

# Anna Iosifovna Ulik

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Kiev

Ukraine

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## My family background



I, Anna Iosifovna Ulik, was born in Zhitomir in 1925, on January 3. Our family had three members – father, mother, and I. Later, my sister was born.

My father's name was Iosif Davidovich Ulik; my mother's name was mina Zakharyevna Papish. My father was born in March 1895. He paid a lot of attention to his studies, he always wanted to hear on all as large as possible, he also studied music. He went to Kharkov on his own to finish his musical education, simultaneously finishing secondary school. He began to work very early. He worked in various symphonic orchestras, and then he held many administrative offices in Kiev, starting with 1926. All his offices were related to the cultural formation of Kiev and Ukraine. He worked at the Ivan Franko Theater, in the Opera Theater, was vice director of the philharmonic society, and at the "Ukrainian Concert" company. He came from an ordinary family. His mother was a seamstress and father – a cabinetmaker.

My father was born in Zhitomir. He had a large family. His father's name was David Kivovich, his mother's name was Lubov. Their children were: eldest daughter Olga, then my father, Iosif, and sister Yelizaveta, who died early, at the age of 36. I remember it very well because she came to Kiev, where we lived at the time, and was put into a hospital. She had cancer, spinal marrow sarcoma. We did not have very strong relations with the family of these grandparents therefore that they lives in Zhitomir, this the whole 150 km from the Kiev, but then this seemed much far cry and go there was difficult and we nearly did not meet. However, one or two visits of my grandfather to Kiev left an unforgettable impression on me, because he was a very kind, nice and gentle man. Know only that family an grandfather was very religious he prayed, attended synagogue, kept Shabbat and kosher laws, celebrated Jewish holidays Both he and grandmother were killed in Babiy Yar.

I don't know who was father's elder sister Olga, I can only say that during the war, her daughter, whose name was Runya, went to fight as a volunteer. At the front she met her future husband, Valentin Pavlenko. After the war she did not return to Zhitomir, but went to her husband's

hometown, remote Russian village. They had two children: Lena and Zhora. Today they are certainly adults. Unfortunately, Runya died two years after the war.

My father also died early, in 1950, at the age of 55.

The family of my mother was somewhat different. It is obvious that the Revolution caused people to count time from it and not to dig deep into history. Everything was designed to cause people think only about the bright future. But some things were told, some things were mentioned, and they are stuck in the memory. For instance, when the war began and we fled and ran to safety, with no clothes or belongings, my mother grabbed her photos with her. She realized that there was something important in them. The most interesting of them is the one with grandmother, Esther Iosifovna Shulfental, wearing a Zionist dress.

Grandmother's family came from West Europe. They came to Ukraine when the Jews were moved to Volyn. They came to Zhitomir area. That's where my parents – mother and father – met each other. My mother's parents certainly came from a more well-to-do family with a higher cultural level, with the knowledge of languages, with great love to music. They had special musical evenings at home. When guests came over, they always played music together.

Mother told me that grandfather, her father, often went to Warsaw. His name was Zakhariy Papish. He died in 1936. From mother's stories I know that being a young man he went to St. Petersburg on foot and graduated from the Higher Agricultural Academy there. He majored in agriculture and forest estimation. It was an interesting and prestigious work requiring special skills. He worked for big land owners. He was given a special house and a cart – and every other thing he needed for his work. His family always accompanied him. They lived in different cities. I only know Pinsk, Lutsk and some other cities of the Volyn province. The family of my grandparents was large. As far as I remember they had five children. I can't name them all though. I only remember those whom I met personally. My mother, Mina Zakharyevna, was born in 1895. Then Lev, Lelya, her brother, was born in 1898; he is my uncle. Mother's younger sister Lubov Zakharyevna was born in 1911. I know from stories that when she went to the United States in 1905 (she was sent there to study the education system of the USA), her eldest son died. My mother said he was the most talented of her children. When his mother returned home he was already dead. Her second son wanted to emigrate during the Revolution. He went somewhere to the East, towards China, but nobody knows where he went and what happened to him. Lev, or Lelya, got blind. During the war we lost all communications with him, but later we found him. He died in some unknown town under some tragic circumstances. We could not find the place where he spent his last years of life. Finally, aunt Lyuba, my mother's youngest sister, whom I and my sister remember very well because she visited us often and helped raise us when she was young; I remember that she married George Baklanovsky. They had a son, Valya. When the war broke out, he turned a year and a half. George, Lyuba's husband, was killed on the first day of the war. She and her son evacuated separately from us. She found herself in Rostov that was occupied by the Germans. A local family rescued her. Her life was very hard as we learned later from her stories. Some people betrayed her, but that local family told the Germans that she was Armenian in order to save her life. Finally, Lyuba and Valya came to Kiev. She had no profession, so she worked at a factory and was in great need. Our life was not very good either, but we did our best to help them. She died in 1978.

My mother had musical education; she met my father in a musical college. It was in Zhitomir. There they began to work as musicians. They worked at a drama theater; my mother also acted in films when she was asked, and taught. She worked 45 years at the Franko Theater, starting from 1926, as a concertmaster of the theater.

My parents did not talk much about revolution in the family. Every time they mentioned something, they asked us not to talk about it, which was absolutely natural then. The Revolution of 1905 enabled the Jews settle where they wanted to, so my grandparents welcomed that revolution. They could certainly not understand what happened in 1917. Sometimes we heard some talk about Lenin at our house, about Gorky, about some other serious matters, but we, children, did not pay much attention to these things. I think my parents understood a lot of what was going on at that time.

At home grandmother spoke Russian. She knew several foreign languages. She spoke fluent English because she had a chance to live in the United States. All her family – sisters, brothers and other relatives – moved to the United States, and she was the only who refused to emigrate in 1905 together with her husband Zakhariy.

Grandmother was an educated woman. She finished high school. At the graduation ceremony she wore the costume she sewed herself – you can see it at the picture. And for this dress she was awarded with a prize at graduation ceremony at a Russian school. She was an educated person, read a lot, and tried to understand things around her. When she was young, Zionism was born, and the advanced Jewish youth got involved in this new movement. I not know belonged she to some Zionist organization. And certainly when we look at a picture and see a woman wearing a homemade Zionist dress with a six-point star with photos of outstanding figures of Zionism, we certainly can understand that she was also interested in these issues. But grandmother was not religious. It was a family of Russian intellectuals of Jewish origin. She did not go to the synagogue. She lived next to St. Vladimir Cathedral and we, children, spent a lot of time in it. [This the most known and beautiful orthodox temple in Kiev]. Later we found out that my grandparents separated. My mother took grandmother to Crimea for treatment because she had some problems with bones and spine. As far as I remember, there was some demonstration in Yevpatoria when grandmother was young; she took part in that demonstration but was knocked down from her feet and people even stepped on her. She had a spine fracture due to this and she had to spend almost two years in bed. She was very clever with her needle and she began to make some special things that were sold in stores. Grandmother had a small room in a communal flat, and when we wanted to get to her flat we had to cross a big hall that was divided into sections in each of which different families lived. Her little room had old furniture and was decorated with her beautiful needlework. I even remember the slippers she made and embroidered herself.

We did not see much of our grandfather because he lived separately and died from pneumonia in 1936. Almost all our nannies and babysitters were former actors. They would go to church and take me with them. Nobody kept Shabbat at our house: life in theater envisages a lot of activities on weekends, that is, on Saturday and Sunday. Grandmother died in 1940, right before the war.

## Growing up

We moved to Kiev in 1926. Kiev in our understanding was only the center of the city. We could not go very far from the center anyway. We lived in Karl Marx Street, which is next to the Ivan Franko Theater, in building № 11. We had a room in a communal flat, whose landlady's name was Klavdia Vasilyevna. I think the whole flat belonged to her before the revolution, but after the revolution all people who owned flats had to share these flats with other families. Klavdia Vasilyevna lived with two beautiful wonderful grown-up daughters, Tanya and Tasya. They loved us very much: both children and my parents. Then Klavdia Vasilyevna disappeared somehow; she was arrested. And a

man by the name of Samokhin settled in the third room. He worked in NKVD.

Our kitchen was small. We did not have much food and we were often hungry. I remember endless lines to get food; people had to register to get into line. I remember some people disappearing, for instance, there was a couple, Professor Zavyalov and his wonderful wife who looked like Marlene Dietrich. They always walked together, hand in hand. They also disappeared. Maybe they were arrested. Every time somebody disappeared it would worry my parents very much and they would talk in whispers to each other. Later my sister and I certainly understood what they were whispering about. I remember myself from the age of two or three. I remember exactly what chair I stood on when my parents received guests. I remember it was a very happy atmosphere and people laughed loudly and told me some nice words.

My sister, Vera Iosifovna Ulik, was born in 1928 in Kiev, on January 30. The best memories I have in this life are always related to my sister and to my father. These two people became symbols for the rest of my life. Vera was a unique person, a very talented girl. I remember one situation when a teacher came to teach her violin. She did not want to have that particular lesson and she acted as if she passed out. When I looked at her, I thought I was losing my sister, and that's when I realized what a talented sister I have. We also had teachers who taught us English and other things. In the street Vera became the leader of the gang of children, who before that obeyed only one guy – Karlusha. For the first time leave on scene of theatre of name of Franco when she was 3 and I was 6 years old. We were part of a Jewish play My sister was pushed in a stroller and I had to cling to my mother's skirt. I remember how my sister was crying and the audience exploded with applause. We even got paid – 3 rubles each! Our whole life was linked with the theater, especially the life of my sister who was born an actress. She worked in the same Ivan Franko Theater at a shoemaking workshop. After school my sister entered the Theater Institute of Kiev and graduated from it with honors. The chief director of the Lesya Ukrainka Theater, honored actor of USSR Professor Khokhlov and then director of the theater Gontar asked the Arts Committee of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic to send three graduates to them. I remember that two graduates were admitted immediately – Yury Shevchuk and Boris Kashirin. But my sister was not. We certainly understood why: because of her nationality. Nevertheless, Khokhlov, on his own initiative, made it so that she was taken as an actress to the Russian Drama Theater. But some time later pressure was put on the directorate and on my sister to quit her work there. It was prior to their tour to Moscow. My mother heard from a high-ranking official that at one meeting it was said that my sister has a “wrong nose”. I remember this phrase all my life. As a result of some changes she found herself at the Kazan Russian Drama Theater where she realized herself as an actress and where she was awarded the title of the Honored Actress. Then she moved to a few more theaters for various reasons. At that time actors were allowed to travel abroad, so she had a chance to visit the United States, where a famous director staged the play “Good Night, Mother” together with her. The same play was staged by Rozovsky [a very famous Russian stage director] after she came back from the States. She also visited Poland and Denmark, was awarded first prizes for roles in plays. One of the plays was staged by the book of Grossman “Life and Fate”. It was recorded on video, and my friend once called me from the USA and said she had just seen Vera on TV in that play. She also had a few good roles in the cinema. Then she moved to Moscow. She died very early, at the age of 67. So, back to the description of our house in Kiev. Our room had two pianos. We played music endlessly: mother played piano, father played violin, Vera was the conductor and I danced. I liked to dance very much; I even took dancing classes at the Opera Theater Choreographic College. I remember Tairov, the famous chief choreographer, how her personally admitted me to the College,

examined my feet and discussed them with my father. My father was working as the vice director of the Opera Theater then.

I have a picture of my group of students of the college. Our teacher was a former ballet dancer. She is on that picture as well. We were very poorly dressed, but since our grandmother sewed wonderfully, she made us dresses, so we were always neat and clean. We had a nanny. It was during the time of dispossession of the kulaks [rich peasants], and many people starved, very many. So, this girl was recommended to us. She settled with us, in a separate room in our flat. She helped my mother, as well as aunt Lyuba. Nobody ate anything special. We were left some slices of bread with jam and with instructions: "Eat this" or "Don't eat this". We allowed be only small slices, part needed was to leave for other members of family and for us on the evening. Mama always wrote in note how much and what we can eat.

Kiev was a small, nice and elegant city, where everything was concentrated in the center. Street cars ran in Kreschatik, the main street, full of stores and lines of people. Prewar Kiev is associated, in my mind, with our street. We were children; I finished only 9 grades of school before the war. I remember the hard times: 1931, 1932. I remember Postyshev making pictures with children. I remember the coming of Voroshilov, how he stood at the balcony of his hotel "Continental" and examined the city, and passers-by looked up to him in delight.

I remember the famine very well. It could be seen in people who fell down on the streets because they starved to death. Many families moved in the streets like today's homeless people. I remember I brought home one woman with children. My mother settled them in our corridor, gave them a chance to wash and provided a little bit of food. It was real famine at the time.

We went to school #79, which was next to the Ivan Franko Theater. It had wonderful teachers. It was interesting and easy for us to learn. I remember our vice director Olga Sergeyevna, who was a strict middle-aged woman; she liked her students to march like soldiers. I remember that in 1936 she went to the famous "Winners' Congress" of the Communist Party. She returned to Kiev in delight from Stalin and everything she saw in Moscow.

I was a pioneer. I also was to join Komsomol, but they did not admit me right away, because I failed to remember the names of some figures. Then I remember the feeling of utter happiness when I could finally join Komsomol. I remember I walked along Kreschatik towards my house and there was no man happier than me.

I was a very good student at school. In our class we had children of different nationalities, but we all were friends and did not know each other's national belonging. But when the Second World War began, in 1939, when we saw the first refugees from Germany and Western Europe, we saw some Jewish children. In our yard we saw some people dressed in a strange manner. Those were refugees from the West. In our class we had a new boy by the name of Grisha Kotlyar. He was Jewish; he and his parents fled from Western Europe. This boy did not speak Russian, but he spoke excellent German, and we were studying German at school. I remember that he felt very much at home in our class. I was a little bit in love with him, but he fell in love with a different girl. Prior to the war I never heard the words "kike" or "Jew" or anything like that.

We heard about fascism, but never saw it and did not believe it was possible. But the shaking of hands between Ribentrop and Molotov was pictured in newspapers and it shook me, because I thought that friendship or cooperation between the Soviet Union and the fascist Germany was some kind of a terrible betrayal. But I could not explain anything.

There were Jewish children in our yard. I remember Nina Korotkina, Arkady who later evacuated and joined military college. After the war he even wanted to marry me, but then he was lost. I also



was friends with another boy in our class, Levin. Many people have already passed away.

### During the war

I remember June 22, 1941, very well. My sister and I were outside of Kiev in a pioneer camp. My mother was on tour with the Ivan Franko Theater in Moscow. Our father came to take us to Kiev. My mother was also allowed to go to Kiev, while the theater team was evacuated to Semipalatinsk. After the start of the war, very soon after that, many a few weeks after, I heard the word “kike” for the first time. Since that time we always felt who we were. I realized that the problem was pretty bad. I am not even speaking about the after-war period.

Something happened at that moment, and people began to plunder flats, take out everything they could find from people who fled. Everything was confused; it was horrible and complicated... Some Jews welcomed the coming of the Germans; they thought it would save them. The family of my friend Nina Korotkina was not going to flee anywhere. They stayed deliberately – and were all killed in Babiy Yar [they remembered the Germans in the First World War, when the Germans treated Jews in a good way]. When Kiev was liberated I got a letter from somebody who said that Nina was killed. Later, my parents told us that our grandparents had also been killed. They came on foot from Zhitomir to Kiev, to my father, that is, to their children, but we had left Kiev by that time. So, they stayed in Kiev and were shot in Babiy Yar on the order of the Germans.

My mother sewed us bags from bed sheets and put some stuff there. I was amazed to see that she put some photos there as well. We also carried some things in our hands. In 1939 the Ivan Franko Theater toured in Lvov, which was considered a very western city of Ukraine. From there, my mother brought us some things we had never seen before. For instance, she brought me a winter coat with a very nice fur collar, and a very nice suitcase. So, we took such things with us as well. I remember how we all ran to the train station. But it was absolutely impossible to get on the train, even to get on its steps. We tried but failed. Then we ran to the Dnepr. There we were told that we could jump on a barge that would soon leave for Dnepropetrovsk. It is impossible to describe the situation there: no water, no food, constant bombings, no place to lie down. I understand that our parents did their best to provide security to their children. We, children, thought only of ourselves, without thinking of the feelings of our parents. We cried a lot. In Dnepropetrovsk we were put on trains, into wagons without doors or windows, without food or drink. It took us 18 days to get to the Northern Caucasus by that train. People got sick and died. Only our family was allowed to get off that terrible train, upon great request from my parents and only because they had documents of figures in culture.

We spent two or three months in Kislovodsk. There I went to school and we stayed with a woman who rented us a part of her room.

After Kislovodsk we went to Tbilisi. The Germans were getting closer. The situation grew dangerous. My father was sent to Tbilisi as an administrator of the theater. In Tbilisi I finished the 10th class of school. I remember that our teachers were very good. Once we had to write compositions. The next day after we turned them in, the teacher said, “Children, you all wrote good compositions, but the best one was written by...” then she made a pause and called my name. I understand that it was all due to the good training at our Kiev school. My sister was also a good student, but I was a better student because she was thinking of theater more, so she was

naughtier.

In Tbilisi we got off the train at dawn. I saw oranges of great beauty that were bought for us for the first time in many years. We stayed with one landlady in Griboyedov Street, which was downtown. I finished school in 1941. At that time a group of outstanding actors was evacuating to Uzbekistan. They had to go to Baku, cross the Caspian sea and there, in Krasnovodsk they were divided. I remember that we went one direction and that group – another. I remember that train station near seaport, and I remember the mad face of a woman who was carrying her dead baby along the railway. Famine, cold, all military hardships and disasters were certainly felt everywhere, absolutely everywhere.

The Germans were attacking; they were already in the Northern Caucasus. There was danger that they could capture those territories. My father went away with the group, while we were first sent to Sverdlovsk and then to Semipalatinsk where we had to join the Ivan Franko Theater.

Semipalatinsk was a terrible steppe town. It cannot even be described. It was full of famine, cold, diseases, steppe; it was not just cold – it was arctic frost. I remember how my mother had to go outside with our neighbor and saw wood woods; they could not do it during the day because they were all too busy. Workers of the theater labored as hard as people of other professions. There I was the first-year student of the Teachers' Institute. I majored in mathematics. I remember I had to walk a long distance, several kilometers, in order to get to that institute. But I lost two years of studies anyway, and when I went to university in Kiev I was already 19, and even though I studied there for two years, it was all in vain.

Then we went with the theater to Tashkent, where the Kiev Polytechnic Institute was located at the time, and I again became a first-year student of the physics and mathematics department. I spent one semester there. So, on the one hand, I studied mathematics all that time, but on the other hand I lost 2 years of studies, because my major in Kiev was absolutely different.

We returned to Kiev together with the Ivan Franko Theater, where our mother worked. We returned right after it was liberated, in 1943. Our father stayed in Semipalatinsk. We saw that everything was destroyed completely, all houses; it was impossible to walk the main street. When I began to study, us, students, were sent to Kreschatik and we cleared it of roadblocks and prepared for the future building of houses. The columns of captured Germans walked Kreschatik when it was a little bit cleared. We witnessed the execution of some German officers in today's Independence Square. The whole square was full of people. I personally was unable to watch it all. It was impossible to see the process of execution.

We had no place to stay; we had no food to eat. A long time passed before my mother and us were given a room in a big communal flat. We were given this room by the theater. It had 13 rooms. It had a stove that had to be heated with woods. The total number of people that lived in that flat was 36. There was one bathroom for the whole flat with long lines to it; there was no shower, just a sink in front of that bathroom. The kitchen was so small that it was very hard to stand and cook something there. That is why there were so many quarrels at the time.

I played accordion at the Ivan Franko Theater. I had to play accordion in the wings when an actor pretended he played it at the stage. I also worked with the jazz band of women in the "Caucasus" restaurant. That restaurant was quite elegant for those times and there many rich people dining in it. They came there with their ladies. I went there with my accordion. Our jazz band was combined of girls who studied at the conservatory. One of them played drums, another blew trumpet and I played accordion. Visitors of the restaurant gave money to the players, but on agreement with our leader we could not touch this money. It was counted afterwards and shared justly between all the

members of the band. Rich people appeared after the war. They came to dance; they ordered music. They were called “speculators”. There were a lot of crimes in Kiev at that time and not only now as some tend to say.

I decided to go to university because I knew English pretty well (I studied it before war outside school as well). I was certainly not admitted to the university despite my diploma with honors from school. Gnat Petrovich Yura, the chief director of the Ivan Franko Theater, played a great role in my life. My mother asked him to help me, and he did. According to his request I was admitted to university at the very end, when the reception of students was over. Thus, in September 1944, I entered the Kiev State University, the Roman-German Department.

Soon, persecution of outstanding teachers began. Great meetings were organized, with hundreds of people present, to rebuke and put to shame these people. All of it resembled the medieval witch-hunting and was terrible. But nobody could stand up and defend those people. Then the same thing was directed against some students, who were close to graduation. Graduates were needed in many cities of Ukraine, especially teachers of English, French, and German languages. And that’s where problems began for me personally. Three graduates from our group were singled out because they were Jewish. It was strange. A special commission was set up to examine the case of just three students concerning the place where they should be sent [in the Soviet Union all graduates had to go to work in places they were sent to by their university]. I was sent to a village near Zhitomir that allegedly needed an English teacher. My father took me there. As it turned out, no English teacher and no English language was needed there. But I could not return to Kiev. So, I was sent to a school in Zhitomir where I worked for one month. Every time I entered classroom my students would throw hats, inkpots, pens, paper into the air. I sat down and laughed together with my students. I could not say a word to them. In Zhitomir I first lived with my aunt, my father’s sister Olga, in a damp terrible basement. Then I rented a flat with Tera Samoilovna, who was sent the same way to teach at a music college. I could not bear it any longer and I went to the city executive committee. They sent me to teach at the Zhitomir military college where I worked for some time. It was in 1950. But then I had to go home because my father died. I returned to Kiev. Father died in Kharkov and he was brought to Kiev in a zinc coffin. My sister and I were in such condition that we did not remember what was going on.

## After the war

After my father’s death, my mother continued to work in the theater for some time. But she was older and many things changed. She was not as spectacular when she came to the stage. Besides, her eyesight was getting worse, so she retired on pension. She was given a great present – 100 rubles. She died in my presence in December 1984.

Thus I was left without any job at all. For other people it was not hard to find a job in Kiev, because specialists were always needed. But as soon as I filled in the line “nationality” I saw strange expressions on the face of commissions and I was denied every work. I could not get any permanent job, only part-time jobs. So, I was very happy when I was given another part-time job at the Economic Institute.

And in 1952 I was given a job at the Foreign Languages Courses. I found myself among very talented Jewish teachers. I realized that these courses were like a refuge for these people. These people were not just highly educated, but also wonderful humans. Our students were adults and



oftentimes specialists. At these Courses we could speak practically of anything. We could not be too open, of course, but we could say things in such a way that both teachers and students would understand you, that nobody would betray you to the authorities. Betrayals were very popular at that time, including among students. Our students came to study languages after work or other studies. We started at 5:30 p.m. and finished at 11 p.m. Our groups had a lot of hours of foreign languages and their studies lasted for three years. These courses were like a “window to Europe” and when they were resumed after the war, many people wanted to study there. For me it was not only a job, but also a place where I wanted to do something interesting. There I studied before pension, before 1990, always concerned with deal, which I like.

My sister returned to Moscow from Leningrad because of her husband, a famous musician and teacher. She worked at the Moscow Jewish theater until she was invited to Rozovsky, to the Nikitsky Gates Theater, there it and worked before the end its short life's. My sister died on August 28, 1995. If I talk about my sister, I need to mention her son as well. His name is Alexander. He is 41 years old. He is the only person who is my blood relative and with whom I have full mutual understanding. He has his own life. He once emigrated to Israel and now he returned to Moscow for some family reasons

The main influence my Jewish identity had affected at the device on work, when moving on the service etc. We were not raised as Jews. The nationality was not important to us, but people. Prior to that, in 1994, she and I went to Israel, when her son Alexander lived there. We spent three months in Israel. I went to Jerusalem and saw everything there. I went to the Wailing Wall and to David's tomb. I visited Yad-Vashem and left information on my grandparents there. I saw how the memory of the Holocaust was preserved there. It was interesting and impressed me very much. Strange as it may seem, I identify myself more Jewish than I did when I was young. I feel drawn to my history and my ancestors. I read Jewish newspapers, watch the Jewish program “Yahad” on TV. But I don't know whether God exists in this world. It seems to me that if he did exist he wouldn't have allowed extermination of over 6 million Jews during the war. Perhaps, I am not a believer. After Perestroika many religious and Jewish communities appeared in Ukraine. But I cannot believe those who were communists yesterday, and today they are standing with candles in the orthodox churches or putting on a kipa. However, I try to celebrate Jewish holidays, I buy matsa at Pesah, observe the fast at Yom-Kipur. I do what I couldn't do during the years of the Soviet power. I began to analyze my life and I can say that I understood what determined my life. It was fear. It was constantly with me. Probably it started with childhood when parents would warn us not to tell other children in the yard certain things, then in later years we had the same warnings; being adults we are also very cautious even if we trusted people.