

Revekka And David Epshteyn



This is my father David Epshteyn and my mother Revekka Epshteyn, nee Levin, on the sea coast during their vacation at the Riga coast in Yurmala. The picture was taken in 1964. In 1948 the state of Israel was founded. It was a great joy for all of us. My father, who had been involved in the construction of Tel Aviv for three years, was really happy for the Jews, who finally had their own

land, their own country. At that time the Soviet regime treated Israel loyally, and as a matter of fact, the Soviet Union was the first country that facilitated the foundation of the state of Israel. In a while the attitude towards Israel drastically changed. At that time official mass media called Israel an aggressor and the Israeli army - the winner of the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War - bandits and occupants. We rejoiced in the victories of Israel, and its calamities were our calamities. Father worked in the students' polyclinic of Tallinn Polytechnic University, first as a therapist and then as a member of the medical examination board. He retired at the age of 75. The nurses liked him very much. In general he was loved by the entire personnel of the hospital. He was a very good doctor and a very good man. Father was not affected by the Doctors' Plot', which commenced in January 1953. He kept on working and the patients made appointments with him beforehand. My parents and our kin kept on observing Jewish traditions. At that time the Soviet regime began struggling against religion. We understood that Father should not go to the synagogue, but no regime could ban marking Jewish holidays at home! We did not mark Soviet holidays at home. Those, who were working, were to attend festive demonstrations on 1st May, 7th November with their organization. For us Soviet holidays were ordinary days-off. In the late 1960s the Soviet regime permitted Jews to leave the USSR for permanent abode in Israel. Many our relatives immigrated. My father was happy to have an opportunity to leave for Israel. He, a Zionist, thought Israel to be the symbol of revival of the Jewry, the dreamland. I was also willing to leave. Unfortunately, we could not do that because of Mother. She was very sick and the doctors prohibited her to change climate. There was no way we could leave Mother here. In 1984 my mother passed away, and in a year Father died. Both of them were buried in Tallinn Jewish cemetery.