

## Margarita Kamiyenskaya



This is me in my office in the company dealing with timber: Lespromsbyt, where I worked as the head of the transportation department. This picture was taken in Tallinn in 1970. In January 1953 the Doctors' Plot commenced. Of course, it wasn't as horrible in Estonia as it was in Russia. 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. In the 1970s a new wave of immigrations of Jews to Israel started. I sympathized with those who had made up their minds to leave, and later I was happy for them when I found out that they had settled in well. I couldn't think of immigration for two reasons: my mother was feeble and started feeling unwell with age. She wouldn't have been able to survive the change. I was the only one she had. The other reason was that I could never stand heat. I couldn't even sunbathe on the beach. When I turned 55 I had to resign. My mother was seriously ill by then and I couldn't leave her alone. It was impossible to live on two skimpy pension benefits. I stayed home for a couple of months and realized that both of us would starve to death. There was a telephone station by our house and I went there to work as a janitor. It was hard work for me. There were high ceilings and I had to climb the step-ladder every day to dust them. I didn't want to lose that job because it was nearby. If my mother had a fit, she called me and I ran home. It happened almost every day. Then there was a time, when I couldn't leave my mother even for an hour and I had to quit my job.