

Ida Zakh And Her Granddaughter Ilona Avdeyeva



This is my mother-in-law Ida Zakh and my daughter Ilona. This photo was taken at our home in Tallinn in 1981. My husband's parents were kind to me. My father-in-law died in 1960, shortly after my husband and I got married. He was buried according to the Jewish rules in the Jewish cemetery in Tallinn. We lived with my mother-in-law. My in-laws led a traditional Jewish way of living. My husband's parents were religious. My husband was not as deeply religious as his parents, but he also observed Jewish traditions. Even during the Soviet period my mother-in-law did her best to follow the kashrut. She only cooked Jewish food. We only ate beef and poultry. We never had any pork or sausage at home. My mother-in-law was a great cook. On holidays she always made something special: gefilte fish, chicken broth and forshmak with herring. We always had matzah on

Pesach. My husband and I bought bread anyway, while my mother-in-law only ate matzah on Pesach. Se also strictly observed the fast on Yom Kippur. On holidays our relatives got together at our home. Sometimes we visited them. My mother-in-law only spoke Yiddish at home. My husband knew Yiddish well to speak it with his mother. Ida also spoke Yiddish to me. I understood everything she was saying, and I replied in Yiddish mixing it with Estonian, if I lacked words to express myself. My husband and I only spoke Russian between ourselves and to our daughter. Ilona was four years old, when my husband fell ill. He had headaches and was weak, but at first he ignored the symptoms. When doctors finally examined him, the diagnosis was frightful: he had malignant growth in his brain. It was too late to have a surgery, and neither the doctors nor we could relieve his suffering. In January 1970 Lev died. This happened a few months before he was to turn 41. We only lived ten years together. We buried my husband in the Jewish cemetery in Tallinn. I stayed with my mother-in-law after my husband died. I couldn't go back to my mother. My stepbrother was there, and there was not much space in their apartment. Besides, my mother worked, and there was nobody at home to look after my daughter. Besides, my mother-in-law was very happy to have Ilona and me with her. She was very attached to her granddaughter, particularly considering that she was absolutely alone. Ida actually raised my daughter, and this was a great contribution on her behalf. My daughter studied in a Russian general education school. She did well at school. She was a quiet and friendly girl. After finishing school, she entered the Light Industry College for the specialty of 'secretary and document control.' After finishing the college, my daughter came to work as a secretary. When Estonia gained independence, the factory was closed as an unprofitable enterprise. It took Ilona a few months before an acquaintance of hers started her own business and offered Ilona a job in her office. This is where Ilona works now.