

Geta Jakiene With Her Husband Kalmin Zak And Sons Jakov And Gerts



The picture was made when we bought a car Pobeda. It was very rare at that time. These are my husband, sons and I. Jakov and Gerts are against the background of the car, Kaunas, 1961.

In 1946 I met my future husband. We were introduced to each other by former inhabitant of Shakai, my father's pal. He took the guy in the restaurant where he was watching me. When we got acquainted, we felt warm feeling towards each other right away. His name was Kalmin Zak. Kalmin and I started seeing each other. I was very strict, I did not let him kiss me or even touch my hand. We had several dates and Kalmin proposed to me and we got married shortly. He bought wedding rings and Leya made a dress for me, we I put on for marriage registration ceremony. I took my husband's name. Later on when I was getting a new passport, the lady who was issuing it, made a mistake and my last name as Jakiene, not Zakene. Thus my last name is Jakiene.

Soon I got pregnant and my husband insisted that I should leave my work. I became a housewife since that time. My Kalmin was an ordinary worker. He worked for glazer's shop. In soviet times he made pretty good money. Kalmin was a very kind person. He always gave me his salary and never asked me to report to him. I was rather economical and we lived comfortably. We had not lived for long in my small room. Soon, my pals helped us get a small apartment in the old part of the city. Later on, in the 1970s, the house was demolished and we were given the apartment in the district where we are still living. We hung it together with my husband. In summer we rented a dacha either in Palanga or in Prenai. We also went to the resorts, e.g. to Druskenkai, where we had mineral water. We had never owned a dacha. Husband bought a car in the early 1960s and we went on vacation by car. We almost did not go to the theaters. I enjoyed reading. I read a lot of books of Russian classics, Jewish and European authors.

In 1947 I gave birth to an elder son, whom I named Iakov. In 1952 our second son was born. We named him Gerts after my father. We had a very good living. My husband and I managed to preserved a true Jewish spirit, which was raised in us. Yiddish was spoken at home and our boys

got to know their mother tongue since childhood. We also tried to keep Jewish traditions the best way we could, though it was very hard in soviet times. I tried observing kashrut- at any rate I never mixed milk and meat food, never had pork at home. I failed to observe Sabbath, as Saturday was a working day- Kalmin had to work, boys had to go to school. I tried not to do anything on Saturday though- no laundry, cleaning. We marked holidays- Pesach, Rosh Hashanah, Shaveot, Simchat Torah the way it was done in grandmother's house. Husband and I obligatorily attended synagogue on holidays. We were the members of Kaunas Jewish religious community. We raised our children Jewish- both of them went through britmilah, bar mitzvah at the age of 13. They identified themselves as Jews since childhood. We told our children how their ancestors died, and Jewish tragedy at Great Patriotic War, we always took them to the place where their relatives were executed.

Our family was not interested in politics. Neither I, nor Kalmin, were the members of communist party, or komsomol. Our children Jakov and Gerts did not want to join pioneer organization, or komsomol. Of course, all of us were aware of the things going on in the country Stalin's death in 1953 was like the death of the tyrant. Kalmin must have understood it and I was influenced by his opinion. We also knew about doctor's plot, and persecution of the Jews. We personally were not affected by that, but still we were worried for our tribesmen.