

Dora Puchalskaya With Her Husband Victor Puchalski And Their Son Anatoli Puchalski



This is me, Dora Puchalskaya (nee Gitman), my husband Victor Puchalski and our son Anatoli photographed in the central square of Ternopol in 1961.

In 1952 I entered the Agronomical Faculty of the Agricultural College in Verkhovka village, Obodov district, Vinnitsa region. I began to meet with a Ukrainian guy in College. His name was Victor Puchalski. Victor and I fell in love and actually became a husband and wife during our last year in College. Victor and I got married in 1956.

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.

When the Great Patriotic War began, our father was not at home, he went on a business trip. We nothing know about him before 1945. In July 1945 our father returned home. He went to look for us in 1941, but then there were Germans everywhere. Our father knew that Vladimir-Volynskiy was occupied and believed that were already dead. He returned to Zhmerinka, got a truck and drove his parents and aunt Fania and her children to the railway station where they got on a train heading to the east. He also went with them. In the train he met a Jewish woman. Her name was Fira. He was suffering and he found consolation and sympathy with her. They parted on the next day. Father was recruited to the army. He served in a road construction unit installing bridges for the front line units. Our father corresponded with this unit and knew that she gave birth to a girl in 1942. The girl was named Ella. Our father asked our mother to forgive him and tried to explain that what happened to him was a result of the pain he suffered from thinking that we were dead. He decided that he and mother had to forget what had happened to them and live together again, but our mother was a proud woman. She never forgave our father. Our father went to Kiev where Fira and her daughter lived. He lived with his second family, but he didn't lose hope to return our mother.

Some time later my father became director of construction material plant in Transcarpathian region with center in Ternopol town. His wife and daughter didn't want to follow him to this provincial area and he offered us to come with him. My mother insisted that we accepted his offer. In 1959 Victor moved to Ternopol and got a job at the plant. Then he and my father returned to pick up my son and me and we left there. We lived in a one-room apartment that my father received for few years until Victor went to work at another plant and we received a 3-room apartment where we live now.

In 1961 our daughter Anna, named after my grandmother Hana, was born and in 1964 our daughter Evgenia was born. We were poor. I obtained a license for manufacture of flowers and wedding bouquets and made and sold my goods. I worked a lot at home sewing and knitting. My husband had stomach ulcer and went to resorts on vacation, but I couldn't afford a vacation.