

Ignac Neubauer's Sister Hermina Spiegel



My sister Hermina Spiegel (nee Neubauer) during our reunion in Budapest in 1985.

My sister Hermina married Ernest Spiegel from Subcarpathia in 1950. During the war her husband was in a concentration camp. After the war he returned to Subcarpathia and settled down in Uzhgorod. His family had perished. We arranged a real Jewish wedding for my sister. Of course, we had to do it in secret. We had a chuppah in the room at home. After the war the soviet power

closed most of synagogues in Uzhgorod, but there was one working. My mother asked the rabbi to conduct the wedding ceremony for my sister. We invited few friends and closed ones to the chuppah and my mother cooked a wedding dinner. My sister and her husband lived in the room and I had a bed in the kitchen. My mother's husband built an annex to the apartment, a small room and I moved in there in due time. In 1951 Yudita, my sister's first daughter, was born and in 1958 - her second daughter Erika. My sister and her husband spoke Russian at home. The girls spoke Hungarian and Russian at home, in the street and at school.

When in the 1970s Jews began to move to Israel, my relatives also decided to emigrate. My mother and stepfather were the first to go in 1971. In 1972 my sister Hermina and her family moved to Qiryat Ono. I was eager to go to Israel, but my wife was against emigration. Her sisters supported her. They lived their lives in the USSR and were patriots of their country. I didn't have much choice: emigration or the family and I chose the family.

I saw my sister again in 1983, before perestroika began. I could never imagine having an opportunity to visit her in Israel at that time and my sister couldn't obtain an entry visa to the USSR. We met in Budapest. It was easier for Subcarpathians to travel to Hungary than for other citizens of the USSR. We spent two weeks in Budapest and talked a lot. I was surprised that Hermina became such a patriot of Israel. I asked her whether it was possible to take to loving the country for such short period of time and my sister replied that it was natural for Jews moving to Israel. After we met in Budapest we began to correspond regularly. Before this meeting we wrote each other occasionally. Unfortunately, I never saw my sister again. She died in 1986.