

Rosa Linger And Her Mother Ester Kagan



There are my mother Ester Kagan and I. The picture was made in Liepaja in 1940.

In late 1919 my future parents got married. Mother started her own business after getting married. Her two sisters Hanna and Mina became housewives when married, mother's elder sister Musya and mother were owners of kosher meat stores. Both of them were very clever, energetic and entrepreneurial women and they probably felt bored at home. In general, mother's family was involved in business of selling kosher meat. Apart from mother and Musya, all mother's brothers owned stores of kosher meat. Father had his own business- he dealt with wholesale trade of products and had contracts with Germany and England. Our family belonged to middle class. We were neither poor nor rich.

I finished lyceum in 1939. I was eager to go on with my studies, but parents could not afford tuition. They had to pay tuition for my sisters, who went to lyceum. I decided that I would work to save money for tuition. Of course, it was hard for me to find a job since I had not acquired any profession. I was offered a job in the office of a private firm. I worked in the daytime and attended evening banking courses. I had worked for that firm for a year.

I got married in July 1940. I met my future husband Naum Linger near the cinema building during the weekend. He was a soviet military officer, senior lieutenant. We did not date for a long time. Naum proposed to me rather soon. I loved Naum, and firmly decided to marry him. Naum was an officer, the member of the party, so there was no way we could have a traditional Jewish wedding. Our marriage was registered in marriage register and that was it. It was painful to my parents, but they were wise people and loved me, so they found strength to abide by that.

After getting married we started living separately from parents. Naum was allowed by his chief to stay in the city, not in the barrack. We rented a 3-room apartment. I furnished it myself and purchased necessary things. I was 19 but he wanted to show my parents that I was a grown-up and independent woman, a true hostess being able to do anything myself.

I did not fully observe Jewish traditions when I got married. Of course, I never mixed meat and milk products. I still keep that rule. I did not have kosher meat. Soviet regime closed down all kosher stores. Mother got kosher meat in synagogue. I was working and it was hard for me. We did not mark holidays at home. Husband was the member of the party so he could not observe Jewish traditions in his family. On all Jewish holidays he and I went to my parents and we marked the holidays with them. On the 1st of May 1941 parents came to see us for the first time after we got married. I was going for the eighth month. On that occasion I bought new dishes for them definitely to be kosher. Though, on that day parents just had tea, but still I understood that they had forgiven us for getting married.

I gave birth to a son on the 7th of June 1941. Parents and sisters came to the delivery house to meet us. We called son Ilia after Naum's father. His Jewish name was Eliagu. My parents were very happy.