

Makhlia Khalzova, Her Sister Itta Vershkina And Their Children



This is a picture of me and my sister Itta Vershkina, nee Ostrover and our children. The photo was taken in Lvov in 1957. From left to right standing: my daughter Ludmila Voronina, nee Khalzova, Itta's daughter Klava, I, Itta's son Victor Vershkin, my sister Itta, my daughter Valentina Zarovskaya, nee Khalzova and Itta's daughter Tania; and sitting are my younger daughter Alla Khalzova and her friend Sveta. In 1946 I gave birth to three girls. Vassiliy was away taking some patients home. The doctors gave me only one girl: she was the tiniest of the three and weighed only 900 grams. I didn't even see the two other girls and have no idea what happened there, the doctors probably gave them away for adoption for money. What could I do being a weak, hungry and helpless woman with no education? I didn't even know where to get help. There were many

childless families after the war. Women wanted children, but couldn't bear them due to the hardships that they went through during the war. That same year, in 1946, Vassiliy and I registered our marriage in a registry office. We didn't have a wedding party. I took my husband's last name - Khalzova. Vassiliy demobilized from the army and began to work at the flour mill factory; he was a mechanic there. He didn't allow me to go to work. I was to look after the children. That doctor was right: our daughter Valentina was born in 1949 and Alla followed in 1953. I took good care of our girls: I made clothes, embroidered and they were always dressed like little dolls. I didn't celebrate any Jewish traditions after the war - it's not that I forgot them, but somehow I didn't observe any. My daughters weren't raised Jewish. We spoke Russian at home. I just told them about my mother and about our life in the village. When we visited Itta we sang songs that Itta and I remembered since we were children. I cooked the way I was used to. Vassiliy didn't eat pork either. We didn't specifically follow the kosher laws, but we kept meat products separately from dairy products. My sister Itta married Vershkin, a Russian man, a military, in 1946. They lived not far from us in Lvov. After the war Jews tried to switch to Russian names to avoid teasing or mocking. Itta changed her Jewish name to Lida, a Russian name. She has three children. Her son Victor lives in Lvov and her daughters married Ukrainian men and moved away: Tania lives in St. Petersburg and Klava lives in Zhytomyr. Itta lives in the vicinity of Lvov. We seldom see each other. Her husband died in the 1980s. Itta has been ill since then.