

Ruth Laane And Her Husband Valdo Laane



This photo was taken during my wedding ceremony in the registry office. This is me and my husband Valdo Laane. This photo was taken in Tallinn in 1967. I got married in 1967. My husband, Valdo Laane, is Estonian. He was born in the town of Viljandi in Estonia in 1934. When the Soviet regime was established in Estonia, all of them, including Valdo's family, were deported in 1941. The men were taken to the Gulag, and members of their families were exiled. Valdo's brother died in exile. Valdo and his mother returned from exile in 1949, when Estonians returned from the army, and the wives of these ex-military of the Estonian Corps were allowed to pick up their relatives from Siberia. These women helped children of their relatives and even those children that had no relatives left in Estonia. Valdo's mother stayed in exile, and Valdo arrived at Viljandi where he had no relatives left. Valdo had no place to live or food to eat. He wandered about the town until a passer-by asked him if he was looking for someone. This passer-by took Valdo to his parents' servant, who took Valdo to his grandparents in the village. Valdo stayed with them. After finishing school he wanted to enter the Faculty of History at Tartu University. He liked history. He was rejected, and it was all for his honesty. He wrote in his application form that he had started school in exile. History was more like policy at the time, and there was no chance for him. What was he to do? Valdo submitted his documents to the Faculty of Russian Philology at the Tallinn Teachers' Training College. He spoke fluent Russian with no accent. Valdo had learned Russian by rather 'state-of-the-art' method of the language environment in exile in Siberia. It is the best way to learn a language plunging into the environment. There was always a deficit of male teachers at school, and guys were appreciated in our college, despite whatever problems areas, if they could be ignored. Valdo entered it. During our studies in college we were distantly acquainted, but when I came to work there, Valdo was also working there and we made a closer acquaintance. Our acquaintance developed into love. And it ended with our wedding. My grandmother died in 1965. Mama had no objections to my marrying a non-Jewish man, but I had my doubts. Then I remembered my grandmother's words when she said one should marry

someone of the same mentality and I took the risk. So it happened and I never once regretted marrying the man. I would even say that only Valdo might have had his regrets since my husband is much wiser and gentler than me. At hard times, when we had disagreements, particularly when I hear about some wrong developments in the news, I can say uncomplimentary things about Estonians, while Valdo has never said a wrong word about Jews, not because he was afraid of me, but because this is not the way of his thinking.