

Hava Goldshtein



I, Hava Goldshtein, photographed at the parade in Lvov on 1 May 1952 holding a flag of the Soviet Ukraine. In summer 1944 almost at once after Crimea was liberated we moved home from evacuation. The whole collective farm was returning. We went back by a freight train. We were given grain by local authorities that we were exchanging for bread and food products on the way. I remember celebration of Victory Day on 9 May 1945. All farmers got together in the center of the settlement in front of the village council building. There were tables installed there and all people brought what they could. Chairman of the collective farm said a speech remembering the deceased. On this day laughter was mixed with tears: it was a happy and a sad day. Life was more difficult than it was in evacuation. In Kazakhstan we had sufficient food, fruit and vegetables and we did not starve, at least, while after the war there was famine. Germans removed all food stocks before retreating and we didn't have any grain left for sowing. I finished a short-term course of

vine-growers and began to work at the vineyard. Was a dexterous worker and earned good money. In 1946 Boris Cherniak that returned from the front proposed to me. Boris' parents Isaac and Gesia came from Byelorussia. They moved to the Crimea in middle 1920s. Boris, born in 1922, was the oldest son in his family with many children. He worked as a driver before the war. After returning from the front Boris' father became director of a greengrocer store and Boris was director of the buttry in the collective farm. Their family was wealthy and my mother wanted me to marry Boris. I knew Boris before the war and tried to avoid him. He had the fame of a drunkard and womanizer. I didn't want to marry Boris. I couldn't forget Syunia Bershak that was my friend before the war. Syunia didn't return from the front. Finally I agreed to marry Boris giving up to my mother and Shmul Bershak. We had a civil ceremony and a small wedding party for close relatives and friends at our home. I had an ankle long wedding gown made at the tailor shop in our collective farm. There was no synagogue or a rabbi in the collective farm. My husband's parents insisted that we had a chuppah installed where I was lead by Shmul Bershak. One of older religious Jews conducted the wedding ceremony. This was the first Jewish wedding after the war and the whole collective farm celebrated it. I put a big tub filled with grain in my room and covered it with bed sheets. This was my bride-bed. My son was born in 1947. We named him Victor. This was a very popular name in those years after Goddess Victoria given in commemoration of victory over Germany. We didn't have our son circumcised since there was no rabbi in the village or anyone else, who could do it. Besides, I didn't feel any need to have him circumcised. Boris failed to make a good husband. From 2nd half of my pregnancy he began to carouse and went on a spree. He didn't come home at all sometimes. When our son was one year old Boris left me for another woman. I hated to stay in Kalay: I believed people were pointing fingers at me to say 'Look, her husband left her'. In 1949 my mother, Victor and I left Kalay for good. We went to Lvov where my sister lived. Before we left Boris came to apologize. He begged me to stay promising to come back and be faithful, but I didn't forgive him. I never saw him again. He didn't support us and Victor never saw him. I know that Boris stayed in Kalay, but I don't know how he is now. In Lvov we stayed some time with our friend Lyova Gershman that also came from Kalay after the war. Later we got an apartment. We lived together: my sister and Ruvim in one room and my mother, Victor and I - in another. Except for few moths when I went to work in Brody, Lvov region and Khmelnytskyi I lived my life in this apartment. We were a close family. My sister and her husband supported me treating him to a meal, giving him toys and clothes, entertaining and spoiling him. My life wasn't easy. I went on my first vacation when my son turned 18. I never had any recreation before: I received my 'vacation pay' (I always needed money) and stayed at work. I got along well with my colleagues. I had Jewish, Russian and Ukrainian friends. We celebrated birthdays and Soviet holidays together. We didn't observe any traditions or celebrate Jewish holidays. I didn't remarry. After Boris betrayed me I didn't trust men and never let any of them to come near me. We stayed at home in the evenings having discussions and drinking tea. Sometimes our friends and acquaintances visited us. I spent time with my son and was busy doing housework: cleaning, cooking and washing.