

Meer Kuyavskis And His Wife Stephania



This is I with my wife Stephania Kuyavskene. The picture was made in Kaunas in the 1960s.

In 1947 I started working in the atelier as a tailor. I was pretty good money there. My skills got better and better and soon I became a good cutter of men's and ladies' garment. I had my own clients and had a rather comfortable living. I rented an apartment from one Jewish lady. It was not far from my work. In couple of years I went to work to the factory, where I was promoted to the foreman.

At times, I went to the cinema, dancing, to the recreation center for the machinist. At the dancing party I met Stephania Vakayte, a young Lithuanian lady. I liked her instantly. Stephania was born in Kaunas in 1926. She was in occupation during the war and she knew about all horrors Jews had to go through. Stepha and I started dated and fell in love with each other. Stepha had a small daughter Aldona, born in 1946. I took her as my own child. I never asked Stepha who the father of her daughter was. I did not care what her past was. In 1949 I proposed to Stepha. It did not matter to me that Stepha was a Jew. She was my soul mate. Stepha's parents were not very happy about our marriage, but on the other hand they understood that it would not be easy for her to raise her daughter by herself. In 1949 Stepha and I had our marriage registered. Her daughter and she moved in my place.

In 1950 our son was born. We named him Shlema after my father. I made pretty good money like other cutters. I could make my cuts. I do not want to share what I did. All I can say that it was impossible to live on salary only, so like other people working at the factory I saved a little bit on the fabric and then sold it externally.

My life was good. In 1956 my second son was born. Stepha asked to give him Lithuanian name Alyukas as it was her father's name. In 1960 my third son Evgeniy was born. Our family was very friendly. Elder daughter Aldona had also treated me like father and I loved her as my own daughter. I work hard at the factory and also took private orders at home. I provided a good living for my family. Stepha and I never parted with the exception of the three months in 1957, when I had to go through additional training in the army. In early 1950s the factory granted us a small

one-room apartment and in late 1960s I had the apartment built in cooperative building and paid my own money for it. I had a car. My family and I went to Palanga, Druskeninkai. We did not go anywhere but Baltic countries. In early 1970s I submitted my documents to immigration for Israel. We did not get the permit, because the elder brother served at the border with China. I was no willing to leave without son, though I regret it now, as later on sons left without me.