

Siima Shkop With Her Husband Victor Mellov



This is me with my husband Victor Mellov. Our picture was taken by a street photographer not far from our house, in the vicinity of the Old City, in Tallinn in 1955. I met my future husband, Victor Mellov, during my studies. My classmate Markovich came back from the front and found me. He studied at the legal department of the university and Victor had studied with him before. They were friends and Markovich introduced me to him. We liked each other and started dating. Both of us were very busy and we saw each other seldom in the evening. We had to get ready for our studies.

Usually we met in the morning on the way to classes. We walked, talked and sometimes got so carried away that we were late for classes. We did not want to part. We decided to get married, but both of us were studying, had no money other than the scholarship, and no apartment. It was not the only obstacle. I cannot say that Victor's parents were happy about our intention to get married. They had a practical vision: both of us were students, whose scholarship and odd jobs would not be enough to get by. Besides, we did not have a place to live. My mother was flatly against my marriage to an Estonian. She did not think of the material side of things. Aunt Sarah was also against it, but not as ardently as mother. We argued for a long time, and eventually Mother told me, 'Leave, and you are not our child any longer.' I cried, but still I did not want to let my beloved go. We got married in 1947. Of course, we did not have a posh wedding. It was the time of hunger and the attitude of our kin did not allow us to feel like having parties. After the registration of our marriage we came home, to the room where I was living with my mother. The three of us shared one room. My husband worked hard. He wrote a lot. His pen name was Andres Valaa. He did not have a lot of spare time, but still he did not want to spend it in the family. He liked loud parties and gambling. Of course, it was not easy for me, but on the other hand he was an interesting person and I loved him. Victor's friends were also very interesting people. I did not mind if they came to us. It was very important for me that Victor treated Jews with deep respect. He had no drop of anti-Semitism in him.