

Pesia Speranskaya And Her Family



This photo was taken at our home before my mother's younger sister Sonja and her family left for Israel. We had a family reunion, not knowing whether we would be able to see each other ever again. From left to right: my mother Hana Marjenburger, her sister Sonja, Sonja's daughter Tamara, my school friend Tsylia Laud and I. This photo was taken in Tallinn in 1976.

In 1952 I became an apprentice in the Sanhygiene store. Later it became merely a perfumery store, but at the time I went to work there, they were selling washing powder, perfumery and even some plain drugs. My apprenticeship was over after two weeks, and director of the store appointed me to the position of a shop assistant. After the war stores hardly offered any products whatsoever. When there was something available in the store, there were long lines forming immediately. Shop assistants had to be smart, reserved, confident and be able to put down whatever conflicts at the start. People were spending hours standing in line. They grew angry and irritant, and were always ready to snap at a shop assistant. However, they never complained of my services. My customers even left their grateful notes in our blotter book. We had continuous contests for the title of the best shop assistant in the store, and I won numerous performance awards and thanks. We also received a rise to our salary for good performance. So, each of us was stimulated to perform better. I liked my job a lot. It wasn't always easy, though. When a supply of deficit goods was delivered to our store, there were lines forming long before our opening hour. There were even fights, when we ran out of goods, when there were still people in line expecting to get what they wanted. However, we managed all right, and there were no complaints about our performance. I worked in this store for 16 years. My aunt Sonja worked in a commission store. When she decided to quit her job, she offered me her position. I worked there 16 years before retiring.

I got married in 1967. Our only daughter was born in 1970. We gave her the name of Marina. I had to go back to work, and my mother agreed to retire and take care of Marina. Marina was a very pretty girl. At the age of 5 she fell ill with scarlet fever, and had to take antibiotics. The girl started gaining weight. Before long we noticed that our former vivid and quick to laugh girl turned into a slow dumb girl. Gradually things grew worse. Marina couldn't stay still 45 minutes in class. Her memory grew worse. I quit my job and stayed at home for 3 years to look after my daughter. She

could go to school no longer. My mother helped me a lot. I can't imagine what I would have done without her.

When in the 1970s Jews were officially allowed to leave the USSR for Israel, almost all our relatives moved there. My father's sister Rebecca and Bertha and their families moved almost immediately. When Lina's husband died, she followed her sisters to Israel. My mother's sister Sonja and her husband also moved to Israel. Tamara and her husband lived in the USA. Sonja's husband died shortly after they arrived in Israel. Perhaps, the climate was not quite agreeable with him. As for Sonja, she lived many years in Israel before she died in 2000. However, we never considered moving there.