

Irina Soboleva-Ginsburg With Her Grandfather And Her Brother



My grandfather Movshe-Girsh Meyer Begam and his grandchildren: I and my brother Juli. The photo was taken in our flat in Moscow, in 1928 in order to mail it to my mother in the Middle East and her brother Lev in the Far East. I was born on 2nd November 1920. My mother didn't love my father and this attitude reflected on me. Two years after I was born my father left us. My father returned to his mother, and my mother remarried soon. My mother met Abram Kutner in 1923 when he was chief of all military offices in the Central House of the Red Army in Moscow. He had a big belly, always wore his military trousers at home and shaved his head. He believed that he didn't have to continue his education and had reached everything he wanted in life. Their son Juli was born in 1925. My mother adored him. I was a miserable and abandoned child. My grandmother Enta and my aunt Maria loved me. They took care of me. We lived in a big apartment in Miasnitskaya Street in the center of Moscow. There was a dark yard near the house. The poet Aseyev, who lived on the 9th floor of our house, described the yard saying, 'the yard looked like an aquarium with no water in it and some children puttering about at the bottom'. My grandfather and grandmother shared their room with me. Maria lived in another room. My mother and her family lived in this same apartment but it was like they were living in a different one. My aunt Maria was the first to notice that I was good at painting. She took me by the hand and took me to an art school. I was 10 years old, and I was admitted to this school. I made good progress there and soon went to the Art College. I also studied at the Russian secondary school until 1935. I remember some Jewish teachers in our school. One of them was Semyon Abramovich Gurevich, a very ugly man. He noticed that I wrote nice poems. I wrote about Soviet labor and about Lenin.