

Sophia Vollerner, Maria Tetelbaum And Her Son



This is a picture of me (on the right) and my aunt Maria Tetelbaum, nee Vollerner, my father's sister, and her son (on the left). The photo was taken in Kiev in 1914. Maria was born in 1890. My grandfather believed it was important to give education to his children. My father and his sister got traditional Jewish education and at the same time they finished Russian grammar school in Zhytomyr. After finishing grammar school they studied at dentistry school in Kiev. They studied for four years at school. After finishing this school they passed a state exam at the Medical Faculty of the Royal University of Saint Vladimir to receive a doctor's diploma that gave them the right to practice medicine. My father and his sister Maria stayed in Kiev after finishing their studies. Maria

married my father's fellow student and friend, Isaac Tetelbaum, after finishing her studies. Her husband was a dentist and Maria was a housewife. They had three children. Isaac had extensive private practice, and the family was well-provided for. My parents and Maria's family were friends; they often went to see each other. Maria's family observed Jewish traditions and Jewish holidays. Maria died in Kiev in 1940. Her children passed away, too. I was born on 31st October 1910. My father told me that I was given the Jewish name of Shyfra after my great-grandmother. Nobody ever called me by this name, though. I've never seen my birth certificate issued by the rabbi and in my passport I had the name of Sophia written. We had a living-room with two sets of furniture: a set of soft furniture with upholstery of green and a Viennese set. There was a table, chairs and a carved cupboard in the dining-room. My parents had nickel-plated beds with nickel balls on the posts in their bedroom. In the children's room we had the same beds, only smaller. We had nice china and carpets. I don't remember any pictures on the walls, only the portrait of me and my brother. Our neighbor photographed us. This portrait disappeared during the Great Patriotic War. My father had a study-room where he read in the evenings. There was a kitchen, a bathroom and a toilet. We had a baby-sitter and a cook. They were both Russian women. We were a wealthy family.