

## Ludmila Sadlik



This is my wife Ludmila Sadlik. This photo was taken in Uzhorod in the same year when she died in 1993.

I met my future wife in the hostel in Norilsk where I was a Gulag prisoner. She wasn't a prisoner. Ludmila Protopopova was Russian, she was born in Novosibirsk in 1922. I know little about her family. Her father, Ignat Protopopov, went to the army and perished at the front during World War II. Ludmila's mother starved to death. Ludmila couldn't find a job in Novosibirsk after finishing a secondary school. She went to Norilsk where her maternal aunt lived and went to work as assistant accountant at a mine.

We began to see each other. I couldn't marry Ludmila even when she got pregnant. The only document I had was my certificate of release. I was eager to restore my Slovakian citizenship, but it was out of question. In all offices I addressed they told me this was impossible.

I had little choice: either rot to death at the mine in Norilsk or obtain Soviet citizenship however much I hated this country. And I got this damned Soviet citizenship. We lived in Norilsk until 1955 and after I became a Soviet citizen we went to Novosibirsk, Ludmila's home town. In 1956 our daughter Vera was born.

My wife and I had a good life. There were just the two of us in the whole world. We often spent vacations at the seashore. When I found my cousin we traveled to Slovakia every now and then. For residents of Subcarpathia traveling to Slovakia was easier than for the rest of the USSR.