

Isaac And Frieda Berkovits



This is a photo of my parents, Isaac and Frieda Berkovits, taken on their silver wedding anniversary in Tallinn in 1939. Upon his return from the army, my father got married and my parents settled in Tallinn. Of course, they had a traditional Jewish wedding; it couldn't have been any other way. My mother was a milliner before getting married; she made very pretty hats. After getting married both my parents worked. My mother made hats at home and my father was a tailor. They lived modestly, refusing themselves many things. With time they managed to save enough money to open a fabric store. They sold silk and woolen fabric. The store was in the downtown area, located

in a thoroughfare and gradually it became prosperous. At first, my mother worked in the store as a cashier. Once the business took off, they hired workers and my mother became a housewife. My father didn't work in the store either, he hired sales assistants. The family was large and my mother had maids. There were five children in the family. The eldest brother, Samuel, was named after my maternal grandfather. He was born on 4th April 1915. My elder sister Ida was born on 11th September 1916. My second sister Vera was born on 14th September 1918. Her Jewish name was Dveira. Rudolf was born on 9th November 1919. I, the youngest, was born in 1922. I was named Liya. My parents were very religious. We respected and observed many Jewish traditions. Friday evening we marked the Sabbath. My mother lit candles and prayed. Then we had a festive dinner. Our house was known for tradition, which implied that anybody could come to us for the Sabbath dinner without invitation. Those who didn't have a place to have their Sabbath meal were hospitably invited to our house. Our relatives always came on Sabbath evening. There were also the visitors who didn't have a chance to get home in time for the Sabbath. We were happy to see everybody. The next day it was a rule for parents to go to the synagogue. They took the children with them. We went to the synagogue on holidays as well. There was a large, beautiful synagogue in Tallinn; it doesn't exist anymore, it burned down during the bombing in 1944.