

Mikhail Falkov's Family



This is a family photo taken during summer vacations in Yurmala in 1953: the first from the right is me, next to me is my grandmother Hannah Borovika, then my brother Israel Falkov, the first from the left is my father Mikhail Falkov and next to him is my mother Dina Falkova, nee Borovika.

My brother was born on 1st January 1935 in Riga. He graduated from the Moscow oil institute and drilled holes for water and oil in Latvia. I was born in Riga in November 1938. We had a loving and happy family. In the summers we would rent a dacha in Yurmala as was proper in the years before the war.

After the war, when we lived in Riga, my family didn't observe Jewish religious traditions. Did the Soviet government influence us? No. It was simply that my parents were very intelligent, educated people who were also democratically inclined. They were well versed in Jewish culture and writers. Our house was often filled with interesting people; there were meetings that took place even before the war.

When, at the beginning of the 1950s, the attacks against cosmopolitans and the Doctors' Plot began, my father was forced to leave his work; he was probably asked to leave. By this time Papa had become the head of a large corporation. He was dismissed from the Communist Party. During these days, in one of the rooms of our big, seven-bedroom apartment from before the war, there was a stove, which we 'fed' all 30 volumes of a pre-war edition of Dubnow's body of work. I can still see Mama, or Papa, I don't remember who, throwing volumes into the stove. The cover of that edition was white and someone had cut out the title and author so that, if the NKVD should happen to come by, they wouldn't know the author. We had many, many books in Russian, Yiddish and Hebrew.