

Ester Kleinstein



This is my mother, Ester Kleinstein. This picture was taken in the central square in Palanga, in the background is the monument of Lenin, in the 1950s. My husband Matvey and I lived comfortably. Both of us earned pretty good money. We didn't own a car or dacha. Only a few people could afford that. We usually went on vacation with our children to the Baltic coast in Palanga. Once we went to Siberia. We stayed in my husband's motherland for a month. We also went to Yalta in the peak of the vacation season. Having been used to the cold sea, I could barely stand the Crimean heat. My mother was bonded with my family. She didn't have friends. She didn't go to the synagogue. Before, my mother wasn't religious and after the war she didn't want to hear of God. Even if she had believed in God, she started disbelieving after she had lost her husband, son and relatives.

Though, she always fasted on Yom Kippur and bought matzah on Pesach. I think she did it because she was used to it. My mother was getting more and more ill and couldn't help me anymore. In 1964 she died. She had a secular funeral in the city cemetery in Vilnius without any Jewish rites being observed.