

Magdolna Palmai And Her Family In Beregszasz



You can see my family in this picture. My daughter, my husband [Sandor Palmai] and I, when we lived in Beregszasz [today Ukraine]. 'With much love, Magda, Sanyi and K., my daughter, 1955, Beregszasz.' Perhaps we were in a photographer's studio, but it's also possible that it was taken in our apartment. I don't remember anymore. Ironically we lived 14 years in the Soviet Union. My husband's neighbor in Nagyberég got a letter saying that his sister was on her way home from Bergen-Belsen, and because of that on 30th August 1945 we went to Nagyberég from Budapest. And while we waited there, they closed the border and annexed Nagyberég to the Soviet Union. Because in the summer of 1945 Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union made an agreement, that they would hand over a part of the former Czechoslovakia to the Soviets. Those who were Czechoslovakian citizens before, automatically became Soviet citizens. I could have become a Soviet citizen at that time at once, but I didn't want to, because I wanted to come home to Hungary. In the end that's how I became homeless and my husband a Soviet citizen, because he was born in Czechoslovakia so he got the new citizenship automatically. But we didn't know anything about this at the time when we were in Nagyberég, everything came out later. My husband and his family became Russian citizens, because before that they weren't Hungarian, but Czechoslovakian citizens. And I became homeless. Once while my husband was working I was pushing my daughter in a pushcart in front of the house, because they had sent the excise officers, who came to check whether he worked on the black market or not. I was walking outside, my husband was working inside, and the excise officer came, and I didn't want my husband to be caught. I asked him to take care of the child until I brought him some tea. And I left him with my daughter and told Sandor to pack up his things because this man was coming. I remember such incidents? Later he told our friends laughing that I had left our daughter with the excise officer until he had packed away his things. There was a furniture factory in Beregszasz. The boiler broke, it had to be welded, but nobody took on the job, because one had to climb into the boiler. My husband wasn't fat at that time, he looked at it and he took it on. But they could pay only in kind, with wood chips. For the welding we got so much wood that we had enough for the winter. We weren't desperate, because there always turned up some barter business.