

Nikolay Schwartz With His Sister Yelizaveta Schwartz



I am with my sister Yelizaveta Schwartz. My sister didn't get an entry visa to the USSR, when she wanted to visit me, and we met in Budapest. I had one photograph, and Yelizaveta and Earnest had two other photos. This photo was taken in Budapest in 1968.

In 1948 my friend offered me position of chief of logistic department at the mechanic plant in Uzhgorod. I had to interface with directors of other plants and enterprises. Most of them came from the USSR and spoke Russian. I started work and was doing well. My management appreciated my performance and I became a respected person in Uzhgorod. There i worked all my life. I rented apartments till I grew old. I only got an apartment, when the house where I rented an apartment was to be removed. This happened in 1989.

I didn't celebrate Soviet holidays at home. There were banquets at work and my attendance was mandatory, but I didn't see any sense in those holidays. I didn't join the party. At first they told me that I needed to join the party, but that I was a prisoner-of-war might make an obstacle for it, and later they stopped talking to me about it. Anyway, I wasn't eager to join the party and took it easy.

I knew nothing about my sister destiny after WWII. In 1950 my sister Yelizaveta found me. Once a woman came to see me at home. I was at work and she left a package and a note for me. There was a knitted vest in the package and the address of this woman in the note. She lived in Khust [50 km from Uzhgorod, 670 km from Kiev]. I went to see her and she told me that this was a gift from my sister. They were in Hemsjo, in a camp in Sweden together. She told me the story of my sister Yelizaveta. She was taken to Auschwitz. During a selection process she added 5 years to her age. The Germans sent her to a work camp in Auschwitz. My sister was reluctant to talk about details of this period. When in spring 1945 the soviet and American armies started their attack, fascists exterminated weaker and sickly prisoners, and the remaining prisoners of the Auschwitz, including my sister, were sent to Mauthausen, a death camp. And few days later American troops liberated the camp. My sister decided there was no way she returned home. She knew that Subcarpathia became Soviet and asked to send her to Sweden. She moved to Hemsjo town in Sweden where she met the woman who brought me that parcel from my sister. In Sweden and later in the USA my sister was called Elisabeth and Lisa in Israel. However, Yelizaveta failed to learn Swedish and didn't think she could get adjusted in Sweden. When my sister grew strong enough after the camp she asked to send her to the USA. My sister was hoping to find our father's brothers there, the ones who left at the beginning of the century. She had no idea how big the USA was and it didn't occur to her that our father's brothers might have changed their surname or moved to another country. She never found them. The woman who brought me the parcel, decided to go to Subcarpathia. My sister asked her to find me to tell me she survived. Yelizaveta. got a US entry visa and plane tickets. Everybody going to USA, got bags with clothes. Yelizaveta flew to New York. She didn't know anybody and couldn't speak English. She was sitting in the airport not knowing what to do. A Jewish man approached her asking her in Yiddish whether she was waiting for somebody. My sister told him her story. This man found lodging for her and helped her to get a job. At first Elisabeth worked on a conveyor at a factory. She met people from Hungary. She also met Chaim Klein, a Jewish man from Svaliava town in Subcarpathia. In 1949 they got married. They had a traditional Jewish wedding. My sister and her husband always observed Jewish traditions. They didn't have children.

In 1965 I met with my sister. She requested a visa to the USSR, but they refused to issue it. She came to Budapest. In those years it was easy for residents of Subcarpathia to travel to Hungary. I managed to go to Budapest where my sister and I spent almost a month. Yelizaveta and her husband decided to move to Israel, when they became pensioners. They moved to Jerusalem in 1986.