

Fanya Maryanchik

*Fanya Israilevna is a short woman with young lively eyes.
She is very old.*

*Remaining faithful to her profession, Fanya Israilevna still
works
as a volunteer librarian at Hesed Avraam [1](#).*

*When she tells her story, events get confused in her
reminiscences,
because all this happened a very long time ago.*

*Fanya Israilevna has many relatives and she makes a
lot of effort to tell me more about their lives as well as
about her own fate.
It was a real pleasure for us to work on this particular
interview.*



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Family background

I was born in Kiev [today Ukraine] in 1917. My mother, Maria Maryanchik, nee Slutskaya, came from the village of Anatovka, Kiev province. She was born there in 1892. My father, Srul Avrumovich Maryanchik was born in Brusilov [today Ukraine] in 1889. I don't know how they found themselves in Kiev. They met each other in 1916. Mother told me that they had a wedding with a chuppah, according to Jewish traditions.

All the relatives of my father – the Maryanchiks – came from Brusilov, Kiev province. I don't remember my grandfather, Avrum Maryanchik, as he died when I was a small girl, in the 1910s in Kiev. According to my mom, when I was three years old, I saw my grandmother, but I don't remember her either. My grandmother was my grandfather's second wife. His first wife died giving birth to a baby. She had six children. His second wife also gave birth to six children; my father was one of them. The family was very big – 14 people. Grandfather was the only one who worked. Father told me that Grandpa worked as an agronomist for a landowner in Brusilov and was engaged in agriculture.

Grandpa and Grandma had big families. Everyone lived in Kiev. It's difficult for me to describe everyone. They all observed the Jewish way of life and paid visits to each other. I remember that when I was a little girl, before the war started in 1941 [2](#), Mother's cousins celebrated their weddings. At first one of my mom's sisters got married, then another, then her third sister celebrated her wedding, and so on and so forth. We were present almost at all the weddings of our relatives in Kiev. 100-150 guests were invited and klezmer musicians played. Mother's brother Moisha had such a big wedding in January 1927. There was a chuppah installed in the five-room apartment. Aunt Rosa was the bride; she was from the Slutsky family – just a namesake. Cooks prepared food and waiters served the tables.

My maternal grandfather, Berl or Boris Slutsky, came from Anatovka. I came across this name only in literature, because everyone called the place Ignatovka. I don't know why people gave Anatovka the name of Ignatovka. Ignat is a Slavic name, Russian or Ukrainian. This is probably the reason for giving such a name to this place. As Sholem Aleichem's [3](#) character Tevye, my grandfather was a milkman. Sholem Aleichem's family lived not far from Anatovka. Grandma even told me that she saw Sholem Aleichem and his wife, Olga Mikhailovna.

Milkmen, as is well known, kept cows, produced sour cream and cottage cheese and sold their products at the market place. Grandpa was not as sociable and talkative as Tevye. Once in 1919 Grandpa and his son Mikhul, my mother's brother, loaded their cart with goods and went to Kiev. As soon as they left Ignatovka, they were attacked by either local or Petliura bandits [4](#). There were two of them. They killed Grandpa and wounded Mikhul in the head. One of the bandits said, 'They are still alive.' Mikhul lay there silently. The other one said, 'Leave it, they'll die.' The bandits took the horse and the goods and left. Mikhul remained on the road with Grandpa's dead body next to him. When it got dark, he went to Anatovka and told everyone about what had happened.

After the robbery Mikhul had to undergo medical treatment for a long time, but remained disabled for the rest of his life and worked in commerce from then on. His wife, Yeva Stolyarova, came from the village of Taraschi, Kiev province. They got married in 1931 and had a wedding with a chuppah. Their elder son was born in 1932 and their younger son was born in 1938. They were in evacuation with both their children during the war. Uncle died in 1964. Aunt Yeva died in the 1980s. Their elder son Boris is still alive and lives in Israel now. He called me recently.

My maternal grandmother's name was Rivka, nee Kholemskaya, she became Slutskaya after marriage. She was born in 1863, also lived in Anatovka and got married there. Grandmother and Grandfather were religious people. They had two sons and five daughters; my mother was one of them. Grandma Rivka had three sisters but I don't remember their names.

Grandpa died and the Slutsky family moved to Kiev. Grandma stayed with her daughters and sons at 4 Basseynaya Street. It was a single-floor building, where they occupied a three-room apartment without any facilities and with a Russian stove [5](#). Grandma was illiterate and looked after the house. Her favorite work was to sort out pepper and make pillows.

My grandmother did not attend the synagogue, never wore a wig, however, she observed all ceremonies. Grandma kept everything kosher in her household; there was even a butcher, a shochet in the yard, who cut chicken on Fridays. She made challah every Friday. She baked it in the Russian stove in a special form and it was not twisted. At 5 o'clock Grandma lit the candles, prayed, but there was no family gathering – no Sabbath. The whole family usually gathered only for

Jewish holidays, which Grandma always celebrated. I spoke to her in Yiddish. When in 1933 we were not able to buy matzah because it was very expensive, I made it for Grandma myself. Mother's brothers and sisters' weddings were celebrated according to the tradition – with a chuppah.

The siblings and cousins lived in peace and friendship. Everyone had a big family. All families observed the Jewish way of life. There were no [Communist] Party members in the family. We were closely in touch and met for holidays, weddings as well as when visiting friends. We were great friends with my father's cousin Shloima Maryanchik and rented a summer house [6](#) together in Svyatoshen. Such gatherings were very cheerful. I remember huge tables covered with plentiful viands, especially during summer time. The children helped the adults to set the table and serve the dishes. The children were fed first, so when the grownups had their meal, the children already played in the yard.

My father was born in 1889. He had no education and my mother also only had home-education. Dad served in the tsarist army starting from 1911. In 1916 he was sent to the war [World War I]. But he did not stay long at the front: he began to lose his sight because of gassing, which the Germans started to use during World War I. He was brought to a hospital and soon, in spring 1917, he was sent home. He suffered from optic atrophy. In 1924 he was still able to see, read and write, but little by little he lost his sight completely.

Father had twelve brothers and sisters. Rukhl, the younger stepsister, my grandfather's first wife's daughter, left for America before the revolution [7](#). The next stepsister, Inda, was ill and died in Kiev in 1920. I don't know why. She had no children. After that her husband married another woman. Later they both perished. Father's brother Falek Maryanchik, was born in 1893. He was a furniture upholsterer and perished at the front in 1942. The next brother Kiva, born in 1895, was in evacuation with his family in Chkalovskaya region during World War II, retired after the war and died in Kiev in 1953. Grigory Maryanchik, my father's next brother, emigrated to the USA in 1966. My father's stepsister Etl Maryanchik was run over by a tram in 1934. I don't know any details of her life.

In the 1920s and 1930s both Mother and Father were handicraftsmen. Mother worked from home and Father joined the Cooperative Association of Blind People. He knocked up wooden cases and assembled switches. We lived in the center of the city, in Bessarabka [Bessarabskaya Square – a district in Kiev, where mostly Jewish families lived], across the covered market. The famous actor Mikhail Svetin also comes from this district. When I met him, I asked him, 'Are you from Bessarabka?' – 'How did you know?' I said, 'I read about it in a book.'

Mother had a workshop with knitting machines used for knitting stockings, socks, and theater tights and a small store. A lot of interesting people came to the store. For instance in 1928 the famous actor Solomon Mikhoels [8](#) and his wife visited us after their trip to America. He made orders for his theater. Since I went to a Jewish school, I could speak Yiddish to him and answer questions, which Solomon Mikhailovich asked me. I remember that encounter to this very day.

First we lived in premises attached to the workshop with no facilities. In 1930 the building's upper floor, which was a hotel, was reconstructed into communal apartments [9](#) and we occupied one of the rooms. Our neighbors in Kiev were very different people, both Russians and Jews. We all got along very well. Father was respected most of all. He was a very witty and sociable person and

always took part in public work – he was a member of the mutual aid fund, when he worked in the Blind People Cooperative. In summer my parents rented summer houses in Boyarka and Svyatoshen. We had a housemaid up to 1930, Aunt Vera, who was a Jewess. Later on she left for Simferopol for her relatives' place and perished there in 1941.

Mother and Father were very busy working, but they never forgot about their children's upbringing. Their mother tongue was Yiddish, but they spoke Russian. Mother received a home education. We had a lot of books at home – children's books and religious books, including prayer books. I cannot remember the names of the books. It is difficult for me to say, how religious my parents were. They never were members of any party, or any Jewish community. I don't recall my father praying, we never celebrated Sabbath and we did not even know the word. But we celebrated Jewish holidays and attended the Lisatsedikh synagogue on these days.

There were a lot of synagogues in Kiev in those times. There were three synagogues on Malaya Vasilkovskaya alone, where we lived: Lisatsedikh, Brodskogo synagogue, constructed with the use of Brodsky's money and Kupecheskaya synagogue, constructed by the merchants. [Brodsky – famous sugar manufacturer in Kiev. There was a choral synagogue located on 13 Malaya Vasilkovskaya, built on his donations. Later on the Kievsky Puppet Theater was arranged there.] At the end of the 1930s the synagogues were abolished [10](#). A sports club was organized in the first synagogue, a children's theater in the Brodskogo synagogue – now a synagogue is being organized there again – and a club in the Kupecheskaya synagogue.

School and work

I went to a private Russian kindergarten. In those times, at the beginning of the 1920s, such kindergartens still existed. They taught French there and, moreover, there was a ballet troupe with choreographer Chistyakov as a teacher. Two sisters, who studied together with me, became ballet dancers. Later I was accepted to a ballet school. I acted in 1924 in a 'Fairy Doll' ballet performance to the music of Joseph Bayer. I remember my mother bringing me to the theater before the performance and leaving me there. I was walking around there crying. Somebody found my mother in the box, I calmed down and went to put on makeup and get dressed as a doll. All our relatives came to watch the performance. I also remember a circus performance – a Chinese pantomime. I practiced ballroom dances since I was seven and I still dance.

In 1925 I was eight and time came for me to go to school. Mother wanted to send me to a prestigious Russian school, but she failed. There were Jewish schools in Kiev in those times, and the RONO [District Department of Education] directed me to such a school located on Malaya Vasilkovskaya, now it is Rustaveli Street. It was school #85, later #59 [11](#). This school was closed after 1932.

Only Jewish children attended the school. I was accepted to the second grade. First we had to pay three rubles per month. Later we did not pay anything. All subjects were taught in Yiddish: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography and others. I did not like exact science at school, I liked languages better. We were taught Ukrainian, Russian and German. We knew nothing about Hebrew, it was prohibited. There was a Jewish theater at school and a gymnastics group. I loved to dance and do sports. We were not told anything about Jewish traditions and we had classes on Saturdays. There were approximately 30 children in our class. Now I cannot remember exactly what kind of special subjects we had in this school.

My favorite teacher was Zalman Skudinsky, I even read about him in the newspaper. He taught Yiddish. In 1931 he left our school for the Literature Department at the Academy of Sciences. Dora Moiseyevna Epstein was our headmistress. She perished during the war in Babi Yar [12](#). Her husband worked together with me at the Manuscript Department at the Academy of Sciences Library in Ukraine before the war. I also attended a Jewish Musical College. The headmaster, Moisey Beregovsky, was a famous specialist in Jewish folklore. Owing to him I came to love the Jewish folklore.

I did not feel the political climate at that time. I did not feel any anti-Semitic manifestations. We were brought up as atheists. It was prohibited for us to attend the synagogue; however, we did go there for the Simchat Torah holiday. We went to the theaters, including Jewish ones. There was a Jewish children's theater in Kiev. We had a pioneer organization [13](#) at school. I was an activist and member of the Red Cross Society when I was in the 6th grade. Beginning from the 1930s we spent summer in a pioneer camp in Boyarka. The camp belonged to the Society of Disabled and my father was a member of it.

All my school friends were Jews. Fima Burakovsky was also a Jewish boy. We often visited each other, did our homework together, but didn't play any games. In 1927 he left for America.

My parents wanted to send me to a musical college also, but, alas, I did not really have an ear for music. We had no piano at home and I did not possess any musical talent. My brother Boris, who was three years younger than me, learned to play the violin at the Jewish Musical College. Kholoneiser was his teacher. The college was not far from our house and he went there by tram or walked. I also went to Jewish music concerts with Boris. Boris studied in a Russian school. Mother didn't want to send him to a Jewish school. He did not know a word of Yiddish. Everyone, including Mom and Dad, were sure that he should study in a Russian Soviet school. He finished Russian school #131 located on Malaya Vasilkovskaya Street. I attended foreign languages courses in that school.

When the Great Patriotic War started Boris wanted to join the army, but he was not accepted because of his illness. He left the city on foot and joined the army as a volunteer. He studied at the Polytechnic Institute and was transferred to the Leningrad Optical and Mechanical Institute during the war. He graduated in 1947 and worked as an engineer. Boris married a Jewish woman, whose name is Rosa Samuilovna. They have a daughter, Maria Borisovna Ivanova. Boris died in St. Petersburg in 2000.

In 1932 I finished the seventh grade of the Jewish school and entered a Librarian College. I studied there for two years. I found out from my friends that the Library of the Academy of Sciences was looking for employees to work at the Exchange Fund Department for the Dnepropetrovsk University. I was accepted to the Library. At the same time the Kharkovsky Institute of Culture with an affiliate in Kiev announced enrollment to the Librarian faculty. Women with a certificate of a gymnasium and even high school education applied for this faculty in order to obtain a librarian education degree certificate. Girls, who already graduated from a librarian college, also took the exams. They invited me to try and enter the Institute with them.

I went to the District Department of Education with a request to be released from the college because I was still a college student by that time. They told me: 'If you pass the exam we will accept you as if you have secondary education, without a college certificate.' I passed the exam

and thus was accepted to the part-time study faculty at the Librarian Institute, Kharkov affiliate. I studied and worked at the same time. It was in 1934. I was transferred from the Exchange Fund at the Library to the Acquisition Department. I received all literature and distributed it to various departments in the Library. There were around 300 employees at our library. When everybody understood that I was a hard-working employee I was accepted to the library to work on a permanent basis.

I worked at the Academy of Sciences Library and often visited the Jewish Culture Institute at the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. My schoolteachers worked there: Yiddish teacher Skudinsky and Maidansky, the teacher of Ukrainian. My friends were Ulya Wolfmann, Nastya Adamenko, Barya Pavlova and Vera Turyan. We studied together at the institute and everybody called us 'academicians.' We studied in the morning and I had to work in the evening.

The working day was six hours. It remained like that until 1940: there existed a law about the six-hour working day. I was busy with acquisition; later on I was 'shifted' to work with the alphabetical catalogue and sorted out catalogue cards the whole day. Later on I worked at the book distribution department, which was more convenient for me: I stayed at the Institute until 1pm and had enough time to have lunch at home, as my department worked between 4.30pm and 11pm. I came back home late at night. I was 17 years old at that time and I actually helped to support the family. Our work at the library was counted as practice. We graduated from the Institute within three years, in 1937.

I became a member of the Young Communist League [14](#) at the Academy of Sciences. In 1969 the Academy YCL organization celebrated an anniversary and I received an invitation. However, my son was sick and I was not able to go. I sent a long telegram, which was read out during the celebration.

When I graduated from the Institute in 1937, I worked as a Senior Librarian Assistant, later as a Librarian and finally as Senior Librarian. When I started to work as Chief Librarian, I was transferred to the Department of Arts. Its assets were stored at the Vladimirsky Cathedral and I had a key to it. The artist Nesterov arrived unexpectedly and I was told to go see him. He was very surprised and said, 'Women were never allowed to the altar and suddenly a girl opens the door for me!' I invited students from the Institute of Arts to meet the famous artist. We usually worked in the Cathedral in summer. During the war the Germans destroyed all assets that were kept there.

During the war

At 6 o'clock early in the morning in June 1941, when the war started, Mother came from the market place and said to me, 'Take the gas-mask and run!' I was a member of the PVO group [antiaircraft defense troops]. On 17th September 1939, the Germans entered Poland and state of siege was announced in Kiev [15](#). We were on duty at the library, as we were afraid of attacks. We were well prepared for cases of military warning. I remember that the siege lasted for five days. And when in 1941 the Germans crossed our border I told everyone at home that we all had to leave. But Dad said, 'I will not go anywhere.' He told us that nothing awful would happen. However, we had already heard about ghettos from those who came from Poland. I wrote in the evacuation reference note for the library that my father, my mother and me were leaving together. However, my parents changed their mind and decided to stay.

We packed precious books urgently at the library to take them out to Ufa. We also took part in digging trenches in June 1941, 30 kilometers from the city. We cut wood there and lived in tents. We were soon told to leave that place. Almost all employees from the library participated in these defense works. We were 100 people and on 11th July, on our way back several people, including me, became detached from the rest. I reached a peasant house and suddenly bombing began and everything was set on fire. I was not sure if we would survive. Everyone managed to come back home before 11pm, except for me. We spent the night in the village and then another bombing started. We were not allowed to go to the city and had to stay with the military in the forest. Later on, when everyone came back to Kiev and went to the library, my mom was there crying: everybody came back, except for me.

On 26th July I went to Ufa by train together with other library employees, where we delivered the most precious books. Before the evacuation my mother gave me 700 rubles and I was able to rent a room in Ufa. I had to find a job and started working as a timekeeper at a construction site. Later I met some relatives on the Maryanchik side. They were planning to leave for Fergana [Central Asia]. Our uncle lived there. He worked as a superior at the KGB [17](#) and 'turned into' Kuzma Timofeyevich Makarenkov from Abram Maryanchik. [A lot of Jews were forced to change their first, patronymic and last names, since it was easier to find a job and to enter an institute that way] [18](#). Together with my relatives I went to Fergana where again I had to look for a job; my uncle could not help me. It was the end of 1941.

There was an Oriental Institute in Fergana. I thought I would be able to enter the institute, get a room at the dormitory and some scholarship. But I was not accepted since I had no secondary education certificate. My higher education did not count. So I took a job as a pioneer leader at a children's home. I never had any conflicts related to my Jewish identity. However I could not stand the Central Asian climate with its sand and heat. It was very difficult to live there because we had no ration cards. Aunt Sima's husband died and she invited me to come to Sverdlovsk.

Two Mikhalchuk boys worked at that children's home. Both their mother and their stepmother were Jewish. These Mikhalchuks asked me to hand over a letter to their father who worked in Sverdlovsk in UNIKHIM [Ural Scientific Research Chemical Institute]. I went to Sverdlovsk in 1942 and visited UNIKHIM looking for Boris Vasilyevich Mikhalchuk. He asked me how his children were – they were his children from his first marriage. He also asked me why I had come there. I told him that I had come to visit my aunt and that I was looking for a job. The librarian at their institute was on maternity leave, so I started to work at the UNIKHIM library. I arrived in Sverdlovsk on 25th July and started to work on 1st August. Soon people evacuated from the Leningrad blockade [19](#) started to arrive and among them was my husband-to-be. He also started to work at the UNIKHIM. He liked me at first sight.

In Sverdlovsk I was very often summoned by the District Committee for various works. Later, in October 1943, I was mobilized by the YCL to work for the KGB. I was asked if I spoke Yiddish. I spoke the language and they offered me a job as a censor for them. I was given letters, which I had to unseal and read. The letters were written in Yiddish. My responsibility was to check if anything bad had been written about the Party or about Stalin. I was a special public official. The result of my check-up, in case I detected nothing discordant with the Soviet Government ideology, was a stamp that said 'Passed by the censor' and the check-up date. Letters of anti-Soviet nature were put aside to be checked further by the KGB. That was none of my business. Two Jewish women

worked there and all chiefs were Jewish.

However, my previous place of employment did not want to let me go and sued me. I brought a note from the KGB to the court and, certainly, was let go immediately. Later on they tried to evict me from my apartment, but failed: I was working at the KGB and we were placed on a secret list. We worked there for 14-16 hours. I left the apartment at 8am and came back home at 10pm. We had very good ration there [20](#) as well as good salaries.

Marriage and later life

I rented a room in a private apartment in Sverdlovsk. My husband-to-be lived in the men's dormitory in a room for five people. They all left for various places later on. The last one to leave was Abram Aisikovich Chizhik, a colleague of my husband-to-be. By the way, he kept proposing us to each other. Once I was planning to go to the cinema with my friend, but she refused. So I offered the ticket to Abram Aisikovich. He sent Alexander Gavrilovich instead, who started to court me. Everyone at the institute, where I worked at the library, noticed that Alexander Gavrilovich was not indifferent to me. I came home from work at 9-10pm and he already waited for me. In the evening we went for a walk and everybody saw it.

My Russian husband, Alexander Gavrilovich Karandin, was born in Leningrad in 1898 and raised there. His parents also came from Leningrad and in 1912 they built a house in the suburbs of St. Petersburg, in Sablino. Alexander Gavrilovich got university education and worked as an engineer at GIPKH [State Institute of Applied Chemistry]. My husband's father was a worker. He died in 1917 and his mother, a housewife, died in 1937. He had three sisters and one brother, who was subjected to repression [21](#). My husband's sisters got on very well with me. My husband was Russian and I decided to stay a Jew, thus I did not change my last name. My aunts, who came to visit me, were very much pleased with my husband.

However, a fatal tragedy befell our family. I concealed from my husband the fact that our son had a sarcoma. I did not tell him about this disease in order not to upset him, since his mother had died of a sarcoma. His nephew also died of this disease. My son finished school, entered the LEEI, Leningrad Electrical and Engineering Institute. He served in the army between 1964 and 1967. When he returned from the army he worked at the LEEI and studied at the same time. However, at the age of 25 he fell sick very severely and died in 1970. It was a total tragedy for me and we could not do anything to save him.

My husband spent the beginning of the war and the first blockade winter in Leningrad. He was evacuated from Leningrad along the Road of Life [22](#) in a very grave condition in 1942. He was older than 40 at that time but he looked younger than his age. We got married in 1944 and lived together for 35 years.

We did not really have any wedding. When our baby was born we went to the ZAGS [State institution, which registers acts of civil status – birth, marriage, death] and registered our marriage. We did not celebrate the event and had no feast. Our son Kolya, or Nikolai, was born in 1945 and weighed only 1.6 kilograms. My pregnancy was very painful and I had to stay at the hospital all the time. The labor was very difficult and nobody thought that I would give birth to a baby. There were no gifts because everyone thought I would die. I had nothing to swaddle the baby into. Later on my husband's sisters sent us some clothes. I quit my job in Sverdlovsk after my son was born. In 1947-

1948 I worked as a librarian at the Sverdlovsk Musical College.

My son, Nikolai Alexandrovich Karandin, was not raised as a Jew. He understood his identity as a Jew on his mother's side, but he was more attracted by the Russian Orthodoxy. He lived in Leningrad, finished the Electrical and Engineering Institute and worked there for some months as a laboratory assistant. But as I mentioned before, he died in Leningrad in 1970 of a sarcoma.

After Kiev was liberated I made an inquiry at the District Soviet [local state authority] about my relatives who stayed in Kiev during the war. I knew that all the Jews, who stayed in Kiev at the beginning of the war, perished at Babi Yar. My mother, father, grandmother Rivka, two of her sisters and her grandson perished there in 1941. I do not know exactly how my parents died. However, I know that it happened at Babi Yar, because our former neighbors, Russians, told me about it. My relatives' names are not written down anywhere. Though someone told me that he saw their names in some museum, but I couldn't find them in the books. On my visit to Israel I made an inquiry at Yad Vashem [23](#), where all Jews, who died during the Holocaust, are being registered. I never received a reply from them.

After the war my uncle Mikhul, my mom's brother, found out from various witnesses about Uncle Moisha and his wife, Aunt Rosa. They also lived in Kiev and had no children. My uncle came from a butchers' family. When in 1941 the Germans entered the city the local population gave over my uncle and aunt Rosa's brothers. When the men were taken away, Aunt Rosa hanged herself in her apartment.

At the end of 1949 I moved to Leningrad with my husband. The Ministry transferred him to GIPKH. He worked as an engineer at the Design Administration. In 1950 we obtained accommodation on Kirovsky Prospekt, which is now called Kamennostrovsky Prospekt.

In 1953 I wanted to find a job. Those who saw my labor book, which said that I worked as a Chief Librarian in Kiev, were very much surprised and said to me, 'You've reached the position of a library General!' But when I asked why they did not give me a job, they simply had nothing to reply. The reason was clear: I was a Jewess [24](#). In 1953 I had been working for two months at the Library of the Botany Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Later on, in 1954 I managed to get a temporary job at the Library named after Pushkin [25](#) in Petrogradsky district. At first I borrowed books there and later on I offered my services. I was asked to prepare a catalogue, which I fulfilled. I worked in this library for 20 years. Later on I organized an affiliate of this library at the Leningrad telephone station, where I stayed to work. From 1982 I was managing the technical library there, which I also organized. After 1994 all pensioners were fired.

I live alone now. My husband died in 1979. I lived for 48 years in a communal apartment. When we came to Leningrad after the war and got a room, it was luxurious for those times, we even had hot water! In 1988 I exchanged my room for a small, separate, bedraggled single-room apartment on Leninsky Prospekt.

I had a lot of relatives on the Maryanchik side as well as on the Slutsky side. Almost all of them have died by now. Many perished in Babi Yar. I am the only one from my generation who is still alive. I keep in touch with my cousins' grandchildren. Two of my nieces on the Maryanchik side, as well as one cousin on the Slutsky side live in Israel now. In 1994 I visited my niece in Israel. I meet some of my relatives and keep corresponding with my half-cousin. Some of my relatives on the

Slutsky side live in America. I liked Israel, though its climate is too hot for me. Besides, I love Leningrad too much and I got used to living here.

I've devoted all my life to library science. When I came to Hesed to the Yiddish club and saw the books, I started to work as a volunteer at the library in Hesed. This is how Judaism reveals itself in my life. I never attended the synagogue and I do not attend it now. The life of the Jewish community is very tangible in our city: Jewish music concerts, major holiday concerts. A lot is done for the revival of Jewish traditions. And I think it is good.

Glossary:

1 Hesed

Meaning care and mercy in Hebrew, Hesed stands for the charity organization founded by Amos Avgar in the early 20th century. Supported by Claims Conference and Joint Hesed helps for Jews in need to have a decent life despite hard economic conditions and encourages development of their self-identity. Hesed provides a number of services aimed at supporting the needs of all, and particularly elderly members of the society. The major social services include: work in the center facilities (information, advertisement of the center activities, foreign ties and free lease of medical equipment); services at homes (care and help at home, food products delivery, delivery of hot meals, minor repairs); work in the community (clubs, meals together, day-time polyclinic, medical and legal consultations); service for volunteers (training programs). The Hesed centers have inspired a real revolution in the Jewish life in the FSU countries. People have seen and sensed the rebirth of the Jewish traditions of humanism. Currently over eighty Hesed centers exist in the FSU countries. Their activities cover the Jewish population of over eight hundred settlements.

2 Great Patriotic War

On 22nd June 1941 at 5 o'clock in the morning Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union without declaring war. This was the beginning of the so-called Great Patriotic War. The German blitzkrieg, known as Operation Barbarossa, nearly succeeded in breaking the Soviet Union in the months that followed. Caught unprepared, the Soviet forces lost whole armies and vast quantities of equipment to the German onslaught in the first weeks of the war. By November 1941 the German army had seized the Ukrainian Republic, besieged Leningrad, the Soviet Union's second largest city, and threatened Moscow itself. The war ended for the Soviet Union on 9th May 1945.

3 Sholem Aleichem (pen name of Shalom Rabinovich) (1859-1916)

Yiddish author and humorist, a prolific writer of novels, stories, feuilletons, critical reviews, and poems in Yiddish, Hebrew and Russian. He also contributed regularly to Yiddish dailies and weeklies. In his writings he described the life of Jews in Russia, creating a gallery of bright characters. His creative work is an alloy of humor and lyricism, accurate psychological and details of everyday life. He founded a literary Yiddish annual called Di Yidishe Folksbibliotek (The Popular Jewish Library), with which he wanted to raise the despised Yiddish literature from its mean status and at the same time to fight authors of trash literature, who dragged Yiddish literature to the lowest popular level. The first volume was a turning point in the history of modern Yiddish literature. Sholem Aleichem died in New York in 1916. His popularity increased beyond the Yiddish-

speaking public after his death. Some of his writings have been translated into most European languages and his plays and dramatic versions of his stories have been performed in many countries. The dramatic version of Tevye the Milkman became an international hit as a musical (Fiddler on the Roof) in the 1960s.

4 Petliura, Simon (1879-1926)

Ukrainian politician, member of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Working Party, one of the leaders of Centralnaya Rada (Central Council), the national government of Ukraine (1917-1918). Military units under his command killed Jews during the Civil War in Ukraine. In the Soviet-Polish war he was on the side of Poland; in 1920 he emigrated. He was killed in Paris by the Jewish nationalist Schwarzbard in revenge for the pogroms against Jews in Ukraine.

5 Russian stove

Big stone stove stoked with wood. They were usually built in a corner of the kitchen and served to heat the house and cook food. It had a bench that made a comfortable bed for children and adults in wintertime.

6 Dacha

Country house, consisting of small huts and little plots of lands. The Soviet authorities came to the decision to allow this activity to the Soviet people to support themselves. The majority of urban citizens grow vegetables and fruit in their small gardens to make preserves for winter.

7 Russian Revolution of 1917

Revolution in which the tsarist regime was overthrown in the Russian Empire and, under Lenin, was replaced by the Bolshevik rule. The two phases of the Revolution were: February Revolution, which came about due to food and fuel shortages during World War I, and during which the tsar abdicated and a provisional government took over. The second phase took place in the form of a coup led by Lenin in October/November (October Revolution) and saw the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks.

8 Mikhoels, Solomon (1890-1948) (born Vovsi)

Great Soviet actor, producer and pedagogue. He worked in the Moscow State Jewish Theater (and was its art director from 1929). He directed philosophical, vivid and monumental works. Mikhoels was murdered by order of the State Security Ministry.

9 Communal apartment

The Soviet power wanted to improve housing conditions by requisitioning 'excess' living space of wealthy families after the Revolution of 1917. Apartments were shared by several families with each family occupying one room and sharing the kitchen, toilet and bathroom with other tenants. Because of the chronic shortage of dwelling space in towns communal or shared apartments continued to exist for decades. Despite state programs for the construction of more houses and the liquidation of communal apartments, which began in the 1960s, shared apartments still exist today.

10 Struggle against religion

The 1930s was a time of anti-religion struggle in the USSR. In those years it was not safe to go to synagogue or to church. Places of worship, statues of saints, etc. were removed; rabbis, Orthodox and Roman Catholic priests disappeared behind KGB walls.

11 School #

Schools had numbers and not names. It was part of the policy of the state. They were all state schools and were all supposed to be identical.

12 Babi Yar

Babi Yar is the site of the first mass shooting of Jews that was carried out openly by fascists. On 29th and 30th September 1941 33,771 Jews were shot there by a special SS unit and Ukrainian militia men. During the Nazi occupation of Kiev between 1941 and 1943 over a 100,000 people were killed in Babi Yar, most of whom were Jewish. The Germans tried in vain to efface the traces of the mass grave in August 1943 and the Soviet public learnt about mass murder after World War II.

13 All-Union pioneer organization

A communist organization for teenagers between 10 and 15 years old (cf: boy-/ girlscouts in the US). The organization aimed at educating the young generation in accordance with the communist ideals, preparing pioneers to become members of the Komsomol and later the Communist Party. In the Soviet Union, all teenagers were pioneers.

14 Komsomol

Communist youth political organization created in 1918. The task of the Komsomol was to spread the ideas of communism and involve the worker and peasant youth in building the Soviet Union. The Komsomol also aimed at giving a communist upbringing by involving the worker youth in the political struggle, supplemented by theoretical education. The Komsomol was more popular than the Communist Party because with its aim of education people could accept uninitiated young proletarians, whereas party members had to have at least a minimal political qualification.

15 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact

Non-aggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, which became known under the name of Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Engaged in a border war with Japan in the Far East and fearing the German advance in the west, the Soviet government began secret negotiations for a non-aggression pact with Germany in 1939. In August 1939 it suddenly announced the conclusion of a Soviet-German agreement of friendship and non-aggression. The Pact contained a secret clause providing for the partition of Poland and for Soviet and German spheres of influence in Eastern Europe.

17 KGB

The KGB or Committee for State Security was the main Soviet external security and intelligence agency, as well as the main secret police agency from 1954 to 1991.

18 Common name

Russified or Russian first names used by Jews in everyday life and adopted in official documents. The Russification of first names was one of the manifestations of the assimilation of Russian Jews at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. In some cases only the spelling and pronunciation of Jewish names was russified (e.g. Isaac instead of Yitskhak; Boris instead of Borukh), while in other cases traditional Jewish names were replaced by similarly sounding Russian names (e.g. Eugenia instead of Ghita; Yury instead of Yuda). When state anti-Semitism intensified in the USSR at the end of the 1940s, most Jewish parents stopped giving their children traditional Jewish names to avoid discrimination.

19 Blockade of Leningrad

On September 8, 1941 the Germans fully encircled Leningrad and its siege began. It lasted until January 27, 1944. The blockade meant incredible hardships and privations for the population of the town. Hundreds of thousands died from hunger, cold and diseases during the almost 900 days of the blockade.

20 Card system

The food card system regulating the distribution of food and industrial products was introduced in the USSR in 1929 due to extreme deficit of consumer goods and food. The system was cancelled in 1931. In 1941, food cards were reintroduced to keep records, distribute and regulate food supplies to the population. The card system covered main food products such as bread, meat, oil, sugar, salt, cereals, etc. The rations varied depending on which social group one belonged to, and what kind of work one did. Workers in the heavy industry and defense enterprises received a daily ration of 800 g (miners - 1 kg) of bread per person; workers in other industries 600 g. Non-manual workers received 400 or 500 g based on the significance of their enterprise, and children 400 g. However, the card system only covered industrial workers and residents of towns while villagers never had any provisions of this kind. The card system was cancelled in 1947.

21 Great Terror (1934-1938)

During the Great Terror, or Great Purges, which included the notorious show trials of Stalin's former Bolshevik opponents in 1936-1938 and reached its peak in 1937 and 1938, millions of innocent Soviet citizens were sent off to labor camps or killed in prison. The major targets of the Great Terror were communists. Over half of the people who were arrested were members of the party at the time of their arrest. The armed forces, the Communist Party, and the government in general were purged of all allegedly dissident persons; the victims were generally sentenced to death or to long terms of hard labor. Much of the purge was carried out in secret, and only a few cases were tried in public 'show trials'. By the time the terror subsided in 1939, Stalin had managed to bring

both the Party and the public to a state of complete submission to his rule. Soviet society was so atomized and the people so fearful of reprisals that mass arrests were no longer necessary. Stalin ruled as absolute dictator of the Soviet Union until his death in March 1953.

22 Road of Life

It was a passage across Lake Ladoga in winter during the Blockade of Leningrad. It was due to the Road of Life that Leningrad survived in the terrible winter of 1941-42.

23 Yad Vashem

This museum, founded in 1953 in Jerusalem, honors both Holocaust martyrs and 'the Righteous Among the Nations', non-Jewish rescuers who have been recognized for their 'compassion, courage and morality.'

24 Campaign against 'cosmopolitans'

The campaign against 'cosmopolitans', i.e. Jews, was initiated in articles in the central organs of the Communist Party in 1949. The campaign was directed primarily at the Jewish intelligentsia and it was the first public attack on Soviet Jews as Jews. 'Cosmopolitans' writers were accused of hating the Russian people, of supporting Zionism, etc. Many Yiddish writers as well as the leaders of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee were arrested in November 1948 on charges that they maintained ties with Zionism and with American 'imperialism'. They were executed secretly in 1952. The anti-Semitic Doctors' Plot was launched in January 1953. A wave of anti-Semitism spread through the USSR. Jews were removed from their positions, and rumors of an imminent mass deportation of Jews to the eastern part of the USSR began to spread. Stalin's death in March 1953 put an end to the campaign against 'cosmopolitans.'

25 Pushkin, Alexandr (1799-1837)

Russian poet and prose writer, among the foremost figures in Russian literature. Pushkin established the modern poetic language of Russia, using Russian history for the basis of many of his works. His masterpiece is Eugene Onegin, a novel in verse about mutually rejected love. The work also contains witty and perceptive descriptions of Russian society of the period. Pushkin died in a duel.