

Tobiash Starozum's Parents: Aron And Tsyrl Starozum With His Aunt Enta



My mother's sister Enta, my father and mother at a kibutz in Israel. Photo made in Israel in 1953 to have me see how they looked, as we hadn't seen each other for 8 years.

In summer 1945 there was a Decree issued allowing Polish citizens to go back to Poland. My family began to pack to go back to Poland. I couldn't go with them. My job had sensitive restrictions, as our institution was within the structure of the Ministry of Foreign affairs. My colleagues respected me. We decided that my family would leave without me and then - come what may. I helped my family to obtain all necessary documents and pack. But what happened was that somebody stole their documents at the railway station. They were forced to get off the train on the border and go to Moscow. I had to put together another package of documentation for them and take it to Moscow. When employees of the Polish Embassy in Moscow got to know that my father was such a good tailor they wanted to convince him to take up a job at the Embassy. They even promised him an apartment in Moscow. My father refused. He looked forward to going back home in Lodz. They went home to Lodz. But after they arrived, they didn't feel welcome in Poland. Nobody wanted them there. There were no apartments available and no jobs and no future. There was anti-Semitism similar to German anti-Semitism. There were very few Jews left in Poland. It was a rough situation and they didn't stay there long.

My parents moved to Germany from Poland. In Germany they received an allowance and moved all together. There was a very strict Jewish community in Chile. (South America) At the end of 1946 my parents and sister moved to Palestine. Shyfra's husband stayed in Chile and I have no more information about him.

Members of my family worked at a kibbutz in Israel. They didn't get any payment for their work, but they got accommodation and meals at the kibbutz. They learned Hebrew there. My father did some farming and made clothes. My mother and sister worked at the canteen. When their situation improved they rented an apartment in Bat-Yam. My sister still lives in this apartment. She lived with our parents. She and our father had some knitwear business. Our mother died in 1964 and our father died in 1973. Benyum grew up and served in the army and then became a worker. He is married. My sister Shyfra is 80. She is a pensioner and is involved in public activities.

My mother's sister Enta, born in 1891 lived in Lodz. She was a good dressmaker. She and her daughter Ella managed to escape to the Soviet Union in 1939. Her husband stayed in Lodz and perished. Aunt Enta was in Middle Asia in evacuation. In 1946 she emigrated to Israel where she died in 1967.

My father visited me in 1962. Then, in about two years' time, my sister came and then my father visited me another time in 1967 or 1968. The Soviet Union didn't have any diplomatic relationships with Israel at that time. My father or sister bought tours in Italy or France to visit our country as tourists from other countries. They came to Moscow and we met at aunt Esther's place. I've always been open about my nationality or my parents and sister living in Israel. My colleagues were aware of my father's arrival. My boss approved my request for a vacation and I went to Moscow to see my father.

When my father came for the first time my mother's sister Esther and I met him in Odessa. My father saw that I had a good job and my colleagues respected me, so he told me to stay where I was. They were living at the kibbutz then working hard and suffering from malaria and heat. I guess they thought that I had an all right life when theirs was too hard and didn't want me to go through new hardships. I spent my vacation with them when they arrived.