

Dora Puchalskaya With Her Husband Victor Puchalski, Mother Vera Gitman And Father-In-Law Andrei Puchalski



This photo was taken on my wedding day in Vladimir-Volynskiy in 1956. We had a civil ceremony. From right to left: it is me, Dora Puchalskaya (nee Gitman), my husband Victor Puchalski, my mother Vera Gitman and my father-in-law Andrei Puchalski.

I finished school in 1951. A year later I entered the Agronomical Faculty of the Agricultural College in Verkhovka village, Obodov district Vinnitsa region. We were the only Jewish students in this College. We lived in a hostel. I began to meet with a Ukrainian guy in College. His name was Victor Puchalski. He was born in Aleksandrovka village, Vinnitsa region in 1932. He was the only child in his family and his parents spoiled him a lot. During the Great Patriotic War Victor stayed in his village. He saw fascist atrocities against Jews and he came to respecting Jewish people. I told him that I was a Jew and that we were in occupation during the war. Victor and I fell in love and actually became a husband and wife during our last year in College. His parents were also positive about our relationships. Victor's two uncles were married to Jewish women, so there were Jews in their family already.

After finishing our College we came to my mother in Vladimir-Volynskiy. My mother didn't care about his nationality. She saw that we were in love and this was what mattered to her. I was pregnant. Victor and I got married in 1956. We didn't have a wedding party. My mother just made a small dinner for our family and Victor's father Andrei Puchalski who came to our wedding.

In 1957 our son Anatoli was born. I stayed at home and my husband was an agronomist in a kolkhoz near the town. Victor was an honest man and didn't allow anybody to steal in the kolkhoz. The management of the kolkhoz was not quite happy about this situation. Once Victor bought a sack of potatoes from the kolkhoz, but they delivered a cart full of bags of potatoes trying to bribe my husband. He told them to take it back. Since then his bosses kept picking on him and fired for some minor drawback. Victor couldn't find another job for a year. He turned to higher authorities and regional party committee, but couldn't find justice with them. Then he wrote a letter to Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper [one of the most popular daily newspapers in the USSR]. He resumed his work after the newspaper interference. This time Victor was sent to work in a distant kolkhoz. I followed him there and my mother looked after Anatoli. I went to work as director of a store in this kolkhoz. I had a diploma of agronomist, but there was no employment for me. We didn't stay long there since Victor lost his job again. We returned to Vladimir-Volynski and lived on my mother's salary for almost a year. Victor's parents and my father also supported us.