

Asta Pekker And Her Children, Daughter Anna Summar And My Son Pavel Summar.



Me, Asta Pekker, and my children, daughter Anna Summar and my son Pavel Summar. The picture was taken in Kiev, 1983.

I am Asta Grigorievna Pekker. I'm 72 years old. I was born in Berlin, in June 1929. I lived there for four and a half years. My parents and my grandfather and grandmother were Soviet citizens. With Hitler coming in 1933 the Soviet government called our family to Moscow at the end of the year.

In 1961 our first child, son Pavlik, was born, and in 1964 - daughter Annushka.

Â Somebody pushed me in the line in a store. A woman there said that I was pregnant and that they could injure my baby. And then I heard from a half-drunk man who pushed me: "That's good. There will be fewer zhydenyat (babies - transl.)". My reaction was immediate and unexpected for me - I turned and hit him, I hit a human being for the first time in my life. It was astonishing but he fell - he must have been too drunk. It was also astonishing that there was dead silence around me. In this crowded store nobody blamed me but nobody supported me either. And since then I clearly realized that being a mother and protecting my children I could kill anybody who would attempt to hurt them. Since then I also realized that I would never hide my Jewish origin. The life of my both children went under the sign of Jewish origin.

The younger one, Annushka, was growing and grew independent. She generally didn't care who she was. It didn't make much sense to pick on her. But Pavlik, although older, was much more vulnerable. At six he asked me what zhyd meant and why they called him this way. It seems I made a mistake then telling him what it meant and how he should treat those people who said so. He wasn't offended or scared, but I understand now that he felt himself a Jew ever since, for the rest of his short life. At 14 he committed suicide. Pavlik was a very gifted boy - almost a genius - that was what doctors told us. He very started learning to play violoncello. We thought he would follow in his

grandfather's footsteps. And in the second form our nine year old Pavlik came home from music school with a huge word "zhyd" written on his back. He asked me then: "Mama, why don't we go to Israel? They won't abuse me there for my being a Jew". I answered him with what I deeply believed in. I said to him: "Look, perhaps, I am not the best mother, but you wouldn't give me up for anybody else?" He didn't ask me one single question more, in his nine years he understood and subdued. At 14 he wrote a leaflet. It said that it was a disgrace to have such a nobody as Brezhnev for the leader our great country, and that it was impossible to keep silent about it. He typed five copies on our typewriter and took them to school. This was in 1975. I explained to Pavlik that he wouldn't help anybody with this leaflet, but only ruin us all. It was the truth but it was unbearable for him. He didn't wait for the scandal or investigation at school. He died, and he was 14 years, a half and 14 days old. They didn't leave my boy alone even after he died. In a month after his death they broke the name plate on the cemetery with a picture of him and destroyed the flowers. Pavlik's death rolled heavily over our life. It was a hard trauma for our 10 year old Annushka, who unfortunately was the first to take the blow. She was the first one who was told about her brother's death. Since then Annushka never asked me the same questions that Pavlik did. She resolved them by herself on the principle of opposition.

After finishing school Annushka, being a humanitarian by nature, decided to study physics - in the last years of his life Pavlik wanted to become a physicist. And the issue of our possible emigration was also resolved for Annushka, once and forever and without being spoken up. Although we had friends and relatives all around the world by that time, she knew that her father, my husband whose mother was a Jew, papa - Bielorussian, and in his passport he was written down as Russian, didn't want to go anywhere by the Soviet tradition. And this was resolution of all issues.