

Sarra Shpitalnik With Her Parents And Their Friends



This is me with my parents Shlomo Molchanskiy (sitting, 1st on the right) and Beila Molchanskaya (standing, 1st on the left) and their friends at the Sobornyi Park. This photo was taken in Kishinev in 1930. My parents got married in 1927. When I was born in 1928, my parents rented an apartment in the house across the street from where my grandmother lived on the corner of Tsyrelson Lane and Oktavian Gog Street. This house belonged to former Russian aristocrats: the Meche-Nikolaevichs. Maria Petrovna Meche-Nikolaevich liked our family, and I was her favorite. She had two good-for-nothing sons. Though I was only three years old, I remember how adults said that one was gay and the other one a card gambler. To cut a long story short, they brought their mother to bankruptcy. Fleshel, a Jewish man, bought this house and the annex in the yard. We lived there till I turned seven. I was a rather capricious and naughty child. I gave my mother a hard time and she sent me to various children's institutions. I went to a Jewish kindergarten for a year: for some reason it was called a 'Hebrew' kindergarten. All I learned there was counting to four. There was no Hebrew there. They taught us music. Once I conducted a noise orchestra where the children played various wooden trinkets on the stage of a club. I had a lovely marquisette dress on, which was pinned. Well, I gesticulated so hard that it got unpinned and fell off me leaving me in my panties in front of everyone. They drew the curtain, but I was so distressed about all the shame, particularly in front of the boys whom I liked: Boria Fleshel, our landlord's son and his friend, Syoma Leiderman. My mother's health condition was very poor. She had problems with my birth: she suffered three days before the doctors pulled me out with forceps. As a result of this hard delivery she almost lost her sight. She took treatment in the Tumarkin private eye clinic. Doctor Faina Chegorskaya gave her injections in her eye: they were very rare at the time. To distract my mother's attention she told her various stories. She became a friend of our family. The doctors in Kishinev advised my mother to go to Vienna with her sight problems. My father somehow managed to get some money and we all went there and stayed there for a few weeks. I was five then.