

## Itzhak Dudak And Gitah Dudak



My parents Itzhak Dudak and Gitah Dudak. This photo was taken in a photo shop in Kaunas. This was their first and last postwar photograph taken in 1954. In summer 1945 we returned to Kaunas from evacuation. My father found a vacant room in a damp basement in Kaunas. The water was almost flowing down the walls. We moved in there. My grandmother and grandfather lived nearby in similar conditions. In 1946 the Neris burst the banks and flooded the houses in the central part of Kaunas. However, our hovel was intact. It was located farther from the center on some elevated spot. So we managed to bargain it for a room in the center of the town. The owner of the room was frightened by the flood and wanted to move into our basement. There was a hairdresser's next door to our new room. It hadn't been used for a while, and my father obtained a permit to have it for us. So, we walled up the door opening, made a window and doors between the rooms, and it was a rather nice apartment that we got in the end. My parents helped our grandfather and grandmother to move in with us and since then we stayed together. Later they moved to Malka's place. Malka was my mother's younger sister. They stayed with her as long as they lived. My father went to work shortly after we returned from evacuation. It was hard to get a job then, particularly for those who had no education. He was employed as a loader, and later he became a vendor. When he was old he trained in glass cutting, and had this job until he retired. The period of evacuation and postwar hardships affected my father's health condition. He had heart problems. My father died of heart disease in 1963, one year after he retired. He was buried according to Jewish traditions. He was carried to the cemetery on a board across the town, and lowered into the grave. There was no coffin. This was frightful and my mother mentioned she would not wish to lie in damp ground without a coffin. Mama lived many years longer. She died at the age of 76 in 1980. I remembered what she had said during my father's funeral, and she was buried in a coffin. However, we observed all other Jewish traditions. An old Jewish man recited a prayer for the deceased, and after the funeral we sat shivah.