

# Rita Vilkobrisstkaya's Father Michael Vilkobrissskiy



My father Michael Vilkobrissskiy photographed in Minsk in the late 1920s.

My father began to work at the electro technical shop of Mr. Mendelson, a Jew, in Vitebsk in 1916. He was an apprentice and finally became an electrician. He worked there until the end of 1918 and at the beginning of 1919 he got fond of revolutionary ideas and went to work at the factory of agricultural machines that belonged to the Unemployment Committee.

This was the period of Civil War, and on 15 October 1919 my father volunteered to the Red army. He became a private in reserve rifle battalion. This battalion was formed in Kazan. On 13 December 1919 my father became a member of the Communist party and then their regiment was sent to fight with the white guard units. My father took part in battles with General Wrangel units. There were military from various parts of the country. They were mainly workers and peasants that believed in the ideas of communism. My father told me that they had sufficient food and uniforms. They lived in barracks that they built themselves. Their living conditions were far from good. In 1920 my father was severely wounded and stayed a long while in hospitals until he was sent to an advanced training course for professional military in Minsk, Byelorussia, in January 1922. He was eager to study and willingly went to Minsk to study aviation.

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 didn't love my father, but grandmother Hasia said 'Bertha, marry Michael for Ilia's sake'. In 1929 my mother married Michael Vilkobrissskiy. 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.