

Yevgeniya Borisovna Barvish With Her Children



This photo depicts my mother Evgenia Borisovna Barvish (sitting), my elder sister Sonya (standing to the left) and me (standing to the right). The photo was taken at a studio in Leningrad in 1930. When she fled to Leningrad, Mother couldn't take me in right away. After my mother arrived in Leningrad she lived incognito with one of her sisters on Grazhdansky Prospekt. Then her sisters found her a Jewish fiancé. They got her acquainted with a representative of the working class with the help of some well-wishers. Iosif Borisovich Barvish worked as a glue-maker at a factory

manufacturing musical instruments. He came from Kazan, arrived in Petrograd at the beginning of the Revolution. His wife died and he had four grown-up sons. He was an unsophisticated man, a nice one, hard-working, without interest in lofty matters and politics. After his wife had died it became difficult for him to cope with his sons. They were serious grown up people but none could cook and keep the house. Three days after Mother was introduced to this man they decided to get married. She was satisfied with his social origin; she would become the wife of a worker and wash off her past sins as a dispossessed person. He thought it convenient that he would have a wife who would feed him and his sons. Later when she pegged her place substantially, she told her husband, "I also have children." He didn't know anything either about the boy or the girl. First Sonya appeared, as if by chance arrived in Leningrad, without a place to live. She fitted in well, though she was with a "flaw" a warped face. Barvish had four sons and no daughters. He accepted her and decided to adopt her. She was Plotkina and became Barvish. Since 1929 Sonya lived with our mother. She finished school and graduated from the Timber-Processing Academy in Leningrad. All her life she worked as an economist in the field of wood processing at the A. V. Lunacharsky musical instruments factory. She was considered a good expert. Her work was very hard; she was the head of the Labor and Salary Department of the whole factory. A lot of people in their team hated her. Bonuses and other payments depended on her. There were always those who wished to get a bigger bonus and other perks. But she did everything according to the rules. It was impossible to compel her, she didn't take bribes, she didn't indulge anyone and thus everyone considered her bad. My sister loved me very much. Later, at the end of fall 1929 Mother took me by the hand and brought me to her husband. Here was a son, who appeared "accidentally." As if she didn't know that I was brought here. "There's nowhere to place him." Barvish was a very nice man. Besides, he was very much pleased with the new housewife. I was allowed to stay. Thus, I began to live in my family again. I lived like his legitimate son. Barvish accepted me. But he adopted my sister legally, she became Barvish, and I remained Plotkin. All his four sons lived with us.