brother. My father took a course in accounting and got a job as an accountant at the peat-bog. I was born in 1934. I got my name after some of my mother's relative who died when she was young. The name Faina is written in my birth certificate, but I was affectionately called Fania at home. My grandfather and grandmother spoke Yiddish. My mother and father spoke both Yiddish and Russian, and I knew both languages because they spoke to me in either one depending on their mood. My brother also spoke fluent Belarus. I found out that I was a Jew in the kindergarten. Although Mama didn't work I still went to the kindergarten. They believed at that time that a child should get used to getting along with other children. I remember that we sang patriotic songs in a choir and learned poems about Lenin and Stalin. Once a commission came and someone of the commission asked about me, and I remember that our teacher told him that I was a Jew. I came home and asked my mother what that meant. She explained it to me. For a long time my favorite stories were the stories from the Bible she was telling me. My brother finished school during the war in evacuation in Frunze in 1944 when he was 16. He passed his exams for the 10th grade. He wanted to learn a profession and go to work. At 16 he entered the Institute of Electric Engineering in Leningrad and finished his 1st year while we were in Frunze. My brother graduated in 1949 in Chernovtsy, where we moved after the war, and got a job assignment in Tashkent. Thanks to him I managed to finish school. My parents wanted me to go to technical school after the 7th grade, get a profession and go to work. They were very short of money. But my brother insisted that I continued my studies if I wanted. His salary was 800 rubles per month, and he sent us 500 rubles. Perhaps, this was one of the reasons why my brother stayed single. I finished ten years at school and studied at university with my brother's support.