

Tilda Galpert



This picture of me was taken on my 30th birthday in Uzhgorod in 1953. I was eager to join the Communist Party in 1945. I believed it was my duty to do so. In 1947 I got married to Ari Galpert. In 1948 I attended a nine-month party training course. Then I went to work at the regional executive committee [Ispolkom]. I worked there in the food department from 1949 to 1985. There were good times and bad times. In 1948 the struggle against 'cosmopolitans' began. I read a lot about it in the newspapers, but I never faced any negative attitude directed towards me. I remember January 1953, the time of the Doctors' Plot, a horrible time. Some people were forced to speak against doctors, saying they were poisoners. A friend of our family, the communist Rotman, a Jew, was forced to make a speech. He refused and was fired immediately. As for me, nobody forced me to say anything. I was kind of born with a silver spoon in my mouth. Our son Pyotr was born in 1951.

His Jewish name is Pinchas. He was named after my husband's paternal grandfather. Our second son Yuri was born in 1955. Both our sons were circumcised. It was a tribute of respect to our parents and members of the family that perished. We hired a nanny for our children. When in 1956 the Soviet troops came to Hungary we believed the Soviet propaganda telling us that the Germans wanted to invade Hungary and that it was necessary to rescue the Hungarians. [The interviewee is referring to the 1956 Revolution in Hungary.] However, when the Soviet troops came to Czechoslovakia in 1968 [to put down the so-called Prague Spring] we were indignant. We sympathized with the Czechs. We were upset when the Soviet troops destroyed democracy in Czechoslovakia. But what could we do? Some people in Moscow openly demonstrated their disagreement with the party policy in Czechoslovakia. We were no heroes here. We expressed our indignation in whispers sitting in the kitchen with our family. We were afraid of being arrested. Anyone that dared to disagree with the party policy had to be punished and we knew this but too well.