

Zelik Kopelovich`s Chuppah



This is my cousin Zelik Kopelovich`s chuppah. The photo was taken by Israel Yahnin in Riga in 1958. I spent three months visiting my cousin Zelik Kopelovich in America at his invitation. He told me that his father had been a joiner. His mother had had a job in the market place selling second-hand articles. They bought overcoats, repaired and resold them. And footwear they sold, too. It was a hard life. And then they moved from Daugavpils to Riga. In Riga she opened a store as well. Life became easier. They began to live better. Then the Soviet power was established. Their life didn't change for the worse ? they were workers, not that rich. Selling and buying operations were then carried out by both Latvians and Jews. The poor were being resettled from the basements to the apartments of the rich, who were sent to shared apartments. Zelik and his wife Bella had their wedding in Riga in 1958, and they had a chuppah, too, in accordance with all the rules. It is a canopy on four posts made of fabric, with which they cover the groom and the bride and lead them to the prayer house, and people are walking around with lit candles. Music plays, serious music, everyone is crying. Then they pour wine in glasses, give a sip to the groom, a sip to the bride. Then they put the glass on the floor, and the groom must step on it and break it into pieces! And at once you hear a burst of cheerful music! Now's when merrymaking starts! The glass is usually wrapped in a cloth to prevent pieces from scattering. But the chuppah was put up not in the synagogue, but at the wedding. They have one daughter.