

Faina Saushkina Biography

Faina Saushkina

Lvov

Ukraine

Interviewer: Zhanna Litinskaya

Date of interview: December 2002

Faina Saushkina found me in Lvov. She said she wanted to tell me about her family and her life. She lives with her daughter Tamara and her son-in-law Yuzik in a nice and big apartment in a new neighborhood in Lvov. She has nice furniture bought in 1970s – it suits her apartment well. The apartment is very clean. She has many books by Russian and Soviet writers on bookshelves. Faina has stayed at home for several years. She had fracture of neck of femur and can hardly move, but she is very nice and hospitable. She has many Jewish, Ukrainian and Russian friends and acquaintances. When I came to see her Faina was having tea with her Ukrainian neighbor Nastia. Faina asked for breaks during the interview when she got tired.

My parents came from that part of Poland that belonged to the tsarist Russia before the revolution of 1917. All I know about my grandparents is what my parents told me since by the time I was born only my mother's father was still living.

My mother's parents Isaac and Leiba Zlotnik born around 1860s lived in Warsaw. My grandfather Isaac was a leather craftsman – he made wallets, purses and wristlets from leftovers of leather. He sold what he made in a small store in his own house. My grandmother was a housewife like all Jewish woman at that time. They led a modest life. They lived in a big 3-room apartment that was modestly furnished. My mother told me that the family was very religious. My grandfather prayed every day with his thales and twiln on. He went to the synagogue that was near their house. There was numerous Jewish population in Warsaw at the end of XIX century and there were few synagogues in the town. My grandparents followed the kashrut, observed all Jewish traditions and celebrated holidays. My mother told me that she had sisters and a brother. My mother's brother Samuel, Shmulik, studied at cheder. After finishing it he followed into his father's footsteps and they worked together. I didn't know him since he died when he was young. Of all mother's sisters I only knew Tzylia that lived in Warsaw with her husband and two children. My grandmother Leiba died in 1918 and my grandfather Isaac died in the middle of 1930s. –We have no information about what happened to my mother's sisters.

My mother Sophia Zlotik, a younger one in the family, was born in Warsaw in 1892. She finished a Jewish primary school. She could read and write in Yiddish. My mother and her sisters had a teacher that taught them Yiddish and religion twice a week. My mother could also speak Polish, but didn't know Russian or Ukrainian. My mother met my future father in 1913 and in 1914 they got married.

My father David Glezer born in a small town (I don't remember the name) to the west from Warsaw, Poland, in 1887. My grandfather Moisey Glezer was widowed by the time my father met my mother. My father's mother Golda was a sickly woman. After my father was born she couldn't

have any more children because of her sickness. My grandmother Golda died when my father was about 14 years old. My father spoke very little about his family. All I know is that my grandfather was a shoemaker and taught my father this profession. Grandfather Moisey didn't remarry. He died around 1917 – I never saw him. Of all father's relatives I only knew his cousin on his mother's side – Moisey Zlatopolskiy, the son of my grandmother Golda's sister. Uncle Moisey or Misha as we called him, moved to Kiev for some reason in early 1920s. He had a wife and three daughters: Lisa, Raya and Manya and a son: Alexandr. During the Great patriotic War their family was in evacuation and after the war they settled down in Lvov. Uncle Moisey died in the middle of 1970s. Of all his children only Raya is alive. She lives in Germany with her family.

My father was a religious man – and I guess, his parents raised him religious. They observed all Jewish traditions, but I don't know how deeply religious they were since my father didn't tell me about them. My father got primary Jewish education. He studied at cheder. He began to help his father when he was in his teens and learned his father's profession. During one of his trips to Warsaw where he took shoes to sell at the market he met my mother's father Isaac that was interested in buying the remains of leather. On his next trip he came to see Isaac at his home and met my mother. This happened in 1913. My mother used to joke that it was her father Isaac's plot to arrange for her to meet my father. However, David and Sophia fell in love. Their parents on both sides were happy that the bride and bridegroom belonged to the same layer of society. Grandfather Moisey was particularly happy- he felt ill and didn't think he had much time left for him to live. He was happy that his son was going to have a family of his own. My parents got married shortly before WWI in 1914. They had a traditional Jewish wedding with a huppah and many guests that were their relatives and friends.

When WWI War began in 1914 my parents moved in the eastern direction to Ukraine. Many Jewish families were moving to Ukraine from Poland at that time trying to escape from the war. Somehow my parents happened to move to a southern resort town of Simferopol in Crimea, [1200 km from Warsaw]. In 1915 they had a girl born, but she didn't live long – in few months she got some infection and died in 1916.

I, Feiga Glezer, was born on 20 July 1917. When I was two or three months old we moved to the town of Slavuta that belonged to Kamenets-Podolsk region [Khmelnitsk region now] 500 km to the west from Kiev. I don't know why my parents moved. There were numerous gangs in the south of Ukraine [1] and my parents were probably looking for a quieter place to live. In 1919 my sister Sarah was born. Our family didn't stay there long. It happened so that my parents that wished to escape from the war in Poland found themselves in the very epicenter of the Civil War [2] in Russia. Starvation, hardships, pogroms and fear forced them back to Poland that wasn't a part of Russia after 1917. I have dim memories of our trip to Warsaw. I only know that we cross the border illegally having no permits or visas. I remember that the 4 of us got to a town by train and from there we walked to avoid passport control at the border. We went in groups: my mother that was pregnant, Sarah and I and my father carrying a suitcase and a bag went separately. Our mother and we had no problems on the way, but our father was stopped by the frontier guard. Fortunately he wasn't arrested – they just didn't let him cross the border. He had to go back to Slavuta. We didn't have any information in a while until we began to receive letters from him in few months.

My mother, Sarah and I came to Warsaw where my mother's father Isaac lived. Our grandmother Leiba died about two years before we came to Warsaw. Our grandfather remarried. His wife's name

was Mirrah. Our arrival was a surprise for them and my mother didn't know that her mother had died either. We were welcomed cordially. Mirrah was very nice to us and I began to call her 'grandmother'.

I was about 4 years old then and I do not remember much about the town or place where we lived. It was a 3-room apartment in a big house on the 3rd or 4th floor, simply furnished: a big wooden table, chairs, cupboard and a wardrobe. There were also wooden beds. My grandfather had his desk where he cut pieces of leather and sewed his crafts with a sewing machine in a big room. We also had meals at this table. Another, smaller room, was my grandparents' bedroom and our mother and we settled down in the smallest room. My mother had a sister – Tsylia. Her husband Aron was a shoemaker. Her family lived in the neighboring street. I remember that we went to see them and I played with Lyonia and Rieva, their children. In the morning my grandfather put on his thales and twiln and went to the synagogue. He was a very religious man. I liked Friday when my grandmother Mirah and my mother made delicious dinner: chicken broth, veal stew and sometimes Gefilte fish. In the evening my grandmother Mirah lit candles in an ancient silver candle stand, my grandfather said a prayer in Hebrew and we sat down to a meal. On Saturday my grandparents went to the synagogue and my mother and I stayed at home – it was difficult for my mother to walk due to her pregnancy.

I have bright memories of my childhood related to Chanukah celebration. My grandfather and aunt Tsylia gave me sweets and money that my mother saved for me. I also remember Pesach – my mother and grandmother Mirah cleaned the house long before the holiday. My grandfather brought some matsah from the synagogue. My grandmother took beautiful silver dishes and china from a big box. Aunt Tsylia and her family came to visit us. There was plenty of delicious food: fish, chicken, sweet tsymes, apples with honey, pastries and matsah cookies. Lyonia, my cousin, asked my grandfather some questions and my grandfather answered them sitting at the head of the table. I wanted to ask questions myself and I constantly interfered with them. My grandfather told me with a smile that I would ask questions when I grow up.

In 1922 my mother gave birth to a baby girl that was named Manya. My mother was missing my father very much – she even cried at night. When the girl turned one year old my mother began to pack to go back to Russia. My father wrote in his letters that life was improving gradually regardless of hardships and lack of food, that he became a shoemaker and bought a dwelling. He was also missing us and asked us to come back. This time we obtained all necessary documents – it wasn't a problem since Sarah and I were born in Russia and had a right to go back there. My mother obtained visas and we left for Russia in 1923.

We never saw our grandfather Isaac again. He died in Warsaw in the late 1920s and my mother failed to obtain the visa on time and couldn't go to his funeral. In 1930s our correspondence with the relatives in Poland terminated and we had no information about my mother's sister Tsylia. We went home by train. Polish and then Soviet frontier inspectors checked our documents and we moved on. I can't remember exactly on what station we got off. Our father was waiting for us on a horse-driven cart. We were happy to see each other and started on our way to Slavuta. Slavuta was a small town with the population of about 20 thousand people. The majority of population was Jewish. Jews resided in private houses in the central part of the town. Jews were craftsmen for the most part: tailors, shoemakers, watchmakers, glasscutters and cabinetmakers. There were barbershops and even a photo studio in the town. Jewish families resided in the central

street and almost every house had a store or a shop on the ground floor. There was a cultural center and post office in the center of the town. There was also a market in the central square where Ukrainian farmers sold their food products (vegetables, greeneries, dairy products, meat and poultry) on Sunday. There were kosher food stores and a shoihet had his shop at the market where he slaughtered chicken. There was a synagogue and a Russian, Ukrainian and Jewish schools in the town.

We lived in a house in the central street with two entrance doors on both sides. Our family resided in one half of the house and the 2nd half of it belonged to the Jewish family of Abram Vinikur, a butcher that owned a small butcher store where he sold kosher meat. We had 3 big rooms and a kitchen. We had a table and a cupboard in the dining room where we had meals on holidays and at Shabbat. My parents had a bedroom and we had a children's room.

In 1925 my mother gave birth to a son. He was named Naum. His cradle was in our parents' room and later he slept in a big room. On weekdays we had meals in the kitchen. There were two stoves in the kitchen: one big stove with a bench and one smaller for heating the house and food. We didn't have a kitchen garden or livestock. Jews in Slavuta bought all they needed at the market. My father was a very skilled shoemaker. He worked at a shop and took some additional work home to provide better for our big family. It was a state run shoe shop on the round floor. They received a salary. It wasn't much, but they had sufficient to make their living. There were about 10 employees in the shop, Jews in the majority. They mainly fixed shoes and sometimes made shoes or orthopedic boots. In the evening when my father came from work he had dinner and sat down on a low stool to work. He had a shoe 'leg' and a box of tools beside him. My father often fixed shoes for his clients and never refused even from minor orders. He was a very kind and tactful man and worked a lot. When working he mused Jewish tunes. My father had a hobby: singing. On Saturday and holidays he sang at the synagogue and took part in an amateur Jewish choir in the cultural center. Our father composed funny songs for us and we always asked him to sing at our bedtime. I remember a song he sang to us in Yiddish: I can't remember it in Yiddish, but the meaning in Russian was as follows: 'Sarah and Fania, what are you doing in the woods - aren't you afraid that I would eat you!'

My mother was a housewife. We weren't a wealthy family, but my mother was very good at housekeeping and we had sufficient of everything. On weekdays our major food was cereals, potatoes and vegetables. My mother made potato pancakes, potato, cabbage and carrot chops. She only made kosher food.

On Friday morning my mother bought kosher meat at a store or went to the market to buy a chicken that she took to the shoihet to have it slaughtered. My mother cleaned the house before Shabbat and had a festive meal: chicken, stew, baked hala bread and strudels. My sisters and I were helping her. My mother cooked sufficient food for Friday and Saturday. It was not allowed to do any work on Saturday. My mother cooked on a big stove and left a Saturday meal in a smaller one to keep it warm.

My father never worked at home on Friday evening. The whole family got together to meet Saturday. My mother lit a candle saying a prayer and our father said 'brakha' ['blessing' in Yiddish] for bread and wine and we sat at the table. On Saturday morning my father went to the synagogue. When he came back home one of the children took lunch out of the oven and we took to our

Saturday meal. We often had poor Jews sitting at the table with us. My mother invited them – they came to our house knowing that they would get a delicious lunch. My mother used to say that Jews had to share with the needy what they had and help the poor. She was raising us to be kind to other people. Nobody in our family ever raised his voice – we got along well and treated each other nicely.

We celebrated all Jewish holidays. My mother had a shed in the yard where she kept chickens that she bought beforehand. Before a holiday she took chickens to have them slaughtered by a shoihet. We cleaned the house and did it particularly thoroughly before Pesach. We swept all rooms, washed and clayed the floors and polished the furniture. We took our fancy dishes that were only used at Pesach from a big box in the attic. Matsah that was bought at the synagogue in advance was kept in a clean white pillowcase. My mother cooked delicious food for Pesach: Gefilte fish, rich meat stew, chicken and chicken broth, liver paste, egg paste with chicken fat and onions and baked sweet strudel and cookies. In the evening of the first day of Pesach the whole family got together at the table. My father reclined at the head of the table and the children were asking questions. We prepared for a holidays and learned by heart what we were supposed to ask. Manya or I asked questions at the beginning and later Naum when he grew old enough. He asked why this day was different from the others, why we ate matsah instead of bread and our father answered their questions, and of course, this conversation was conducted in Yiddish.

My favorite holiday was Chanukah. I didn't know the story of this holidays, but I liked to receive money and sweets on this day. I saved money in my moneybox to spend it to buy lollypops and marmelade. We also celebrated the Jewish New [Rosh Hashana] year and my parents fasted on Judgment Day [Yam Kippur]. Our mother cooked food for us telling us that children didn't necessarily have to fast, but Sarah and I were trying to follow my mother's example and ate very little on this day.

In 1924 I went to a Jewish lower secondary school. It had the same curriculum as Ukrainian schools. We studied mathematic, geography, history and Ukrainian language and literature. The only difference was that we studied in Yiddish. We didn't study Jewish literature or history. In the 3rd form I became a pioneer. I liked wearing a pioneer necktie, attending meetings and singing new songs. We had meetings on 1 May, 7 November [3]. We didn't celebrate Soviet holidays at home. Only my hospitable mother always made pies and cakes for our friends and us.

I had many friends: Fania, a Jew, Ivanka, a Ukrainian girl, Stefka, a Polish girl, and others. We never heard words like 'zhydy' [4] or 'moskali' [5] – slang name of Russians. We never paid any attention to nationality issues. We spent a lot of time at the town Palace of pioneers attending clubs – I attended choir classes. I sang in a choir where we sang Ukrainian, Russian and Jewish songs. There were also technical and literature clubs, dancing and music classes. On holidays my friends and I went to walk in the central park.

In the 7th form I became a Komsomol [6] member without giving it much thought. All children were enthusiastic about membership in Komsomol – we believed our country to be the best in the world and wanted to contribute into its prosperity. 1932 was a period of famine in Ukraine [7]. I didn't see dying people in our town, but there were many starved. We had a hard time, too. However, our mother was very handy with cooking and we did not starve. She made mamalyga [corn flour meal], soup and pancakes from potato peels. Our mother baked the beetroots in the oven. Our family still had a hard time and after finishing school I went to look for a job. I was 17 years old.

I came to the Komsomol district committee and they sent me to a 6-month training course of teachers at kindergarten. After finishing this course I began to work at a Jewish kindergarten. I enjoyed my work: I liked children and enjoyed teaching them Jewish songs, dances and poems. At leisure time my friends and I went to dancing parties and sang in a choir – we sang popular Jewish and Soviet songs. Once the district Komsomol committee sent us to a frontier unit in Slavuta where I met my future husband. We conducted meetings dedicated to memorable dates, recited poems and sang. Once our neighbor Manya Vinokur that lived in another half of our house came to our house. She told me that a guy wanted to meet me. He saw me several times during our performances at the frontier unit, but dared not to approach me. At that time morals were very strict in smaller towns in all families, not only in Jewish. Young girls could only meet with young men with their mothers or older sisters chaperoning them. Any intimate relationships with young men were out of the question. It was normal when a husband's mother checked bed sheets after the first night to make sure that his wife was a virgin.

Knowing strict morals of Jewish families this young man didn't know how to approach me. I told my parents that a military from the frontier unit wanted to be my friend and they invited him to our home. Manya brought this soldier to our house in the evening. He was a Russian guy with fair hair, blue eyes, handsome and strong. His name was Alexandr Savushkin. Alexandr was born in a poor family in a village near Voronezh, in the central part of Russia in 1912. His parents died of typhoid during the Civil War and Alexandr and his sisters grew up in a children's home. He served in the army in Slavuta. Alexandr was a cook in a canteen for soldiers.

Alexandr visited us every day. He courted me in his own particular way - he brought some food instead of flowers. 1934 was still a difficult year and soldiers got better food than we had. I liked him and met with him. My parents were not particularly happy about my friendship with a Russian man with no parents. My father didn't like it, but my mother liked Alexandr. She liked it that he cared about me. We met for a year. By the way, we were never left by ourselves. I went to parties at the military unit or Alexandr visited us and when we went for a walk in the town my sisters Sarah or Manya were always with me. In summer a group of young people and I went to a collective farm to help them with harvesting. Alexandr came there on a Sunday with a bag full of food.

In autumn 1934 Alexandr officially proposed to me. He came with flowers and asked my parents to give their consent to our marriage. My parents had no objections to our marriage – they saw that Sasha treated me nicely and that I was in love with him and didn't want to put any barriers on our way. At the beginning of 1935 we had a civil ceremony at the local registry office. I took my husband's last name and became Faina Savushkina. After the war when I was receiving a new passport I saw that they wrote my last name with one letter missing - Saushkina, but I left it at that. We had a wedding dinner with members of our family, Alexandr's friends from the military unit and our neighbor Manya that introduced us to one another. It was a small dinner party. Alexandr stayed with me overnight. We slept on my narrow bed and my sister Manya that shared the room with me went to sleep in our parents' bedroom. In the morning my husband went to the military unit. For some time Alexandr only came home on Saturday or when he got a leave and left for the military unit again. He began to observe some Jewish traditions with our family. He learned few prayers and enjoyed our celebrations at Shabbat or on holidays. On 30 March 1935 my husband's term of service was over. He demobilized and we began to prepare to depart to Voronezh where he came from. Soldiers and officers from the military unit where Alexandr served

came to say 'good bye' to us and wish us happiness. I didn't sleep the night before we left – I talked with my father and mother. They were very concerned about our departure and my father was afraid of letting me go away with a non-Jewish husband.

Alexandr's sister Ania met us in Voronezh. She was older than Alexandr. She lived in Voronezh with her husband. They didn't have children. They welcomed us with warmth and we moved in with them into their big room. My husband went to work as a locksmith at the same plant where he worked before he went to serve in the army.

On 7 October 1935 my son Boria was born. He was a nice boy only he was growing and developing so fast that doctors were even concerned about it. At 7 months he walked in his bed and smiled – he had a mouthful of teeth. My husband and I were very happy and Anna helped us to take care of our son. But Boria caught cold and died of pleurisy. Only thanks to my husband's love and warmth with which his sister treated me I began to come back to life after my son died.

I went to work at a kindergarten. In some time we received a room at a communal apartment not far from where Anna lived. We celebrated Soviet holidays and went to parades with Anna and her husband. I lived in a Russian family and of course I didn't observe any Jewish traditions. However, before Pesach my husband always bought me some matsah in a bakery and I cooked all traditional food that my mother used to cook. My husband and his sister treated me with respect and we never had any conflicts related to national differences.

On 15 September 1938 my daughter Tamara was born. In summer 1939, 9 months after our daughter was born my husband was recruited to the army to participate in the Finnish war [8]. After this short-term war was over my husband wasn't demobilized – he stayed in the army. Alexandr's sister loved Tamara as much as she loved Boria and helped me to take care of the baby. On 12 June 1941 I took Tamara to visit my parents in Slavuta. This was my first visit after I left. We had a photo of the family taken on this occasion. On 21 June [9] my mother and I went to the prom of my younger sister Manya. When we were on the way home late at night all of a sudden there appeared black planes in the sky dropping bombs. This was the beginning of the Great patriotic War. We packed our documents, money, underwear and clothes and went to the railway station. Some houses were ruined and there were people killed. We came to the station and saw that it was on fire and railroad track was destroyed. We walked in Eastern direction: my mother and father, Sarah and Manya, Naum and I with Tamara. We took turns to carry my daughter. We reached Shepetovka. There was a train with wounded soldiers and officers there. We boarded this train. It arrived in Kiev where we were accommodated in a school building along with other evacuated people. Kiev was bombed.

We were offered to continue on our way on barges along the Dnieper River, but my father refused. He said he wished to die on the ground. Shortly afterward we got onto a train for the government and party officials' families. The only place we found was on the floor. We didn't have any food. My sister and I got off at stations. We went to military trains asking for food and soldiers gave us bread, sugar or tinned meat. My father got high fever on the way. He was lying on the floor in delirium and our mother was praying beside him.

Our trip lasted for about a month until we arrived in Novosibirsk in 3000 km to the northeast from Kiev. We were accommodated in a villager's house in a village near the town. The owners of the house welcomed us warmly and gave us food. In two days we went to work in the field, threshing

ground and in the farm ground. I was very worried about my husband that might have sent his letters to Voronezh while I had no idea where or how he was. I went to ask chairman of the collective farm to help us obtain permission to go home and showed him my passport with a residential stamp for Voronezh. Chairman gave us food to take with us on the road and the district executive committee gave us money to buy tickets. The family and I went to the railway station. We spent there few days before we managed to get on a train – there were crowds of people wishing to leave. Manager of the station helped us to get on a train. We arrived at Voronezh and went home. Our neighbors cried on seeing us – they thought I had perished since they knew that when the war began I was in Slavuta near the border and they didn't think my daughter and I had escaped. My father's cousin Misha from Kiev was staying in our apartment. He left to search for his family in few days. My relatives didn't get a residential permit to stay in Voronezh since there were many military enterprises in the town and for security reasons authorities didn't issue such permits to all civilians. They: my mother, father, sisters Sarah and Manya, and brother Naum, were accommodated in a collective farm near Voronezh – they worked at harvesting. I got letters from Alexandr. He was at the front. His sister and her husband stayed in Voronezh during the war. They were having a very hard time during the war. After the war they stayed to live in Voronezh. They died in 1970s. We corresponded and had very warm relationships, but we only saw them once when they visited us in Lvov in 1950s.

In 2 or 3 months when the frontline was approaching Moscow military enterprises in Voronezh began to evacuate. I went to see Chukhnov, director of the military enterprise where my husband worked before the war to ask him to take my daughter and me in evacuation with the plant. When evacuation of the plant began director of the plant notified me about it and Tamara and I evacuated with the plant to Chimkent, Middle Asia, about 2500 km from Voronezh. Our trip lasted about 10 days. The train was comfortable – we went by a passenger train and we had no problems on the way. In few days my family joined me there. We were accommodated in a shed, but we were happy to be together.

Workers, engineers and administration of the plant started installation of the plant on a new site. I was working with them loading bricks, sand and other construction materials. When the plant resumed operation I went to work there as a laborer. It was hard work – I was handling heavy cast iron billets. In two years I had two surgeries on hernia from carrying weights. In 1943 director of the plant offered me a position of director of the store at the plant. The former director was stealing. Chukhnov told me that he knew how decent and honest I was. I went home to talk with my parents. My father told me to decline this offer. There was a tendency to anti-Semitic moods at that time. Jews were accused of many misfortunes. For example, a woman at the market sang chastooshka songs [Russian comic verse songs] 'All zhydy are bosses, Russians are at the front and gypsies stand aside...' making people around laugh. I went to see Chukhnov to tell him that I refused. He called the party leader of the plant and they began telling me that every person had to make a contribution into victory and if I got this offer from management it meant that they needed me to be there. Well, what could I do? I gave my consent and became director of the store. I was an honest manager. In 1944 I joined the Party since all key personnel in the former Soviet Union had to be members of the Communist Party.

Victory Day of 9 May 1945 was a greatest holiday for our family and millions of people. It was a sunny day. People came out into streets greeting and hugging. Many had tears in their eyes – of

happiness about the end of the war and grief for their lost ones.

I received letters from my husband regularly. He was severely wounded in action on the Dnieper River in 1943 and was in hospital. He had his renal pelvis injured and had a lower part of his body paralyzed. He stayed in hospitals for several years.

In 1946 my father's brother Misha wrote us. He settled down in Lvov after the Great Patriotic War and called us to come there. My parents, sisters and brother went to Lvov at the end of 1945. But I had to stay due to my work. My daughter attended a kindergarten at the plant. My husband was in hospital in Truskavets near Lvov and my brother and sisters often visited him there. Later I resigned and in the end of 1946 Tamara and I went to Lvov.

Lvov joined the USSR in 1939 under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact [10], - it belonged to Poland before. Many Polish families left for Poland and there were many vacant apartments in the town. We liked Lvov with its beautiful architecture and old buildings.

We stayed with my uncle for some time in his big 3-room apartment until we received an apartment and moved there with the rest of the family. We had a big family. My father didn't work - he was ill. My mother wasn't well either. My parents still observed all Jewish traditions until the end of their life. Only we didn't follow kosher rules considering lack of any food whatsoever. Every Friday my mother lit candles in their room and prayed. They didn't do any work on Saturday. They also celebrated Pesach. It was actually next to impossible to get matsah in those years, but my mother managed to get some. My mother died in 1952 and my father passed away in 1954. They were buried at the Jewish corner of the town cemetery in Lvov. We didn't follow any Jewish rituals since we didn't know them and the synagogue was closed.

Shortly after we returned from evacuation my sisters Sarah and Manya got married and so did our brother Naum. Sarah married Aron Rubinshtein, a Jewish man. Sarah finished an accounting school and worked at the 'Progress' shoe factory, her husband worked there as production engineer. In early 1950s her son Isaac was born, named after my mother's father. In 1970s Sarah and her family moved to the US. They live in New York.

Manya married Izia Grinwald, a Jewish man. He was a shop assistant in a store and Manya went to work there, too. Their only son Lyova went to serve in the Soviet army and his unit was sent to Afghanistan. His parents didn't know where he was since he didn't mention it in his letters. He was brought home on a stretcher in 1985 - he was shell-shocked and paralyzed and died soon. Manya and her husband moved to Israel - they reside in Beer-Sheva. My brother Naum finished a school of household services and became a watchmaker. In 1979 Naum, his wife Lena and son Misha moved to New York.

The Party district committee in Lvov gave me an assignment to hold a position of director of a food store. I was doing well at work. In early 1950s, at the height of anti-Semitic struggle against cosmopolites [11] I had continuous audits in my store. Auditors were looking for any violations, but couldn't find any. Once an auditor said fretting 'People told me that this zhydovka had things in order - she spoke Ukrainian. Auditors didn't find a thing to blame me in violations. We took Stalin's death in 1953 without any emotions; we understood that 'nature abhors vacuum'. Besides, we had our own problems - so why would we be grieving about a person that was stranger to us. There was always anti-Semitism in Lvov: in the streets, in transport, at work one could hear this «zhydy are to blame for everything'. Here I have to mention that I never heard anything like that said to

my children or me. We had Jewish, Ukrainian and Polish friends – we celebrated Soviet holidays together, went to the cinema, theaters and supported one another. I retired from the store I worked at in 1976.

After I moved to Lvov I took my husband to a hospital in Lvov. I took him home after my sisters and brother got married and move out and there was sufficient space to take him home. My husband was an invalid. He had functions of his lower limbs restored, but his urinal system atrophied. I loved Alexandr dearly, but I suffered so. We slept together and Alexandr embraced me, but my young body urged for more what I couldn't get from my husband. Every night was a torture for me, but it never even occurred to me to look for what I wanted so somewhere else. So it happened that I had intimate relations with Sasha before he went to the Finnish war in 1939. This was the last time in my life. Alexandr was a very nice person. He loved and protected me as much as he could. He worked at home as a binder for a shop. He also did house chores, even washed windows to help me about the house. He helped Tamara do her homework when she went to school. Alexandr died in 1964. I had opportunities to remarry, but I couldn't do it – Alexandr was the love of my life.

After finishing a secondary school my daughter Tamara entered Mechanic Faculty in Lvov Polytechnic Institute. She finished school with a gold medal and had no problems with admission to the Institute regardless of existing anti-Semitism. Tamara worked as an engineer in a scientific research institute in Lvov. When she was a student she met Joseph Budnik, a nice Jewish guy, a senior student. Joseph was born in Kiev in 1935. His parents Raya and Michael Budnik were engineers. Tamara and Joseph got married in 1960. There were about 100 guests at their wedding party: relatives, their fellow students and former classmates. There was no huppah at the wedding – in those years it wasn't customary, but there was a Jewish band playing at the wedding party welcoming guests with Jewish wedding tunes. In 1962 Tamara and Joseph's daughter Lubochka was born. My daughter and Joseph get along very well.

Joseph began his career as an engineer upon graduation and became deputy director of the 'Electron' Association in Lvov. Electron was a big manufacturer of TV sets and other appliances in the former USSR. Joseph made a good career, provided well for the family and we never considered emigration to other countries.

In 1990s, during perestroika period, many enterprises were closed. First my daughter and then my son-in-law lost their jobs. Joseph is a pensioner and Tamara is a volunteer at the local Hesed – she helps Hesed employees to do their work. My granddaughter Luba went to Israel in 1994 under a students' exchange program. In Israel she got married. She has a daughter (she is my great-granddaughter) named Diane. Tamara and her husband visited her in Israel and we've taken a firm decision to move to Israel even though the country is on the verge of a war, but I feel like going home and living among our own people. I look forward to the time when I won't hear 'zhydovka' or 'zhydy' any longer. Some people explain that many people living in Lvov came from Poland and 'zhyd' means 'Jew' in Polish, but I still believe that they use this word intentionally to abuse Jewish people.

After my parents died I never celebrated Jewish holidays or bought matsah since I was a member of the Communist party, I didn't take part in any activities – I just couldn't be bothered, but I couldn't observe Jewish traditions either. Firstly, it would have been against my atheist's convictions and secondly, I might have faced problems at work if they had found out. In 1991 I tore my Party

membership card – I was ashamed for having joined the Party that broke hopes and faith in ideals of so many people and brought so much sorrow to their own people. Since then I began to go back to Jewish traditions. There is a Jewish community in Lvov – ‘Sholem Alechem’ [12], Hesed, and I am happy to recall what I absorbed with my mother’s milk: the Jewish language - Yiddish, culture and traditions. Of course, we didn’t follow the kashrut in our family, but we celebrate all Jewish holidays. We don’t follow all rules, though – I don’t remember prayers, but we cook traditional Jewish food, light candles at Shabbat, get together for a family dinner and read the Torah in Russian. I read Jewish newspapers. My daughter and son-in-law often go to concerts of Jewish amateur groups. They often take me to the Daytime center in Hesed where I enjoy getting together with friends – we have a common history putting us together as well as all hardships of life that we’ve lived.

GLOSSARY:

1. In 1920s there were many anti-Semitic gangs in Ukraine. They killed Jews and burnt their houses, they robbed their houses, raped women and killed children.
2. CIVIL WAR 1917-1922 By early 1918, a major civil war had broken out in Russia--only recently named the USSR--which is commonly known as the civil war between the ‘Reds’ and the ‘Whites’. The ‘Reds’ were the Bolshevik controlled Soviets. During this time the Bolsheviks changed their name to the Communist party. The ‘Whites’ were mostly Russian army units from the world war who were led by anti-Bolshevik officers. They were also joined by anti-Bolshevik volunteers and some Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. During this civil war, the Bolsheviks signed a separate peace with Germany and finally ended Russia's involvement with the world war. 8 to 13 mln people perished in the war. Up to 2 mln. people moved to other countries. Damage constituted over 50 billion rubles in gold, production rate reduced to 4-20% compared with 1913.
3. October Revolution Day: October 25 (according to the old calendar), 1917 went down in history as victory day for the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia. This day is the most significant date in the history of the USSR. Today the anniversary is celebrated as ‘Day of Accord and Reconciliation’ on November 7.
4. ‘zhydy’ – abusive nickname of Jews in the Soviet Union
5. ‘moskali’ - abusive nickname of Russians in Ukraine
6. Komsomol –Communist youth organization created by the Communist Party to make sure that the state would be in control of the ideological upbringing and spiritual development of the youth almost until the age of 30.
7. In 1920 an artificial famine was introduced in Ukraine that caused the death of millions of people. It was arranged in order to suppress the protesting peasants that did not want to join the collective farms. There was another dreadful forced famine in 1930-1934 in Ukraine. The authorities took away the last food products from the farmers. People were dying in the streets, whole villages became deserted. The authorities arranged this specifically to suppress the rebellious farmers that did not want to accept the Soviet power and join the collective farms.
8. SOVIET-FINNISH WAR 1939-40, the Soviet Union began the war on 30 November 1939 to take hold of the Karelian Isthmus. The red Army was stopped at the ‘Mannengeim line’. The League of Nations expelled the USSR from its members. In February-March 1940 the red Army broke through the Mannengeim line and reached Vyborg. On 12.3.1940 the Peace Treaty was signed in Moscow. According to this treaty the Karelian Isthmus and some other areas now belonged to the Soviet Union.

9. 22 June 1941 – memorable day for all Soviet people. It was the first day of the great Patriotic War when the Germans crossed the border of their country bringing the war to its terrain. 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 the German army had seized the Ukrainian Republic, besieged Leningrad, the Soviet Union's second largest city, and threatened Moscow itself. The Great Patriotic War, as the Soviet Union and then Russia have called that phase of World War II, thus began inauspiciously for the Soviet Union.
10. Non-aggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, which fall into history under name Molotov-Ribbentrop pactum. Engaged in a border war with Japan in the Far East and fearing the German advance in the west, the Soviet government in 1939 began secret negotiations for a nonaggression pact with Germany. In August 1939 it suddenly announced the conclusion of a Soviet-German pact of friendship and nonaggression. This pact contained a secret clause providing for the partition of Poland and for Soviet and German spheres of influence in Eastern Europe.
11. Anti-Semitic campaign initiated by J. Stalin against intellectuals: teachers, doctors and scientists.
12. SHOLEM ALEICHEM (real name – Shalom Nohumovich Rabinovich) (1859-1916), Jewish writer. He lived in Russia and moved to the USA in 1914. He wrote in about the life of Jews in Russia in Yiddish, Hebrew & Russian.