

Eta Gurvich And Her Friends



This is my friends and I at the party at work (I am in the center). To the right is Feigele Zelyanskaya, to the left is Merele Dvorkovich (her married name is Shein). They are about two years older than me. Both of them died in Israel in early 1960s.

After the war I came in postwar Vilnius and decided to stay here. It was easier to find a job and a lodging in Vilnius. There were no free apartments in town, and I was not good at going from one institution to another to push things. I had to rent a poky room. I found a job in the ministry of culture. There was a wonderful team there. A lot of Jews worked there, and I made friends with some of them. The most important thing was that I found love, the true and overwhelming love.

I met a Lithuanian lad Augustinas Savitskas. He was an artist. Augustinas and I started living like husband and wife without having our marriage registered. We lived in a poky room without paying attention to postwar hardships. We often went to bed hungry, but our love was the only thing that mattered. In 1946 I got pregnant, and our relationship was not affected by it. Augustinas took to bottle. He often came home drunk and reproached Jews. He was not an anti-Semitist, he just found Jews to be wretched and leading to trouble. We often had arguments and it make our lives bitter. At the beginning of 1947 I gave birth to a son, whom I named Edvardas like Augustinas asked in honor of some of his relative. Augustinas, who promised to come and get me and a child, was procrastinating. He did not come to get us. My last name was written in my son's birth certificate. I am very proud by nature. I wrote Augustinas that I would raise son by myself. Sister Anna, who remained single, loved my boy and helped me with everything. I had lived with her for two years.

I came back to Vilnius in 1949. I was offered a job in the economy department of one of suppliers. Soon we were given a room and our life was getting better. There were difficulties, but I did not complain of anything to anybody. My sister helped me out. My son was a wonderful, clever and obedient boy. He went to the kindergarten. He was loved by everybody. My son's father often came and asked to forgive him. But his addiction to alcohol was the strongest. I was afraid that my son would be like him and often did not let father see him.

I worked in a wonderful team and made many good friends there. We marked Jewish holidays. A lot of people got together on Chanukkah, Purim and Pesach. We open spoke Yiddish at work, which was common in Lithuania. I was not affected by anti-Semitism campaigns of the beginning of the 1950s, [Campaign against 'cosmopolitans'], even doctors' plot. Of course, we were very worried thinking that Jews were dissolved, even arrested, but it went past my friends and I. I was crying along with many other people, when Stalin died in 1953. I wore a mourning band and was on the sentry by his portrait. With time I learnt more and more about Stalin, so the resolutions of the Communist Party Congress were not unexpected for me, on the contrary it seemed to me that the justice prevailed.

There was a great computer center in our company I was employed by. I was a computer operator. The computer machine I was working on in the early 1960s covered half of my office. People treated me good at work. I was always good to people and they were reciprocal. Almost every year I got a trip vouchers to the spa Druskeninkai or Palanga, which was paid by the trade union, son always went on vacation to the pioneer camps at the cost of trade-union. I had worked there until retirement.