

Wacek Kornblum's Stepmother Lonia (Lea) Kornblum As A Schoolchild



This is the class photo of my Mom, (actually stepmother), Lonia Kornblum. It was taken as she was in 1st grade, so she was probably 8 years old. She's first from left in the upper row on that picture. I don't know where it was taken. The inscription above is in Polish. It means 'Who's with God, God is with him. Be grateful for the goodness.'

My mom Lonia - Lea Kornblum - nee Mileband, was born in 1900. Dad got married to Lonia some time around 1929. I don't have information on what school she went to, but she was a teacher before she got married, a home room teacher, and she may have also taught Polish at Korczak's, on Krochmalna Street. When I was little she didn't work, but later, when we weren't doing to well, she learnt how to make corsets, there were two additional sewing machines at home for Mother. I learnt how to sew and used to help Mom to sew bras, so called full ones, you had to put the cups in first. Later Mom realized it would be better for her to open her own store instead of providing bras to other stores. And she opened a store on Rymarska Street, in the other part of the store there was a dressmaker or a haberdasher. It could have been in 1936, didn't last long. We used to go there some time to visit Mom, My brother Borus was nuts about those visits.

I knew Lonia wasn't my mom, but I didn't feel it. Mom was a very smart woman. But from the time perspective, I realize I didn't experience true motherly love. I was a bit browbeaten, always very shy. I know that Mother's niece, Estusia, who stayed with us, used to pick on me a bit. And Dad would always get very upset about it, I remember. Once in a summer resort she made me a hardboiled or soft-boiled egg - not what I liked, another time in a row. When I protested, Dad got upset, he was drinking a glass of tea with milk. He didn't finish, threw the glass over the porch. Mom didn't say anything.

Out of parents of Mom Lonia Mileband I only remember Grandmother, her name was Bube Gele. She was born in Warsaw, I don't know which year. She came from a religious family. I remember her as if through fog, only in bed, because she was sick. Not a small woman, dressed traditionally, in dark colors, she had a white collar. She treated me rather coolly. When I was a very little boy, I remember that whenever she was to visit us on Friday, Mom would quickly light candles, which I couldn't understand, because it was so unlike Mom. I think it was about 1933 when she died. Mom's father's name was Ber Wolf Mileband. I know nothing about him.

In our house we spoke Polish with Mom, Jewish with dad. Parents spoke usually Jewish to each other. Mom was from Bundist circles, but I can't say she was an activist. It was rather a group of friends, well-wishers of Bund.