

Faina Minkova's Family



This photo was taken shortly after I was born in 1949 in Chernovtsy. On the right is my father Yuzik Minkov, next to him my mother Tzyva Shyfrinson, then my mother's friend and on the left is my father's niece Ania, the daughter of his sister Fania. My father is wearing a Soviet Army uniform from the time of the Great Patriotic War. In 1947 my father was sent to fight the enemies of the Soviet regime in Chernovtsy, Western Ukraine. In 1948 he received a two-storied mansion and a plot of land in a quiet street close to the center of Chernovtsy. It was a cultured European town. There was a university and theaters. Chernovtsy belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy until 1918. In November 1918 Bukovina became part of Romania. Chernovtsy used to be a Jewish town. When the Romanians came to power some Jews left Chernovtsy. But even then the Jewish population still constituted over 60% of the town. There were about 65,000 Jews out of 105,000 people living in Chernovtsy. Yiddish was spoken in the streets as well as German and Romanian. My mother and the children moved to Chernovtsy. Ania, my cousin, the daughter of Aunt Fania who perished in Orsha, moved in with them. Ania entered Medical College. My sister and brother went to school. My father grew vegetables and had chickens. Their situation was hard at the time. My

mother didn't work and was raising three children. My father ordered my mother to let nobody in when he wasn't at home. People used to bring baskets with food and left them near the door trying to bribe my father. My father took them to the street when he came home. Sometimes aggressive relatives of Ukrainian bandits came to the house threatening to kill the family. It was a horrible time. After all gangs were eliminated my father was transferred to the Chernovtsy regional KGB department. I was born in November 1949. There were only two ambulance vehicles in town at the time. I was born while the ambulance was on its way to our house. Ania, who was a medical student, was my mother's midwife and cut the umbilical cord. I was named Faina after Fania, my father's sister. I went to kindergarten at 3, and my mother went to work as an accountant. She had learned this profession in evacuation during the war.