

Zenta Kanevskaya



This photograph of me was taken in August 1948 in one of the Leningrad photo studios.

That day I used lipstick for the first time in my life and I wanted to inscribe that fact in my memory. Nowadays girls start using lipstick at the age of 15.

We returned to Leningrad in October 1945. It was necessary to begin life anew. I was the elder and felt responsible for my sister.

My first post-war work was in the Pharmaceutical College.

The director of the college offered me to enter the college, but I had to earn money for myself and my sister. And my sister entered the Pharmaceutical Technical School.

She was housed in a hostel. After the end of her education she left for Priozersk to work. There she got a room.

As for me, I had no place of my own for 14 years. I got my first room in a communal apartment in 1959. And in my present apartment I've lived since 1976. It is the second self-contained apartment in my life – the first one was in Berlin.

In 1948 I started work at the Krasnogvardeets factory, manufacturing medical devices. There I worked till 1980, when I retired. And again I was lucky with people.

You know, after the end of the war, anti-Semitic campaigns were launched by state authorities, and a lot of people suffered from it. But at the Krasnoarmeets factory Georgy Moudanov was the director.

He was Armenian and employed Jews, when already nobody did it.

He also refused to fire employees because of their nationality. One day they summoned him to the regional Communist Party Committee and said that at his factory the percentage of Jews among the employees was too high.

The director answered that he would prefer to be thrown out of the Party rather than fulfill their requirements. Among the citizens his factory had the reputation of an institution where they gave jobs.

At my work I never came into conflicts on the ground of my Jewish origin.

When entering the college, I also faced no discrimination.

Most probably it happened because I wanted only to become a correspondence course student.

And one more thing:

the College of Finance and Economic, which at present has a very high rating, was not in popular demand at that time.