

## Solomon Israeltan And Family



There are Israeltans - the family of my mother's stepbrother Solomon Israeltan (frist from right). The photo was taken in the E.V. Eggeret photo studio in Riga in 1928.

They are the most apparent victims of the Holocaust of all my relatives. Bella Karpovna, nee Rabinovich, my uncle's wife, called me around 20th June 1941, and asked, whether it was possible for them to leave with me. And I didn't know myself what to do.

My uncle's name was Solomon Velvel - they also called him Solomon Vladimirovich - Israeltan but we called him Uncle Sam. He had been to the USA several times and spoke good English. They lived on Antonievskaya Street in Riga, in a large beautiful apartment with wall-paintings, ornaments and pictures. It is he who gave shelter to Nyuta after she returned from Switzerland in 1921. And whenever I went to Riga, I stayed in their apartment. He was the manager of a large textiles shop, owned by Kazatsky, a Jew. This big shop was situated on the corner of Krishyan Baron and Elizavetinskaya Streets. When the Soviet power was established, he was appointed the shop's manager. The relatives of his wife - the Rabinovich family - lived in Dvinsk and were engaged in the trading business. Uncle Sam sent them the goods.

His wife, Bella Karpovna, wasn't as beautiful as she was imperious and clever. They had wonderful, educated sons Yulik or Yuly, and Vovik or Velvel. They were proficient in German, Latvian and Russian, but they didn't speak Yiddish. My uncle and aunt only spoke Russian at home. Velvel married a nice girl in May 1941. I visited them on the occasion and we had a lot of fun. He sent her to a sanatorium in Sigulda [a town 50 km from Riga]; she was pregnant then. You can imagine, the war began, and she remained alone in Sigulda, expecting a baby. I was told that Yulik and Vovik were shot by Nazis at the very beginning of the war. Aunt Bella and Uncle Sam perished in the ghetto in Riga. In the 1960s I accidentally met their former housemaid in the street, Tanya, a simple Russian woman with a Nizhniy Novgorod accent. It was she who told me that my aunt and uncle had been in the ghetto and that she had brought them food suppressing her fear.