

Tsyliya Spivak



This is a photo of me photographed after my wedding in Daryevka village Kherson region in 1953.

In 1949 I finished 10 grades with a good certificate. I could go to any higher educational institution like Kiev University, for example, considering its high prestige, but I had to start work to earn money as soon as possible and this made me go to Chernigov 2-year Pedagogical College. In 1951 there was a job assignment distribution. I was prepared to go anywhere since my mother was going to follow me anyway. I chose Zagoryanovka village near Kherson hoping to be able to often go to Kherson. When I came to the regional department of education its chairman looked at me (and I was a thin short girl) and said: 'I don't think it's worth for you, girl, to go to Zagoryanovka. It's not the place a young girl would like to be at. I will send you to Tehinka. There is big construction there. They need teachers with diplomas and this place is better than Zagoryanovka'. So I went to Tehinka. They welcomed me warmly and showed me the school. I rented a room from nice Ukrainian people: Marusia and Kolia who liked me, too. The department of education paid my rental fees and gave me money for wood and kerosene. So I was a desirable tenant. Three weeks later my mother joined me. She lived with me ever since.

There was a kolkhoz named after Kalinin in Tehinka. It was a poor kolkhoz. Its members were paid with food coupons for work. Since I had a regular salary I also became a desirable fiancée. Young people proposed marriage to me, but my mother and I declined them joking about it. Teaching was easy for me. I taught in the 5th, 7th and 8th grades. The 8th grade was the first year of higher secondary school. They were the children who wanted to have a complete secondary education. They listened to me with attention and I was eager to inspire love to the Russian literature in them. As for the 5th grade those children didn't bother to listen to me. Why did they need Russian? They

were noisy and caused problems. Once I lost my temper and pushed one of those hooligans. I forced him out of his desk and pushed him out of the classroom. They began to respect me then: 'Hey, she can fight!' and were quiet at my lessons. After working for a year I got a transfer to Daryevka, a neighboring village. I didn't mind since Daryevka was even bigger than Tehinka and there were more comforts there. I spent a few more weeks in Tehinka and met a Jewish girl. Her name was Fira Spivak. She had her job assignment in this village. I supported her since I was well aware how hard it was for a girl from a town to live in the village. Her brother Naum Spivak came from Kherson to visit his sister and so I met my future husband. Naum began to visit me in Daryevka. He courted me very nicely. I fell in love with him and we got married on 3 October 1952. Almost the whole village was invited to our wedding. It was a joyful wedding party. Many young people attended it. Almost immediately after the wedding he was sent to support agriculture improvement following the decision of Khrushchev to send specialists to villages. We went to Sadovo, a big village where I went to work at school. A year later on 19 September 1953 my daughter Inna was born.