

Sofia Rogovski



This is a photo of my mother Sofia Rogovski. It was taken in Petrograd in 1923.

My mother was born in 1900 in Yamburg, Petersburg province. Her father, Joseph Beilis, was a good military tailor. He made uniforms and overcoats for top officials in the Russian army. In the mid-1900s, in regard to Joseph's high qualification as a tailor and, therefore, his usefulness, he was given permission to settle in St. Petersburg along with his family. My grandfather rented a

basement near the city center, engaged several workers, and opened a workshop. His family lived next to the workshop.

My parents got married on 28th June 1923. The wedding ceremony took place in the synagogue in Rakvere. At that time my father lived in Tallinn with Aunt Beile and her husband in a small apartment near the synagogue. In 1923, my father brought his newlywed wife into Aunt Beile's small apartment. I was born there in 1924. When my mother arrived in Estonia she could only speak Russian. So Russian was my first language. As my mother talked to Grandmother Beile while at home, she was soon able to speak Yiddish: she had heard it spoken in her family from a young age. Later, she could understand and speak Estonian to servants and shop-keepers. I laughed when I heard her Estonian.

My mother knew how to dress inexpensively but fashionably and elegantly. She invented her own designs for dresses and suits. Sometimes she used her old clothes, combining them with new material. As a result she obtained some very elegant clothes, and her lady friends thought that she had bought them from an expensive tailor.