

Rita Vilkobrisstkaya's Mother Bertha Vilkobrisstkaya With Her Friend



My mother Bertha Vilkobrisstkaya, nee Eishynskaya (standing) photographed with her friend (her name unknown) in Minsk in 1929.

My mother Bertha Eishynskaya, the youngest in the family, was born in Lubcha town in 1907. From 1917 she and her brothers Efim and Max was raised at a children's home in Minsk where she got a lower secondary education. After finishing school in 1924 my mother went to work as envelope maker at the envelope factory in Minsk and later went to work at confectionery factory. In 1925 she joined Komsomol and in 1928 she became a candidate and then a member of the Communist Party.

In Minsk my father met Maria Eishynskaya, my mother's older sister, I don't know how or where they met. They got married and in 1923 their son Ilia, was born, he was named after his grandfather. Maria died of galloping consumption in 1926. Before she died she demanded that my father promised her to marry her younger sister Bertha. She also asked Bertha to agree to marry my father. She wanted him to be well set and cared for.

My mother was an active and cheerful girl. Her friends were her schoolmates of various nationalities. Nationality was an issue of no importance at that time. She had many friends in Minsk and Smolensk where she went to visit her sister Sophia. Therefore, when her older sister Maria asked her to marry her husband before she died, this suggestion was a complete and quite undesirable surprise for my mother. My mother didn't love my father, but grandmother Hasia said 'Bertha, marry Michael for Ilia's sake'.

In 1929 my mother married Michael Wilkobrisiski. At that time he had an important position in Minsk aviation regiment. They had a civil ceremony at a registry office and a wedding dinner at

home in the evening. I guess, at that time my father was more like a friend to my mother. She wasn't in love with him, but she had to follow her sister's will. However, in due time she fell in love with him while he just adored her. The more my parents learned about one another the closer they became. They lived their life in love for 25 years.