

Ivan Moshkovich



This is a picture of me taken during my service in the army in Belarus in 1950. After finishing school in 1947 I became an apprentice to a mechanic in a car shop in Uzhgorod. It was the only car shop in town. After the war people spoke mostly Hungarian in Uzhgorod. We lived in Dolgoye Pole, but I studied and then worked in Uzhgorod. I got up at 3am, walked two kilometers to the railway station to take a train to Uzhgorod and returned home in the evening. Life was difficult. There wasn't enough food and it was hard to get a job. I wanted to have a profession that would enable me to support my family. I believed that the profession of a car mechanic was exactly what I needed. I tried to do my best to learn all I could from my skilled colleagues. I knew that I had to earn money. After finishing my training course I got a job at the car shop. In 1949 I was recruited to the Soviet army. [Editor's note: Young men of 18 years of age were subject to mandatory military service. The term of service at the time that Ivan Moshkovich talks about was four years.] I started

my service in Belarus and then I was sent to Vladivostok in the Far East where I served until the end of my term. I served in a construction battalion. The inhabitants of Subcarpathia weren't in big favor with the rest of the Soviet Union since Hungary had been an ally of Germany in World War II. Construction battalions were the least prestigious military units and the only military subdivisions where we could serve. We worked at the construction of an airfield. Later I became a driving instructor training soldiers. My service lasted for four years. When I came to the army I didn't face any anti-Semitism, but by the end of my term at the beginning of 1953 there were such signs. The newspapers published articles about doctors that plotted to poison Stalin. All the names they listed were Jewish. [Ivan Moshkovich is referring to the Doctors' Plot.] After demobilization I lived with my sister Clara. My sister and her husband received a plot of land to build a house. They constructed their own house. I got back to my work at the car shop. Later I entered an automobile college and after finishing it I returned to the car shop where I became an engineer. My car shop became the first car pool enterprise in town. There was no public transportation in Uzhgorod at that time. I was authorized to create a public transportation network for the town. We started with buses. People weren't used to going by bus and we had to convince them to start using it. I worked as a driver for some time on various routes and then became a foreman in the garage. I worked at the road traffic safety department before I retired, I taught driving rules and examined candidates in GAI [traffic police]. It was strenuous work, but I liked it. I retired last year after I had been working at the same enterprise for 54 years. I never faced any anti-Semitism, my colleagues always treated me with respect.