

## Faina Shlemovich With Her Mother And Aunt



This is a picture of my father's sister Sarra, me and my mother. The photo was taken on my 4th birthday in Kamenets-Podolsk in 1929. I was born on 4th September 1925. My mother didn't want to stay in Zhvantsy after I was born. She thought it was better for a child to grow up in a bigger town to have more opportunities to study. She left for Mohilev-Podolsk with me. My father visited her and tried to persuade her to come back, but she didn't want to. So in the end my father moved to Mohilev-Podolsk, too. He became human resource manager at the sugar factory. My mother didn't work. My parents rented an apartment from a Jewish family. The landlady's son was my best friend. My parents weren't religious. They became atheists either under the influence of the revolutionary propaganda or because they had to adjust to the demands of the time. They spoke Russian with me. They sometimes switched to Yiddish when they didn't want me to understand what they were talking about. They didn't celebrate Jewish holidays, just the Soviet ones. Of course I knew that I was a Jew and about Jewish holidays, but I thought it was all a hopelessly outdated vestige of the past. Nationality didn't matter at all to me. On holidays and on Sundays we always had guests - my father's colleagues. My mother cooked and made cakes. I remember our landlords celebrating Chanukkah. Their children's grandmothers visited them bringing gifts and money. My father's parents lived in Zhvantsy and my mother's parents had died. Nobody came to see me. I cried and asked my mother why I didn't have a grandmother and grandfather, who would bring me gifts. So, my mother gave some money to the neighbor boy's grandmother. She brought it to me saying that she was my grandmother. I was a little girl and this made me quite happy.