

## Siima Shkop



This is me with the Komsomol badge on my chest. The picture was taken in Tallinn in 1962. When I was a student, I started making posters, took part in the exhibitions, even got a prize for my poster devoted to the Days of Estonian Culture, taking place in 1947 at Tallinn stadium. Besides, I liked making illustrations for books, especially for children. Upon graduation, I sought a job with a publisher of children's books. I was given an assignment for probation - to make illustrations for fairy tales. The art council approved of my work, but still I was not hired. The director did not like Jews and did not even conceal it. Only several years later, when another man was in charge of the publishers', I was hired. I made posters dedicated to some memorable dates, events, but mostly

they were political. I made many of them. Each of my political posters was to be approved by the central commission of the communist party of Estonia. They were supposed to put a stamp on my sketch with a note that it was ideologically correct. I never held back that I was a Jew. Knowing that in the Soviet Union it is dangerous to keep in touch with relatives abroad, I still mentioned in my forms that my sister was living in Israel. I was never persecuted, even during the campaign against cosmopolitans. When I finished the institute, I joined the Party right away and I became a member of Artist Council of Estonia. I did not have any conditions to do my job - the three of us were living in one dark small room. When I received a prize for my poster, I was given a room in the graphics workshop. I think that in Estonia the campaign against cosmopolitans was not as spread as in other parts of the USSR.