

## Tilda Galpert



This is me photographed in Uzhgorod in 1946, to send this photo to my future husband, Ari Galpert, who was on service in the Soviet army in Khmelnytskyi, Vinnitsa region, Ukraine. I met my future husband Ernest Galpert at the factory where I worked. We call him Ari. His Jewish name is Aron. Ari was born in Mukachevo in 1923. We are the same age. After finishing school he became an apprentice to a joiner. When the Hungarians came to power the owner of this shop had to transfer it to somebody else and Ari lost his job. In 1941 he became a mechanic at the Rot factory. We became friends in 1943. We were 20. This was the time of the German occupation. Ari visited me at home and I went to see him in his home. Our families were religious. Ari and I met after work every day. We went for a walk. At that time we were required to wear yellow stars on our clothes. We decided to be together, but this was no time to think about life arrangements. We decided to wait and see how the situation would develop. In April 1944 most of my family and me were taken to Auschwitz, where most of my family perished. My friend Frida and I stayed in Auschwitz for three months, three months of hard exhausting work and hunger. This was a very hard period. I can't bring back these memories again. Later my friend and I were taken to a labor camp in Reichenbach [600 km from Auschwitz, Germany]. Life was relatively better there. We put together radio parts. It wasn't very hard work, but we were starved and exhausted. When I arrived in Mukachevo after the war I met my friend Frida's friend Voita. He had been in a forced labor battalion in Austria with Ari. They returned to Mukachevo together. When they returned to Mukachevo there were no Jews back from the concentration camps yet, and Ari volunteered to the Soviet army. He said he wanted a

revenge for what the fascists had done. He went to the army in April 1945 not knowing that the war was going to be over soon. When the war was over he couldn't be demobilized since he came of age for mandatory service in the army. Subcarpathia became a part of the USSR and Ari was subject to service in the army as a Soviet citizen. I waited for him for three years: one year in the camp and two years after the war. He was demobilized in March 1947. Voita, Frida's boyfriend, gave me the number of Ari's field mailbox. This was in 1945. I wrote letters, but it took some time before I received his response. His first letter reached me on 6th November 1945. This was when he got to know that I had survived. I sent him my photograph, which was taken after I returned home. I signed it with the words, 'To my beloved Ari'. Ari has kept it and we have this photograph in our family album now.