

Abram Bashmet With His Family



The Bashmet family. The upper row from left to right: my father's older brother Solomon, the girl I don't know, I, Abram Bashmet, my cousin Yakov (my father's younger brother Aizik's older son). Sitting in the lower row from left to right: Milia (Solomon's wife), Mikhail (Aizik's son), my grandmother Feiga Bashmet, Lilia (Aizik's daughter), Mina (Aizik's wife), Aizik. This photo was taken in 1949 in Alma-Ata.

After World War II my family remained in Alma-Ata till 1949. I went to visit them on vacations. My trip lasted six days, and I got a cheap ticket to sleep on the third-tier berth since I couldn't afford to buy a more expensive ticket. By 1950 the Bashmet family gradually reunited in Lvov.

My grandmother was a beautiful woman and a good housewife. She knew customs and rules, spoke Yiddish and worked hard, but she didn't have a happy life. She became a widow at the age of 44. My grandfather died of typhus at the age of 48 in August 1920 and was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Odessa according to traditions. My grandmother loved her sons and grandchildren dearly. Her children were the most beautiful, talented and intelligent in the world. My grandmother died in 1952 in Lvov where the family came to live after the Great Patriotic War when they returned from evacuation in Alma-Ata. She was 76. She was buried in the Jewish sector of the town cemetery in Lvov according to the Jewish customs.

My father's brother Solomon was a specialist in shoe painting; before the war he worked at the shoe factory in Odessa. During the war he was in Saratov in evacuation and he stayed there after the war. He painted shoes as a private craftsman. While working at the factory Solomon was exposed to hazardous acetone and had lung problems. He was married twice: his wives' names were Tsylia and Milia. I met his second wife, with whom he moved to his brothers in Lvov, when he was a pensioner. Solomon died in 1987. He had no children.

The youngest brother Aizik – he was called Izia at home – was born in 1910. He was the most enterprising of all the brothers. We were the closest with him and his family, and he and I were friends. Every time he had different ideas. At first he thought of becoming a photographer and he arranged a 'Photo salon' that was a small room with a garden bench in it and decorations of all kinds to take photos with the mountains, sea or a waterfall in the background. He also painted over the pictures with different colors. His wife was Shprintsia Ostritskaya, a Jew from Odessa. He had four sons and a daughter.