

Masha Zakh With Her Husband Lev Zakh, And Their Daughter Ilona Avdeyeva



This is my husband Lev Zakh, our daughter Ilona and I. Ilona turned 6 months. This photo was taken in Tallinn in 1965. I met my future husband Lev Zakh at work. He was a mechanic at our factory. Lev liked me and asked me to date him. I liked him, too. We kept seeing each other. I was in no hurry to get married. We got married in 1960. We had a common wedding. We registered our marriage, and our mothers made a wedding dinner. After the wedding I moved in with my husband. We lived with my mother-in-law. My in-laws led a traditional Jewish way of living. My husband's parents were religious. My husband was not as deeply religious as his parents, but he also observed Jewish traditions. Even during the Soviet period my mother-in-law did her best to follow the kashrut. She only cooked Jewish food. We only ate beef and poultry. We never had any pork or sausage at home. Our only daughter Ilona was born in 1965. At that time maternity leave only lasted three months, and when it expired, I had to go back to work. My mother-in-law was there to take care of my daughter. When Ilona turned three, she went to a kindergarten. However, Ilona started getting ill very often, until finally my mother-in-law said she preferred to take care of a healthy child, rather than staying at home with a sick child. Ida actually raised our daughter, actually. She died, when my daughter was in the 9th grade. Ilona was four years old, when my husband fell ill. He had headaches and was weak, but at first he ignored the symptoms. When doctors finally examined him, the diagnosis was frightful: he had malignant growth in his brain. It was too late to have a surgery, and neither the doctors nor we could relieve his suffering. In January 1970 Lev died. This happened a few months before he was to turn 41. We only lived ten years together. We buried my husband in the Jewish cemetery in Tallinn. I stayed with my mother-in-law after my husband died.