

Cilja Laud



This is me feeding the doves at Vabadus Square (Liberty Square). I had barely learned walking. The picture was taken in Tallinn in 1939. My parents got married in 1936 after they had known each other for several years. After the wedding my parents rented an apartment in downtown Tallinn, on Bruksi Street. Mother was a housewife. I was born in 1938 and named Cilja. Though Mother was a housewife, I had a baby-sitter since I was an infant. She was German, Frau Opperman her name was. She was very strict. She was not pleased when I was chatting with my parents, nothing to

speak of my grandparents. Opperman raised me very strictly and feared that they might spoil me. Of course, when I spent time with them, they really pampered me. Mother said that Frau Opperman loved oranges. Thus, Grandpa brought oranges to Frau Opperman for her to allow me to go for a walk with him or go to see my grandparents. In that case, she could not say no to him. I do not remember much about my prewar childhood in Tallinn. I remember sitting on the lap of Frau Opperman, who was reading books to me. I can recall how my parents took me to the zoo for me to see the animals. I also remember the walks along Kardiorg Park with my father. I also remember that I was a bad eater, but Frau Opperman always made me eat all the food on my plate. When she turned away, I hid the food under the table cloth. When she left the room I threw the food out the window or to the roof of the neighboring house. I must have been started speaking German as I spent a lot of time with my baby-sitter. I spoke only German before we left for evacuation. Of course, my parents were fluent in German, but they often spoke Yiddish. In general, many languages were spoken at home.