

Masha Zhak With Her My Mother Dina Kitt And Father Solomon Stumer



This is our family photograph: my mother Dina Stumer (Kitt in her second marriage), I and my father Solomon Stumer. This photo was taken in May 1941 in Tallinn. My parents got married in October 1935. They had a traditional Jewish wedding. After the wedding they rented a large two-room apartment with a spacious kitchen in the same apartment building. I was born in 1936. I was given the name of Masha after both my grandfathers. Both of them had the name of Meishe, and my name also started with M. After I was born, Mama had a maternity leave to take care of me, and when it was over, she resumed her work at the Punane Kojt factory. My mother liked going to

work and communicating with people. She actually didn't have to go work. My father earned quite sufficient, but my mother wanted to be independent. Both grandmothers were helping to raise me. In 1940 Estonia became a Soviet Republic. Nothing seemed to change for our family. We had no wealthy relatives, and our family was not persecuted. My father went to work as a shoe leather cutter at a shoe factory, and my mother continued working at the Punane Kojt factory. She was well-respected at work. I don't think there was any anti-Semitism before the war even during the Soviet rule in Estonia. At least, this is what my mother used to say. On 22nd June 1941 the radio broadcast that Germany had attacked the Soviet Union. The war began. This happened at noon, and the war was already on-going in Belarus. They were bombing Kiev. A few days later my father was conscripted to the Soviet army. His brother Zemakh and Aunt Bertha's husband Efraim were drafted, too. In late 1941 my mother was notified that my father was dead, and Bertha also received a notification about her husband Efraim's death. Both of them served on a Soviet battleship, which sank near the Hanko Peninsula, Finland.