

Frieda Portnaya's Parents: Anatoliy Waldman And Tsylia Waldman



This is a photo of my parents, Anatoliy Waldman and Tsylia Mandemberg Waldman. It was taken in Kiev in 1940. My mother was born in 1897 in Makarov, a town near Kiev where her father was a rabbi. She had a two brothers, Lyova and Iosif, and a sister, Fiera. Fiera died before the [1917] Revolution. Lyova was born in 1899, and Iosif was born in 1900. My grandfather, who was a widower when he married my grandmother, also had four children from his first wife. My father was born in Lodz, Poland in 1899. My father was captured when he was in the Polish Army fighting against the Red Army. He stayed in Russia and got to Kiev somehow. He got a job as a sailor at the Dnipro Fleet in Kiev and met my mother there. My parents got married in 1921. They bought an apartment in a house in Podol. In 1923 my older brother Mikhail was born, and I was born in 1928. We had two small rooms in an apartment that we shared with other people. There were Primus stoves in the kitchen and each family had its own table. My father earned good money, but we couldn't afford good clothes or food, as our neighbors could report to the police that we were spending more than we were supposed to. My mother was religious. She always tried to celebrate the Jewish holidays and cooked all the traditional food. There was matzo at home for Pesach. But as my father wasn't religious these celebrations were quite modest. With the outbreak of World War II, my father was called up to the army in 1941. He was 44, and the age limit was 45. Just after the War, somebody told us that our neighbors had seen father in 1941 near Lubny. He told them that he was going back to Kiev to find out what happened to us.. We still don't know for sure what happened to him. My mother was a religious person before the war, but after she lost her loved ones, after Babi Yar, she couldn't believe any more. She said 'How could He let this happen? How could He allow the death of all, whom I loved? I believed in him all my life!'