

Ignac Neubauer



This is me at work in the garment shop in 1980, Uzhgorod. My colleague who had just bought a camera, photographed me as a surprise.

In 1946 I became an apprentice of a tailor in a garment store. I had to support my mother and sister, being the only man in the family. It stimulated me to study well and two years later I became a good tailor. Many people ordered their clothes at garment shops since it was hard to buy anything in shops. I could make any clothes, but I was good at making men's suits. The town and region's top men were my clients. Besides my salary I got good tips from my clients, and they also brought me food products that were hard to buy. I retired only in 1988.

The longer I lived in the soviet regime, the more I hated it. There was no freedom in the USSR and we got used to freedoms in Subcarpathia, particularly during the Czech rule. We could speak our minds without suspecting KGB informers in everybody else. Besides, we lived near the border and to travel to another town we had to obtain a permit from militia and have our passports stamped. We couldn't buy train tickets if we didn't have a stamp; and there was another stamp to be obtained for each trip. We could only walk in the town with our passport. Could one live in this country? It was also hard from the material point of view. There were lines in stores and one had to stand for hours before buying a thing. What is this country like where people are not free and also,

are miserably poor! For me to love this country, the country had to love me, but we lived like it was a prison. Sometimes it seemed to me that we had more freedom in the concentration camp.

When in the 1970s Jews began to move to Israel, I thought about it like it was a miraculous escape from everything I hated that the God sent me. My relatives also decided to emigrate. My mother and stepfather were the first to go. In 1972 my sister Hermina and her family moved to Qiriat Ono. I was eager to go to Israel, but my wife was against emigration. Her sisters supported her. So it happened that we stayed in the USSR. I didn't have much choice: emigration or the family and I chose the family.