

## Cilja Laud With Members Of The Jewish Community Of Estonia



This is me, the chairwoman of the Jewish community of Estonia with its members during the meeting in Viljandi 'Warm House' - the program in our community which gathers elderly people by interests, for them to have a chat. From left to right: members of the program Elen Peterson, I, Lev Broshinskiy and his wife Maria. The picture was taken in Viljandi in 2005.

When I reached the age of 55, the pension age in the USSR, I quit my job. At that time the Jewish community of Estonia was open and its chairman, Gennadiy Gramberg, invited me to work there. My colleagues did not want me to leave, tried to talk me into staying, but my decision was firm. I have always been a true Jew. Blood is thicker than water. I am proud of being a Jew, and do not want to be anything else. I went to work at the community when it was just budding.

I never regretted the breakup of the Soviet Union. I think that none of the people who inhabited Estonia before 1940 regret it. We regained the right to decide to live the way we wished in our country.

I was the chairwoman of the Jewish community of Estonia until last year. Then I was given an offer at the Ministry of Education in spite of being 68 and I accepted it. I was not known in Estonia, only as the chairwoman of the Jewish community. I was also a member of the round table under the auspice of the president, and our community was cofounder of the Association of Estonian Peoples. I was interested in politics.

Frankly speaking, I think if taking into account human weakness and knowing the culture of different peoples here in Estonia a bit and understanding their psychology, we can find a key to people of all nationalities. This is what we should do.

If people are kinder to each other, it would be better for them and for the country as a whole. I believe in that in spite of my age. I am not idealistic, I just know that it is true. All problems can be tackled if good things will be noticed in people, if you talk to them about the things that unite us, not separate us. And then later, together we can try to solve the problems we are looking at from different angles.