

Polina Leibovich And Her Brother Shymon Sofar



This is me with my brother Shymon Sofar. This photo was taken in Kishinev in 1926. Shymon is wearing his uniform cap of an elementary school pupil. This photo was given to my aunt Rachil in USA, who sent it to my brother after the war.

My brother Shymon was born on 17th March 1918, when my mother was 42 years old. I was born six years later, on 2nd April 1924. I was named Cipora after my grandmother. My mother said that the first thing my nanny did, when she came to live with us in the house and heard that my name was Cipora, she said, 'What kind of name is that? I will call her Polina, that's it!' So, it was her initiative that everybody in the family began calling me Polina and now everybody calls me so. Only in my documents I am Cipora. The nanny was very good and was devoted to our family. She was like a member of our family, but she was quite a drunkard, as they say. Often a policeman took me back home from a stroll for she would be lying on the pavement drunk while I would quietly play beside her, when they found me. My mother was terrified by this situation saying each time, 'This was the last time. It's impossible to go on like this!', but my nanny didn't have a place to go to, and my mother was so kind that she tolerated her. She lived her life with us. She loved me and loved our family. At the age of three or four, I was sent to the kindergarten and not to a Frebelichka.

I adored my brother Shymy. He was six years older than me and I was jealous that mother bought him whatever he wanted. Shymy was a little boy, when our parents bought him a big toy car with pedals that he drove in the yard. At 13 Shymy had his bar mitzvah. I remember many guests and

they all brought him presents. When I was at school, he already studied in the lyceum and was popular with other students in Kishinev.