

## Maria Koblik-Zeltser With Her Family



This is the only photograph of the entire Kozhushnyan family. My father Yankel Kozhushnyan is in the center, my brother Velvl is on his right, I am on his left, my mother, Soibel Kozhushnyan is standing on the left, my elder brother Leibl is next to her, my middle brother Abram is to the right. The picture was taken in 1928 in Rezina before my brother's departure for Belgium.

My parents had their wedding in Soroca under a chuppah in accordance with the Jewish rite. They settled in Rezina. Some time later my father opened a drapery store. My parents used to live in rented apartments, changing them every couple of years. The first room of their apartment was always used as a store. In December 1909 Mother gave birth to her first child. The boy was named Leibl after our grandfather. Mother didn't have children for a couple of years, and then two sons were born, with the difference of one year. Abram was born in 1913 and Velvl in 1914. I don't know about the life of my family in that period of time. Fortunately, Father wasn't drafted into the army when World War I started. First, he was the bread-winner of the family with three children and besides he was to take care of his mother Charna.

We had a rather modest living. My parents thought that it was the most important thing for their sons to be educated. All of them went to a Romanian lyceum in Rezina. When the youngest was twelve, mother unexpectedly got pregnant. First, she was at a loss. She didn't know what to do as she was about forty, but the wish to have a daughter was stronger. On 9th December 1926 she understood from her previous experience that she was having labor pains and sent her eldest son Leibl to bring a midwife. Mrs. Paromshchik was the midwife in our town. While the son was thinking where to go, parturition began. That was the way I, the youngest in the family, was born on 9th December 1926. My parents were happy. They had dreamt of having a daughter. In accordance with the tradition in my mother's family I was named Menihe after my maternal grandmother.

However, later on when I was getting my official documents I changed my name to the Russian Maria, as it was more euphonic.

I had a wonderful childhood. My mother was deeply immersed in looking after me and taking care of the house. Father loved me very much as well. In spite of the fact that there were four children in the family, I was raised as an only child, because my siblings were much older than I was. They were interested in other things, but it didn't mean that they didn't care for me. They treated me very well, even pampering me sometimes. I didn't see them very often. When I got a little older they left Rezina to continue their education.

Mother spent almost all her time with me. We went shopping together - to the stores and to the market. We enjoyed having our picture taken rather often - sometimes the three of us, sometimes the whole family was in the pictures. There were two photography shops. One of them belonged to Golovanevskiy, and the other one belonged to Zilberman. Our family preferred having pictures taken at Golovanevskiy's. They often took my pictures free of charge and placed them in the window case. They said I was a very pretty child. We took pictures to send them to Leibl in Belgium. He was missing us very much and he couldn't afford to come home for a visit.