

Aron Rudiak's Mother Ruchlia Rudiak With Her Second Husband Iosif Poltorak



My mother Ruchlia Rudiak and her second husband Iosif Poltorak. This photo was taken on Iosif's birthday in 1961.

My mother and sister returned from evacuation to Odessa after it was liberated in 1944. My father Dovid Rudiak was at the front, he disappeared near Mariupol in October 1941. He must have perished when fascist troops landed in Mariupol.

My mother remarried very successfully in 1957. Her husband Iosif Poltorak, a Jew, was many years older than my mother. Iosif had four sons from the first marriage. One of them - Arkadi Poltorak - was senior researcher of the Institute of State and Law in Moscow. Iosif was a very intelligent and - a rare quality at the time - very religious man. He retired and held some important position in a synagogue. He had a tallit and tefillin and started every day with a prayer. When I visited my mother he told me the Jewish history and about Exodus. I celebrated Pesach and Rosh Hashanah with him several times. Unfortunately, I visited them rather rarely and cannot tell any details, but I know that he was very religious and observed Jewish traditions strictly. I respected his faith, but since I was a member of the Party I was far from religion, but my mother resumed observing Jewish traditions and followed them until the end of her life, she began to follow kashrut and on Saturday they went to the synagogue. My mother lit candles on Sabbath and prayed. She cooked traditional Jewish food on Sabbath. Iosif died in 1977. All members of the Jewish religious community of Odessa came to his funeral. They buried Iosif with prayers following all Jewish rules. My mother died 10 years later in 1987. She was buried near Iosif, but we didn't follow any Jewish traditions at her funeral.