

Pesia Marjenburger And Her Cousin Tamara



This is me and my cousin Tamara. This is my first postwar picture. We returned from the evacuation and settled down at my mother younger sister Sonja's. Sonja had a daughter, and my mother did the babysitting for her. I was happy, when I was allowed to hold my cousin Tamara. This photo was taken in Tallinn in 1945.

In November 1944 we heard that Estonia was liberated from fascists. We could start on our way home, but we had no money to buy tickets. We had to stay where we were until 1945. By that time aunt Sonja and her husband were back home in Estonia. They sent us money to buy tickets. My mother and I headed to Estonia. My grandmother died in 1943. She actually starved to death. We buried her in the local cemetery in Andijon. I don't even know whether it was a Jewish or a common cemetery she was buried in. I was too young to know about such things.

We arrived in Tallinn wearing ragged boots and quilt jackets. My father's parents met us at the station. They moved to Tallinn after the war. My grandmother and grandmother were in Uvel'ka, Cheliabinsk region, in the evacuation, like Aunt Sonja and her husband, but they did not communicate. They were very friendly. This was the first time in our life that they treated us kindly. We were starved, and my grandmother invited us to eat right away. She made many delicious things, and this meal was like a feast to us. We couldn't stop eating, and Grandmother kept bringing more food. We stayed there overnight before going to Tartu.

My mother and I would have stayed to live in Tartu, had our house been intact. However, it was ruined like many other houses in Tartu during the war. Our acquaintances gave us shelter where we stayed for some time before moving to Tallinn. My mother's sister Sonja, her husband and their baby daughter lived in a 26 square meter room in a shared apartment. Sonja had to go back to

work. She worked as a shop-assistant. There were no nursery schools or kindergartens available at that time. Sonja talked us into moving in with them. She wanted Mama to be a babysitter. Having no other options, we agreed.

I attended no school in the evacuation. My mother believed the war wasn't going to last long and then I would go back to an Estonian school. This was why I went to school in 1945, when I was about to turn 10. However, there were many overage children like me at that time. In the evacuation I almost forgot the Estonian language and mama sent me to a Russian school. I met Tsylia Perelman, a Jewish girl, in the first form, and we became close friends. We are still friends with Tsylia. Tsylia was two years younger than me, but this made no barrier to our friendship. When we were in the 4th form, Edith Umova came joined our class. Tsylia had known her before. Edith's mother used to work for Tsylia's grandmother at some point of time. We became friends, and we still are. However, Tsylia is a closer friend to me than Edith.

I became a pioneer at school. I did all right at school. I wasn't a very active pioneer. I always preferred minding my own business. I wasn't quite sociable, when a child. I was my mama's girl. I never liked leaving mama.