

Siima Shkop



This is me on the balcony of my cousin Gertrude, the daughter of my mother's sister Dina Milts, who lived in Germany. In 1989 I went to Munich for a visit and stayed with Gertrude's family. She took my picture. During the Soviet times I could not leave the country. I could travel anywhere throughout the Soviet Union, but I could not even think of going overseas. In 1989, after perestroika began, I was happy to meet our relatives, who were living in Germany. I was happy to meet our relatives, who were living in Germany - the daughters of Mother's sister Dina. She married a German and left for his home country. Before the war, Mother wrote to Dina, but after the war it was impossible. Those people whose relatives were living abroad were very suspicious to the Soviet regime, but their relatives being in Germany was almost a crime. Thus we did not know

anything about them. Only after perestroika they found us. I went to see them and my son also went for a visit. Then Dina's children came to Estonia a couple of times when Dina was not alive any longer. I do not remember when she died. She was past 90. I met three of my cousins. I stayed in Bremen with the family of Dina's elder daughter Gertrude Ossa, and the rest came to Bremen to meet me. Gertrude studied theology and her husband was a pastor at an old interesting church in Bremen. The middle daughter Inge looks like her mother did in her youth: bright blue-eyed blond. Inge is a ballet dancer. She had her own ballet school. During the war Inge went to the front to the German soldiers with the performances. During one of her concerts she met her future husband, who was an actor. It was amazing that all of them managed to survive in Germany during the war. Inge said that her father quit his job during the war. He was a teacher and many people in town knew him. Some people might remember that his wife was a Jew. So he went to live in the forest and worked as a forester. Then they moved from one place to another. The younger daughter Krista had no idea whatsoever that her mother was a Jew. She was even a member of the Hitlerjugend [36](#). I also met her. She lives with her family in Canada, but came to Germany to see me. Krista's husband was a tank man during the war. His tank was on fire, but still he survived, despite of severe burns. He had face lifting operations over a period of two years. Krista was working at that hospital as a nurse, when he was there. They fell in love with each other and got married. They have many children. All of them are living in Canada. Krista's husband is an optician. He is working for a large company, which produces complex optics. I keep in touch with my relatives. We talk and visit each other.