

Genrich Zimanis



This is my husband, Genrich Zimanis, in Vilnius in the 1970s.

My husband and I were a wonderful couple. He loved and respected me. Nevertheless, I had no idea what was going on in his soul. He most likely spared me and didn't speak of his doubts and anxieties. I think Genrich, a Communist and internationalist by nature, knew more than common people about the regime, Communists and Stalin. When Stalin died, both of us were mourning. The resolutions of the Twentieth Party Congress pleased my husband and me. We never spoke about the horror of Stalin's regime. I didn't even know anything about the fate of my sister's husband Mark. When my husband died, I went to Israel, and Mark told me what Communists did to his family and what a hard life they had in Siberia. My husband didn't encourage such conversations as they contradicted his beliefs. I don't even know how my husband could escape trouble, in connection with the departure of my sister to Israel.

My husband and I didn't discuss issues related to Israel, wars of that period, viz. the Six-Day-War, Yom Kippur War. Even now I don't know his opinion on that and, frankly speaking, I wasn't interested in that either.

In the 1970s my husband went on a trip to the USA during the period when American Jews started making protests against the anti-Semitic politics in the USSR. My husband talked to them, trying to prove that on the contrary, our country carried out the politics of internationalism. When I met Genrich in Moscow, he said that it had been a very complicated trip. My husband brought me a present – a typing machine with Hebrew font. First I was perturbed like any woman would be. I was expecting something different – a fur coat, jewelry or other things. My husband confessed to me that he dreamed of reviving the Jewish press and culture and the present given to me was the first step in that direction.

My husband also went to Israel within the framework of the congress of the Communist Party of Israel. The members of the Soviet delegation weren't allowed by the accompanying KGB officers to leave the hotel, for them not to meet people and not to see the real life of Israelis. They traveled in a car with opaque glass. They weren't allowed to walk around the country! Nevertheless, my

husband managed to meet his prewar friends. My husband knew Hebrew very well and communicated with them. He got the press in Hebrew from Israel all those years.