

Rita Vilkobrissskaya's Mother Bertha Vilkobrissskaya With The Dance Group



My mother Bertha Vilkobrissskaya photographed with the dance group that she organized at the club of aviation unit in Khabarovsk. My mother is on the left. 1936.

At the beginning of 1935 the squadron, where my father worked, was transferred to Krasnaya Rechka town near Khabarovsk in the Far East in 7500 km from home. We lived in the neighborhood for families of the military - there were few two-storied buildings there. We had a two-room apartment in a two-storied building. There was no running water and we fetched water from a pump nearby and washed ourselves in a basin in the room. Grandmother did all housekeeping and my mother, as usual went to work at the women's division of the military unit. My mother had a lot of energy and talent.

She organized various clubs and concerts. She liked dancing and singing. She organized a dancing club attended by almost all officers' wives danced Russian national and modern dances. They often rehearsed at our home preparing for celebration of 7 November or 1 May. There were parties and concerts that my mother organized on Soviet holidays. Officers' wives and children performed singing patriotic Soviet songs, reciting poems and dancing. This was a nice entertainment. We lived a life full of joy. We didn't celebrate any Jewish holidays, I don't know whether there were other Jews around us, it didn't matter. I guess my grandmother that grew up in a small town where there was a strong Jewish community celebrated Jewish holidays before the revolution of 1917, but after the revolution she probably was afraid of damaging my father's reputation of devoted communist since he was a commissar of a big aviation unit.