

Susanna Sirota With Her Son Valentin Markelov



Here I am with my older son Valentin. This photo was taken in Kiev in 1946.

During World War II, I was a radio operator of the highest category. I met Lev Markelov, two years younger than I, born in Nizhni Novgorod in 1925. He was Russian and a radio operator as well. We became friends and later got married.

I wrote my parents that I got married. They thought Lev was a Jew – for some reason the name of Lev was considered to be a Jewish name – and were very happy for me and I didn't give them any details. Nationality didn't matter to me. We had an official civil registration on 11th May 1945 after Victory Day. I remember that happy day of 9th May 1945. It was a bright sunny day and lilac bushes were in blossom. We were feeling happy and then we saw that there was a registry office where we were having a walk and we went in there and had our marriage registered. He kept his last name and I kept mine.

In 1946 my son Valentin was born and at that time Markelov got a job offer to work in the embassy in Bucharest in Romania. Our baby was just a few months old and I was afraid of traveling with him and I went to my management to ask them to release me from this trip, but they said, 'You can stay if you wish. We will find him another wife. Our troops there are more numerous than the Romanian population.' While the documents were processed my baby turned eleven months and I had to go. My husband had a sensitive job receiving and transmitting messages. We had many impressions of our life abroad. It was a different world. We had everything we needed living in an embassy apartment. Our boy had nice food, clothes and toys.