Sima Magder

This is my mother Sima Magder (nee Feinzilber). This photo was taken in Kishinev in 1940 (Bella Studio) before my father was recruited to the army and they were to part. This is the last photo taken of my mother, and my father took a copy of it with him when he was recruited. My mother was quite well-educated for her time. She learned to play the piano and did so quite well. She also studied foreign languages. Neither my father nor my mother knew Hebrew. My parents got married in Iasi in 1912. Mama spent all her time with me. She read me fairy tales and poems by Romanian authors, and she took me for walks in the beautiful town garden in Kishinev that is still there. There was a visiting housemaid, who did the shopping, cleaning and cooking at home, but my mother tried to do as much housework as she managed herself: at that time the progressive intelligentsia,

which I think my parents belonged to, inspired by democratic ideas, tried to avoid using hired labor. My father, Solomon Magder, was recruited to the Romanian army in 1940 and was away from home. The Soviet Army arrived in Bessarabia on 28th June. I was alone with my mother, with no earnings, without my father, and besides, I knew no Russian. About a month after Bessarabia was annexed to the USSR, a man from Romania found me to tell me the tragic story of my father. He was released from the army like all other Jews. My father was in Romania, had no contact with us, and facing the crash of his views - democracy and respect of people - and understanding that he couldn't stand to live under a fascist regime, he committed suicide. This was a hard period for me. I decided to keep it a secret from Mama and she kept hoping to see him again and didn't give up this hope and love for my father till the end of her life. In late 1943 my mother fell ill and died. I never told her what had happened to my father, and she never lost hope to see him again. We buried Mama in the local cemetery without observing Jewish traditions since she wasn't religious.