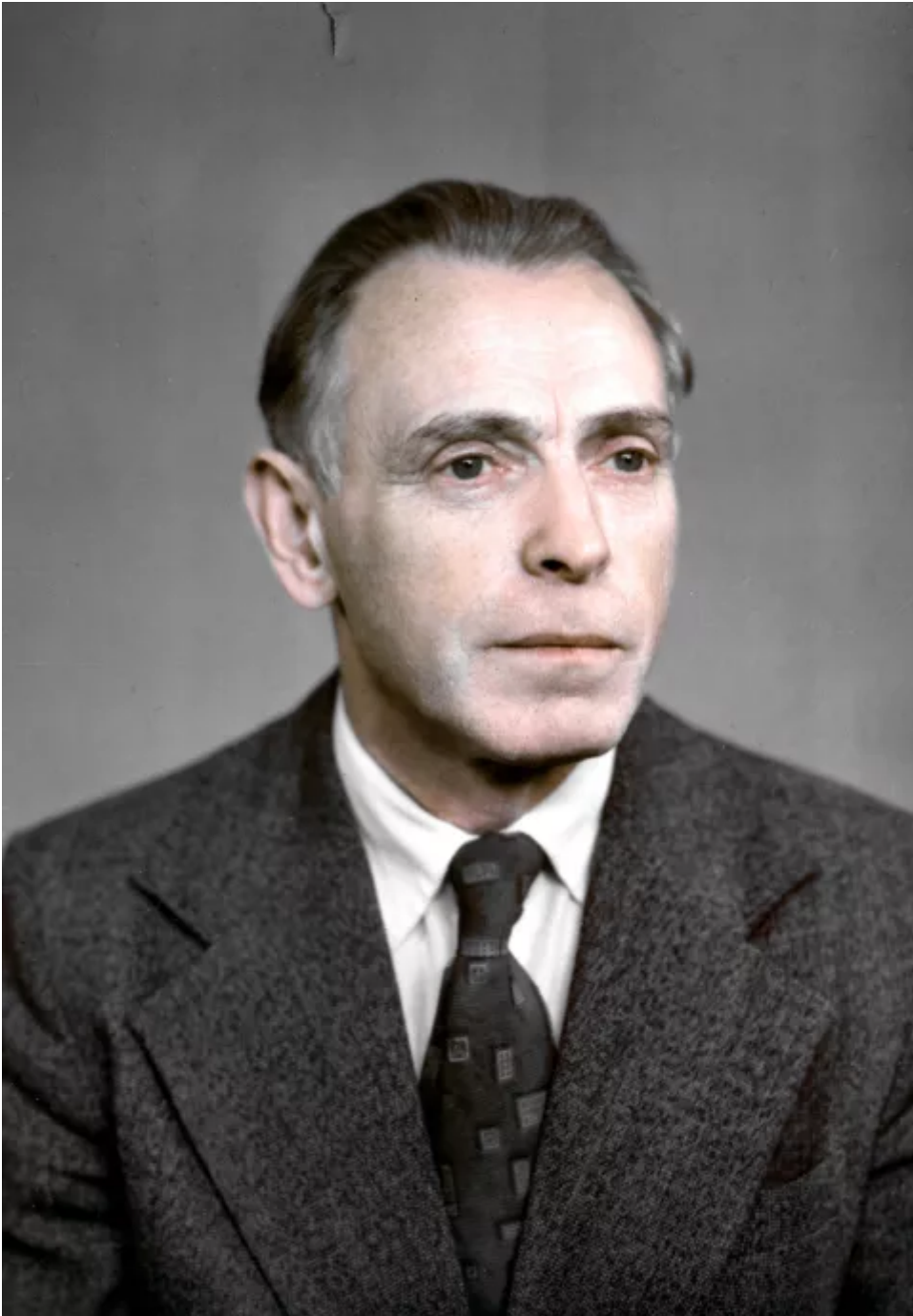


Ernest Galpert



This is a picture of me, taken in Uzhgorod in 1964. My wife Tilda Galpert, nee Akerman, and I didn't live under the Soviet rule for a long time - the area where we resided was annexed to the USSR in 1945 - and we didn't have a clear understanding of what was truly happening around us. We believed everything the Communist Party said. We belonged to the proletariat when we were young working for the owner of a factory. He exploited us. We truly believed that we were building a bright future and a nice international society where all people would be equal. This was a wonderful idea! We read books by Marx, Lenin and Stalin. We also read works by utopian socialists. It sounded beautiful what they wrote in those books. It was interesting and we lived believing it. When Stalin died in 1953 we were in grief. Of course, we saw that the reality was different from its description in books, but we thought it was due to the transition period and that the higher

authorities weren't aware of the real status of things, but we had a feeling that something was wrong and that words were different from what they were doing. We lived through the campaign against cosmopolitans in 1948. It didn't have any impact on us and we couldn't understand the situation. It seemed to be a falsification. Same with the Doctors' Plot in January 1953, it was all lousy and was a preparation to strengthen anti-Semitism. We tried not go too deep into it. When Khrushchev spoke about Stalin and about the Soviet system disclosing Stalin's crimes on Twentieth Party Congress, we understood what it was all about. We realized that we had to give up the idea of communism and socialism. Since I was a party member and a manager I had to propagate to engineers at the plant. I was responsible for regular political classes with them. I can say one thing frankly: I never spoke my mind. I only said, 'Here is what Khrushchev says?', or 'This is what Brezhnev said?'. I always referred to them since after the Twentieth Party Congress Tilda and I understood that the idea of communism was false. However, we remained party members until the last day in 1991, the breakup of the Soviet Union. Some time in the late 1980s I stopped conducting the political training of my colleagues and at that period my party membership was a mere formality.