

Efim Shpielberg And His Two-Year Old Daughter Mila.



It is me Efim Shpielberg and my two-year old daughter Mila. This photo was taken in Odessa in 1962.

In 1959 I got married with Faina Melamed a Jewish girl. We had a civil ceremony .I was 30 years old and I had a strong feeling of being able to support my family. After we got married we went to live in 108, Ostrovidova Street, with Faina's mother Leya. There were two small rooms in the basement, but I was struck with how clean they were: like a surgery room. One room was divided with a curtain separating a kerogas stove, a tap with a container for water and a bucket underneath. There was no dampness in the basement. There was a coal-stoked stove heating it. We fetched water from the yard and did laundry in the yard. It was especially hard in winter. Housewives had to do their washing in ice-cold water. Here was a toilet in the yard. My wife was afraid of going there. There were rats living inside. My mother-in-law did the housekeeping. She cooked delicious food. She observed kashrut. She managed to do everything so right as not to mix meat and dairy products. My wife and I didn't live a traditional Jewish life, but my mother-in-law went to the synagogue to pray and lit candles on Sabbath.

In 1960 my daughter Mila was born. In 1966 my wife managed to receive a two-room apartment with all comforts in a new five-storied building in Primorski district in Odessa. There were two rooms: one of them was like a passage room: 20 square meters big and another room 16 square meters big. There was a 6-square-meter kitchen and a gas stove in it. There was a bathroom in the apartment. Mila went to a kindergarten. In 1968 she went to school # 56. A week later I bought a piano and Mila began to study music.

In 1978 Mila finished school and entered the Faculty of Cryogen Engineering in the Refrigeration College in Odessa. She studied successfully in the College. She had many friends and there were Jewish friends among them. She met a Russian guy named Andrei Makarenko, student of the Construction College at a party. Mila fell in love with him. In 1981 Mila got pregnant and they got married. We wanted Mila to marry a good Jewish man, but it happened this way. After the wedding the newly weds settled down with us. In 1982 my first grandson Igor was born. Mila finished the College in 1984 and began to work as an engineer in a design institute. In 1986 our granddaughter Yulia was born. Mila quit her job to raise the children and my wife Faina was helping her with the children. After my granddaughter was born I bought a car and gave it to Mila and Andrei. On 3 April 1989 they got in an accident. Mila died and Andrei survived. It's hard for me to talk about it. It's hard to bear this. One wouldn't wish it to his bitterest enemy. Faina cries every day. She cannot forget it. She can never forget it. We buried Mila in the Jewish cemetery. How do we live now? To keep going we have our grandchildren living with us.