

## Mina Fischbein After WWII



This is my mother, Mina Fischbein. This picture was taken in Walbrzych after we had returned to Poland from the Soviet Union in 1946. I suppose she needed it for a document and thus had it taken at a photo studio. My mother didn't have a profession, she took care of the house. I believe my mother was a very pretty woman. She had large dark eyes, dark brown hair and ? something I will never forget ? a shapely nose. Since her own nose was thin, long but quite thin, she used to say to me, ?You know what? Why don't you squeeze your nose from time to time, maybe it will become thinner.? Nowadays they'd say that my mother was hurting my self-esteem and damaging my psyche. Not to worry, she didn't. She was a shapely woman, with a pretty, oval face, as you can see on the pictures. Her problem were the large ? really large ? breasts. She dressed in modern clothes. She even wore a type of corset, laced up in the back. I remember that, because sometimes

she she'd ask me for help: 'Would you pull a little here, please?' My mother called me Niunia. Apparently I named that myself. My original name is Regina. She spoke very good Polish: without an accent, without deforming it and with perfect grammar. Despite the fact that she had finished only six grades of elementary school, as she herself emphasized, she was a polyglot, as most of the people from Tysmienica were; she spoke good Yiddish, Ukrainian, Polish and relatively good German. My parents spoke to each other in Yiddish. My mom was so dominated by my father, that she maneuvered, somehow, between his views and what was left of her desire to stick to the tradition. She had candleholders and sometimes on Friday she lit the candles when my father wasn't there. When she heard him coming up the stairs she blew them out and put them away. She had a Pesach dish set and she even took it out; I guess she had my father's permission for that. The food was Jewish, but not kosher. During World War II we were in evacuation in Tashkent. We finally came back in the summer, June or July, of 1946. We traveled for several weeks. We took mostly freight trains which stopped no one knew where and for how long. After our return we first lived for a short while in Zary , then Wroclaw and then Walbrzych.