

Margarita Kamiyenovskaya



This is me by the spa building during my vacation in Piarnu. This picture was taken in 1966. In January 1953 the Doctors' Plot commenced. Of course, it wasn't as horrible in Estonia as it was in Russia. One of my colleagues had returned from Leningrad and said that when he was in the tram, the ticket-collector and some passengers were discussing what should be done with the Jews in the tram. They suggested that the Jews should be ousted from the tram, but the ticket-collector talked them out of it in a peculiar way saying that it wasn't the time. Of course, nothing of the kind happened here. Though, directors of enterprises were ordered by Moscow to fire all Jews. Sometimes people were dissolved for 'incompetence'. I was called to the HR department and was told to write a resignation letter. I did. My direct boss, an Estonian, was fired probably for 'wrong' recruitment. I was looking for a job for three months, but as soon as the HR department saw my passport, it turned out that there were no job openings. Then my former boss offered me a job as a

supplier in a service company he worked for. We collected scrap metal in the dumps and cut fir tree branches before New Year. I hoped that our life would change for the better after the Twentieth Party Congress, when Khrushchev held a speech, exposing Stalin's crimes. There were no quick changes. Only after ten years or so I got a good job. I was hired as a dispatcher in a company, dealing with timber: Lespromsbyt. Then I was in charge of the transportation department. I worked there until my retirement. My mother and I remained by ourselves in the apartment after my father's death. In Soviet terms our apartment was too big for two people. I was called to the Ispolkom and told that half of our apartment would have to be occupied and that we would be left with two rooms. Our acquaintances, an Estonian couple, needed lodging and we gave them half of our apartment. We decided that if we had to share the apartment, it would be better to do that with people we knew. We made a big mistake. Our new neighbors started harassing us, nagging at every trifle. It happened so that my mother was afraid to go into the kitchen when I wasn't around. Before going to work I cooked lunch for my mother and left it in her room. She warmed it on a small electric oven. This went on for a long time. A new house was built in front of ours and we exchanged both our rooms for a one-room apartment in a new building. I still live there.