

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Yefim Chudnovsky
May 1, 2019
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PREFACE

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YEFIM CHUDNOVSKY
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Lucy (Z-B): Hello! Hello! Hello!

Yefim (A-O): Hello! My name is **Yefim Chudnovsky**

Q: **Efim**, it's me, I can hear you now. It's working, we're connected. Can you hear me?

A: Yes.

Q: It's fine. Now we're going to start, and I want to remind you that the cameraman on the line will record our conversation, and I'll begin our interview, as I told you, with an introduction in English and then I will immediately switch to Russian, and we will talk with you. Okay?

A: Okay. Can you hear me?

Q: Yes, very well. Everything is fine. So, let's start.

This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum phone interview with **Yefim Chudnovsky** conducted by **Liliya Meyerovich**, on May 01, 2019. **Yefim Chudnovsky** is now in **Chicago, Illinois**. The Interview is conducted in **Russian**.

Q: Hello!

A: Good afternoon!

Q: We'll start by asking you to introduce yourself. Please, give us your name and surname.

A: I am **Yefim Chudnovsky** born in 1[9]35.

Q: Can you say the day and month when you were born?

A: August 17th.

Q: 17th?

A: 18th

Q: 18th. In what city were you born?

A: I was born in the city of **Zvenigorodka, Kiev region**.

Q: **Yefim!** What were your parents' first names?

A: My father's name was **Isrul in Hebrew, Israel**.

Q: And the patronymic?

A: **Moiseyevich**, born in 1885.

Q: Do you remember or know where your father was born?

A: No. I don't know that.

Q: But was it **Ukraine?**

A: Yes, in the city of **Zvenigorodka, Ukraine, Kiev region**.

Q: What was your mother's name?

A: My mother's name was **Manny**, and she was registered as **Maria Yefimovna Chudnovskaya**.

Q: And her maiden name?

A: Her maiden name was **Letochaya** (UKRAINIAN: flying)

Q: A peculiar last name, and don't you know what is the origin of such a surname of your mother's?

A: I don't know the origin of her last name. I know she was born in the **village of Lysenko** - it is not far from **Zvenigorodka**.

Q: Do you know how your parents met? How did they get together?

A: No, I don't know that.

Q: They didn't tell you, did they?

A: That ___ my mother was my father's second wife.

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Q: Did your dad have children from his first marriage?

A: Yes, my father, from his first marriage, had four sons and one daughter.

Q: Did they also live in **Zvenigorodka**?

A: They were all born and lived in **Zvenigorodka**.

Q: Did you know them?

A: As to my elder brothers, I hardly knew them. As to my younger ones ____ and my sister ____ [she] lived with us, two brothers.

Q: Your two younger brothers and a sister, your brothers by your father and a sister lived with you, right?

A: Yes

Q: Can you give me their names?

A: Yes,

Q: Please!

A: My sister was **Asya**, born in **1913**, my brother **Yakov**, born in **1915**, and my brother **Leonid**, called **Yosif**, was born in **1919**. They had already been drafted to the regular military service before the war and perished during the war.

Q: But how did it happen that they lived with you?

A: They were still ____ they were born and lived with my dad, with us, of course, they stayed, and the sister lived with us.

Q: Tell me, **Yefim**, did you have other relatives, there in **Lysenko village** your mother came from?

A: No, I only knew my mother's brother, he lived in **Kiev**. He was my mother's elder brother, he lived in **Kiev**. His name was **Itzik**, I saw him after the war. He had a family and three daughters.

Q: Did you know them all before the war or did you meet after the war?

A: Before the war I can't remember them.

Q: Were his daughters, **Itzik's** daughters, older than you?

A: Yes, of course. The eldest daughter was **Dora**, that was her name, born in **1924**, **Manya** born in **1926**, and **Nina** born in **1929**.

Q: Were they all still alive after the war?

A: Yes, they were in evacuation, and they were all alive. Two are now dead, and the youngest one is now in the nursing home in **Chicago**.

Q: So, after the war, you continued to communicate with them, didn't you?

A: Yes

Q: Understood. Tell me, besides **Kiev**, anywhere in **Ukraine**, did you have other relatives whom you remember before the war?

A: No. We didn't have anyone, I don't know. There were relatives, as I was told, that my father's two sisters had left, one to **America**, and one, supposedly, went to **Mexico**. One sister left sometime in 1913 or [19]12, she went to **New York**. Her husband was **David**, and she had two daughters. And then there's this other aunt - dad's sisters went to **Mexico** in **1927**, I certainly don't know their last names. [one went to **America** and the other one went to **Mexico**]

Q: And you've never ____ the family has never been in touch with them?

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A: They have. They [sisters] sent letters and parcels before the war and after the war. When we returned from the evacuation, there was a letter from one [sister] from **America**, but we were so frightened, my mother instantly destroyed it, and there were no more signs [of them].

B: I see, yes. And **Yefim**, what do you remember about your parents? What did they do before the war?

A: Before the war, my dad worked for **Raitozh [Raitosh]** as that Society for Blind People [a government workshop where the blind could work] was called. He had his workshop [there], and he worked, did tin work mostly. Any kind of work he could do. Before the war, Dad himself built a mechanism that rolled out matza. It was all forbidden! But he wasn't afraid of anything, of anyone, he was a worker. And we had a big stove, and the people from **mestechko [ph]** [Jewish settlement] could come over and bake matza for **Paska [Passover]**. That's what I remember. And my mother was a housewife. She was a dressmaker, she was sewing for the whole family.

Q: Apart from your brothers, from your father's first marriage, and your sister, did you have any other brothers or sisters?

A: Well, my mother had, before I was born, a girl, her name was **Edoosya**. She went to the kindergarten, and there she was vaccinated, and she got a blood infection, and she died. After that I was born.

Q: I see. Tell me, **Yefim**, did you see your grandparents alive?

A: With us, only my father's mother lived.

Q: What was her name?

A: **Katya**

Q: Yeah, and have you ever seen your grandfather from your father's side or your grandmother from your mother's side?

A: No, no.

Q: Your grandma was still ___ was able to help your mom with the housework?

A: No, she couldn't help, but she was, like, on her feet. She was already very old. And she stayed [during the war] in **Zvenigorodka**. We had a big house and she said: "I'm going to stay watching the house. No one will cause any harm to an old lady like me."

Q: Yes, well, we'll talk about the beginning of the war later and the things related to it. Tell us about your house. Do you remember what it was like? What did it look like?

A: Of course. We came back [after the war] - the house was intact. We even had tenants in the house.

Q: Was it before the war or after?

A: That was before the war, yes, we rented out part of the house, and the main part was occupied by us. We__ my sister had a big room, a nice one. We had our own bedroom, there was the dining room, the kitchen, and my grandmother's room was also there, where she lived.

Q: Did you have a garden, a vegetable garden? Any domestic animals?

A: No, we didn't keep any of those.

Q: I mean, you didn't plant anything around the house, did you?

A: No, we didn't plant anything. We had fruit trees, there were a few. And nothing else.

Q: Tell me, **Yefim**, what language did you speak at home?

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A: At home, we spoke **Russian**. Only my father and mother communicated in **Jewish**, and with my grandmother as well.

Q: But you didn't know the Jewish language before the war, did you? You couldn't communicate in it, could you?

A: No, I only studied it a little during the war, during the cold winter.

Q: Did your elder brothers and sister speak **Yiddish**?

A: Yes, yes, all of them did.

Q: But when they talked to you, did they switch to **Russian**?

A: Well, with me - yes, they communicated in the **Russian language**. My two elder brothers, before the war, when my dad married my mother, they moved to **Kiev**. They had already been trained by my father in his line of work, so they already were able to earn their living, and they went to live in **Kiev**. And there they got married, and they even had children.

B: Are you talking about **Joseph and Jacob**?

A: No, it was my brother **Nikolai**, born in **1910** and **Boris**, born in **1911**.

Q: Just a moment, so you said that your brothers from your father were **Lyonya (Joseph) and Yasha**, is that right?

A: These are those who lived with us before the war.

Q: So, **Boris and Koleman (Kolya)** are dad's eldest sons?

A: Yes, they __ when dad married my mother, they [brothers] decided to go **to Kiev** to live and work there.

Q: Tell me, were Jewish traditions respected in the family? Do you remember how Jewish holidays were celebrated?

A: No, I don't remember that.

Q: Don't you remember, before the war?

A: No, I don't remember that. I just remember I had a sweet tooth, and we had a kerosene lamp burning at night, and Dad made a tripod over the glass, and on the tripod there was a teapot with sweet tea, I could wake up at night and drink warm tea.

Q: And you said that Dad made a special mechanism for making matza, so did they make the matza for Passover? Jewish Passover?

A: Yes, of course they did, but I don't remember it at all. I was only five years old.

Q: Don't you remember if someone came to you for the holidays celebration, do you remember it at all?

A: During the holidays, my father's first cousin used to come, [she] lived with her son and daughter. She got married too, and she lived in **Ekaterinopol**. It's also not far from **Zvenigorodka**, a Jewish settlement. And she had a second marriage to a man whose wife had died. He had a daughter, Lisa. She moved to **Kiev** too and worked as a typist, well she typed on a typewriter.

Q: What was the name of your Dad's cousin's sister?

A: Her name was **Zisl – Zeena**.

Q: They came to you for the holidays, do you remember that?

A: They did. They were very dear to us. She had a son **Boris**, born in **1921** and a daughter **Raya** born in **1926**.

Q: In general, do you remember if there were a lot of Jews in **Zvenigorodka**?

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A: Yes, it was a Jewish settlement, and now there are still people living there. I__ in the cemetery__ they're providing me a service of tending to my mom's grave.

Q: Jewish society, right?

A: Yes

Q: Do you remember if, in **Zvenigorodka**, there was a synagogue before the war or a house of prayer?

A: Somewhere [we] were gathering, I don't know. There was no synagogue. All of that must have been forbidden. Before the war, there was still a Jewish school. And **Boris**, who is my aunt's son, completed ten grades of the Jewish school.

Q: And besides the Jews, what other nationalities lived in **Zvenigorodka**?

A: In **Zvenigorodka**, there lived **Ukrainians and Jews**.

Q: And how did they communicate with each other? Do you remember anything?

A: There were **friend** _____ [**friendly**]. We even had a woman who came and helped my mother with the housework, cleaning, and even, after the war, she came to us when my mother and I returned home, thinking that my father was there, and she would also help somehow, but we did not need her help. I only needed it when I remained alone [*sobbing*]. She used to collect my clothes, washed them, for money, of course.

Q: Did you go to kindergarten or stayed at home with your grandmother?

A: I was at home with my grandmother and my mother. I didn't go to kindergarten.

Q: But still, did you have any friends? Like neighborhood kids?

A: Yes, yes. So, **the Gutartzevs'** family lived across from us, and they had three children: a sister **Raya**, brother **David** and brother **Boris**. They __ we met them after the war again. They returned to **Zvenigorodka**, and I was friends with them, with the guys.

Q: Have you been friends with the Jewi __ with **Ukrainian guys**?

A: When I was in school, yes, I had friends.

B: Was it already after the war?

A: Yes

Q: And before the war, do you remember if you actively communicate?

A: I only remember this family. Their house was across from our's.

Q: Did they have a big house, too?

A: Yes, they had a big [house] and they had a big family.

Q: And your parents were friends as well as you were friends with the boys, right?

A: Yes, yes. And after the war, they also returned home, and we even went to school together.

Q: **Yefim**, do you remember how you learned about the beginning of the war?

A: For __ well, my parents kept saying that it was necessary to leave, it was necessary to flee, although they hoped it would not last long and __ would be over. Well, the way it turned out - no one could imagine that.

Q: Were your parents the only ones who talked about escaping or did other neighbors come over to you and discuss it, or do you know if a lot of people around you were also going to leave? How did this all happen?

A: Yes, of course, everyone was so worried that we should leave. And so they did, each one in their own way. I don't know how everyone left, but I only remember our family and [the family] of Dad's female cousin whom we evacuated with.

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Q: You're talking about **Zisl**, Daddy's sister.

A: Yes.

Q: Tell us, what do you remember about your preparations for evacuation, how did it all happen?

A: My Dad and uncle, the husband of **Zisl**, went to the market, we had a big market, and there the gypsies traded horses, carts, and all sort of other things, especially related to blacksmithing. And they decided to buy two horse carts from them [gypsies] - these are carts like gypsy **kibitka** (RUSSIAN: covered wagon), and a couple of horses in a harness, and that's how we decided to evacuate.

Q: Tell me, **Yefim**, when you talk about gypsies: did they always stay somewhere near your town? Was the **tabor** (RUSSIAN: gypsy camp) always around, or did they come back and forth from time to time?

A: They used to come over and go away, they didn't have a place of permanent residence. They were roaming, that's it.

Q: Were those always the same people who came to you or they were different?

A: I don't know that. Anyway, they could help us with that, so that we could leave **Zvenigorodka**, as our railway and the suburban station were 10 or 12 kilometers from **Zvenigorodka**, and then we had to move farther away, which we couldn't have done by ourselves, there was simply no time for it.

Q: Did you take the things you needed the most with you and load it on the horse cart?

A: Yes, the most necessary things were taken as well as the photos, of course, which I have saved up to this day.

Q: It's important.

A: Yes. My sister - she had a lot of friends, and they always bundled together. I also have these photos where she and her friends are having a good time, taking a stroll.

Q: Do you remember the approximate time you left **Zvenigorodka**?

A: We left **Zvenigorodka** somewhere, I think, at the end of June.

Q: [19]41st

A: Yes, and we were going, I don't know where.

Q: Together with you and the family of aunt **Zisl**, were there any other families on the move?

A: No, there were only two horse carts. And they were riding: the aunt with her daughter and husband.

Q: Please, remind me, what was her husband's first name?

A: Her husband's name was **Leib. Lei ___ Lei ___ Lyova**

Q: **Lyova**

A: And he was, of course, a little younger than Dad. I don't quite remember him, nor their birthdays. Neither my dad's, nor my aunt's, though I do remember **Raya's**.

Q: So, you set out. You set out toward the **East**.

A: Yes, we went **East**. I remember that we were going__ crossing the **Dnipro river**. There was one - and we had to cross the river on the ferry. It was very dangerous. At that time, the area was being bombed and shelled.

Q: **Yefim**, before you reached the ferry, what else on the way do you remember? What was going on? Did you meet people who were from other places and moving in the same direction?

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A: No, we didn't know anyone. I remember that we were also going through **Kirovograd**, and there was also a raid, a bombardment, a strong shelling, so we scattered all over the place wherever we could.

Q: Was this area an open space where you were caught by the bombing?

A: Yes, yes, and we lay face down not to see those horrors and that was it. And what might have happened to us – nobody had a clue.

Q: And again, were there only your two families, no more people around, or where there others?

A: No, there were only the two of us, two families.

Q: How did you eat on the way? You had taken something with you, but it was most likely enough only for the beginning of the journey, wasn't it?

A: We had taken something, and we also bartered [our] things for food, because people didn't need money. And in general, we made stops where it was possible to stay. We were also helped by local population, obviously, I don't quite remember it.

Q: And you somehow survived this bombing in the vicinity of **Kirovograd** and moved on, didn't you?

A: Yes, yes, we drove on, and we reached **Bokovskaya stanitsa** (RUSSIAN: a Cossack village).

Q: And please tell us more about how you crossed **the Dnipro river** if you ___ what do you remember about it?

A: The crossing was ___ we were loaded on a raft ___ on these ___ on barges, and we went together with the horses and horse carts. But this crossing was, of course, very risky because we did not know when and where the bomb would hit, the one they would drop.

Q: There were people on **the Dnipro**, of course, besides you, right?

A: Yes, yes, there were a lot of people. But who was going where we did not know, and we talked with no one.

Q: And were there many barges used as ferries to do the transporting?

A: Yes, yes, there was a big waiting line to cross **the Dnipro river**.

Q: Did the military run the crossing?

A: I'm not ___

Q: You don't remember, don't remember. Now ___ Do you remember how long you had to wait before you could cross?

A: I can't [tell you about] the time either.

Q: A day? Two? Half a day? Don't you remember at all?

A: Nothing about the time.

Q: And it was, it was somewhere in July, probably, wasn't it?

A: Well, yes, maybe it was already August, I don't know for sure, that's why we crossed [the river] and went on, all the way to **the east**, we ___ [thought] that the Germans would not get there.

Q: And where did you make a stop, a long one?

A: So, the last [place] we reached ___ Already winter had begun, because it was already cold, it was impossible to be in these conditions, and we reached **stanitsa Bokovskaya, Rostov region**, and there, in general, around the village there were the farms, and there was also a dairy farm and a cafe. And there, we stopped and waited for the horses and horse cart ___ to the collective farm, and [we] went over there [to the farm]. Dad went to work. He had professional skills needed to everyone.

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Q: **Yefim**, I'm going to interrupt you. You say that it was already cold when you reached the **Rostov region**. All this time when you were moving, could you stay overnight in some houses or did you spend the night outdoors? Don't you remember that?

A: We didn't stay overnight in anyone's home, I only remember that we were on the road all the time.

Q: So, you got to **stanitsa Bokovskaya** and stopped at some farm, and your Dad went to work at the collective farm.

A: Yes, he got the job and my uncle also got the job. He was a carpenter. These specialties are needed everywhere.

Q: Tell me, how did you find a house where to settle on the farm?

A: Well, our [local] people got us settled, the locals, well, the village council. Who specifically, I don't know. Anyway, they put us in a house, where there was a huge room, and all the seven people settled there.

Q: And how did the owners react to the fact that you moved into their house?

A: No one had any complaints about us, and in my opinion, this house belonged to the village council or someone, because there were no owners in the house.

Q: Did you live there alone?

A: Yes, yes. And also, when our troops were retreating to **Stalingrad**, the military also stayed there, and I remember how they [*trembling voice*] shared bread, portions. [They] cut it with a saw - the bread was frozen, and they cut it according to the number of people, and then one soldier stood with his back [to the table] and another one, who had cut the bread, called out the name of a person for whom this ration was intended.

I, while they were cutting, spread a newspaper or paper, and all the crumbs were mine.

Q: We'll get back to that. Now please, tell us about the farm itself. Were there a lot of houses on this farm?

A: No. There were a few houses on each farm, and they [farms] were not far from each other. I remember the last farm, where this fight was taking place, when our troops were advancing. I think it [farm] was called **Yevlantievo**.

Q: And beside you, were there other evacuees, on this farm or on the nearest ones?

A: No, there were no others there but our families.

Q: Tell me, did the farmers know that you were **Jews**? Was it even inflated?

A: Well, I think they knew, but, so to say, they were good-natured to us.

Q: Benevolent

A: Yes

Q: Were there children your age? Have you become friends with them?

A: Yes, yes, there were their children. I went with them in the field, helped, so to say, to shepherd the cattle.

Q: You said that your father and uncle started working on a collective farm. Dad worked as a tinsmith, your uncle – as a carpenter or a builder.

A: Yes

Q: What did the women do, your mother and aunt, and sister, and cousin?

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A: They were all doing household chores, and they ___ for the local population ___ they were dressmakers, so they too could do for the locals what those needed: sewing, making alterations. They [locals] needed that, too.

Q: And did they make money or get food products for their work?

A: No, only food products.

Q: Well, of course, it helped you a lot.

A: Yes, of course.

Q: You began talking about the retreat of our troops – the Soviet troops. When could it have happened? Don't you remember?

A: It happened, according to my sister **Raya**, she was older than me, that the Germans came on July 11 of [19]42.

Q: So, some time before that, the Soviet troops started to retreat, didn't they?

A: Our troops retreated, and the Germans came in without a single shot, calmly. And the Germans were riding motorcycles, cars and were even moving on bicycles. None of them walked.

Q: Did you say that when the Soviet troops were retreating, they -- you told how they were sharing bread -- how long did they stay on the farm?

A: For some time until the offensive, until spring, they were there [not clear, whether until spring or until the offensive]

Q: So, they [Russian troops] stayed for a few weeks on the farm, didn't they?

A: Yes, they did not stay for a long time - everyone went to **Stalingrad**. They left.

Q: Do you remember in what mood they were, how they behaved, what they talked about, and how they communicated with the children? Do you remember anything like that?

A: No, I cannot remember any communication.

Q: And the mood they were in, don't you remember?

A: No, I cannot remember anything.

Q: But this episode has burned into your memory, how they shared bread, right?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And in July, you said on the 11th, came the **Germans**. Were the **Germans** alone or were there any other troops with them? Troops from other countries?

A: Well, together with **Germans** there participated **Italians, Romanians**. They fought together with them (with the **Germans**).

Q: And they settled on the farms, didn't they?

A: Yes, they were basically on the central farm, they had a commandant's office, they stayed there.

Q: And how did they conduct themselves?

A: Well, they did not particularly harass the local population, as they say, because they simply stripped them, robbed of everything: poultry, cattle, grain. In general, they needed and had to eat.

Q: The commandant's office was on the main farm. And what about the rest of the farms, did they also live in houses or only visit from time to time?

A: They visited. They came only to rob the local population of whatever they could.

Q: And, in some way, did they find out that you were **Jewish**, or did everything go calmly?

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A: It was __ so Dad was immediately captured and taken prisoner. There were mostly

Romanians in that **stanitsa Bokovskaya**.

Q: Why was your dad captured? Because he was **Jewish**?

A: Well, of course!

Q: They somehow found out that your dad was **Jewish**, didn't they?

A: Well, yes, they did, I think. They captured him, and he __ for them __ at that time the harsh winter came. They felt very cold, and he had to make them **bourzhuika** (RUSSIAN: potbelly stove) to heat.

Q: What is a bourzhuika?

A: The bourzhuika is a barrel in which one bottom is removed, a door is made, and wood is burned in it, and [it] gives heat.

Q: And the barrel is made from metal, isn't it?

A: Yes, of course, metal barrels.

Q: And how did it happen that they captured your dad, but none of you was taken?

A: Not that we were harassed, but we already had to be hiding. We were taking refuge among the local population. We no longer had a permanent residence.

Q: And you left that big house?

A: Oh yes, of course

Q: And you were hiding in different houses? There were many of you, how were you being hidden?

A: We were in different houses, on different farms, we were. Mom and aunt were __ Well, we were not many. Mom was together with my aunt, and I and my sister were there.

Q: And your uncle was with **Raya**?

A: And my uncle __ when our troops retreated, he fled too, as if in retreat. And we do not know where he died, and what happened to him.

Q: And he left with the Russian troops?

A: Yes, yes, yes! And **Raya** also fled with a local girlfriend, and she voluntarily joined the army, and she served through the whole war. She was even under someone else's name __ under a different first and last name. She was not even under her own name. And, in fact, we had destroyed all the documents. We did not have any documents.

Q: And you, your sister, mother, and aunt stayed, didn't you?

A: Oh yes, yes. Dad - this was when the fighting already broke out, it happened later, and before that the local people were hiding us all the time, and we stayed wherever we could: in the cellars, in the sheds, and in the forest. In general, they hid us all the time.

Q: People probably... people probably somehow decided among themselves to whom you would go next. Don't you know how it __ [worked]?

A: Yes, the local population. There the **Don Cossacks** dwelled. And once I ran into the field when, the summer was still warm, and I left the house and __ Well, there was a commandant's office nearby. At that time, the commandant was wagging his shepherd dog. I saw them and quickly ran to the guys in the field, and the shepherd dog ran after me, grabbed me by the elbow and dragged me along. I screamed at the top of my lungs. He was standing on the porch smiling. Then, I saw, he called it [the dog] back, and it let off the grip, and I ran away into the field. That is what happened to me. Afterwards, there was another case when I was returning from the field.

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A German, probably, officer called me and made me follow him. He brought me to his house, where he was staying, opened the canned food [*in a trembling voice*] and made me sit, saying: "Eat!" I was scared, I thought: "Well, what does he want from me?" [officer] "Eat!" I ate, ate the canned food, I thought: "Well, that's it! He'll shoot me now." No. He let me go [*Yefim's voice trembles all the time*].

Q: Well, there have been such cases as well.

A: Well, yes, [*sobbing a little*] evidently, his heart sank too. Then there was another event with me that I remember. Mom and aunt, when my sister was not with us, she was somewhere __ in another house, hiding [*sobbing*]. We were there and were also working in this house, when a wagon drove up. They had stolen a wagon with oxen. And all the stuff they had looted, taken from the population, they had loaded on the wagon, and then they found my mother and aunt and me. They take me out into the street and say: "Sprechen zi deutch?" (GERMAN: Do you speak German?) I, of course, kept silent. I had understood what they were asking me. And the policemen were two **Ukrainians** and two **Germans**. They said «Треба зняти з нього штанці!» (UKRAINIAN: You need to take off his pants!). But they did not do it, of course, and after they filled the wagon to the brim, they took us as kind of hostages and made us go in front of the wagon [*planning*] to bring us to the commandant's office, probably. We did not know where they wanted us to be. In any case, we were walking in front of the wagon. The oxen walk slowly, so we were walking, and they [*Germans*] were lying or sitting on the wagon, having fun and shooting in the air, and all this time __ we, at every shot __ we had __ so to say, we cringed in horror. We thought: "And now they will shoot at us." Anyway, it began getting dark __ we were __ they were passing __ it was a forest planting, and we realized that we had no other choice - we must run! And we took to the forest. They, of course, did not dare run after us. We were of no use to them, I understood, and they were afraid [*to go*] into the forest. Forests, in general, they were afraid of [*them*]. These were the events that I remember.

Q: And how much time did you spend in the forest or did you immediately return to the farm?

A: Then we cautiously came back to the farm and there __ the local population got to hiding us.

Q: Well, those, you say, there were those **Ukrainian** policemen, they, of course, knew that you were Jews?

A: Of course, how could one __ could anyone fool them? And in general, I was so swarthy - I looked more like a gypsy. I was even told before: "If you get caught or something, say you're a gypsy." They did not harass the gypsies, they say, as well the Jews.

Q: Well, these **Ukrainian** policemen knew that you were hiding somewhere on the farm, but somehow God had mercy on you, right?

A: They did not look for us. We were absolutely of no use to them. This area is almost in the vicinity of **Stalingrad**. So, we were of no use to them, and there was no place to hold us there: either to shoot us, or I do not know what else they could have done to us.

Q: **Yefim**, and did your dad continue to be held captive all this time and work for the **Romanians**?

A: Yes, yes, dad, all this time, continued to be with them, and they kept him so that he would help them in everything. Well, the winter was already there. This was in 1942-1943. When the battles for **Stalingrad** began, and our troops began an offensive. Here the battles already began. So dad __ they, apparently, had already begun to retreat, and dad fled from them and came to us.

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He found us. Found. Of course, we were full of joy that dad was alive and with us. We were ___ during the battles ___ we were on this farm. There was a huge workshop - we made felt boots, from wool, [we] beat felt boots, yes, we made felt boots. So we were in this workshop, and the local population hid there, they were during the day time. During the day, there were fighting and shelling all the time. We did not even know which side made shots: either ours' or **Germans'**. In any case, there was a raid, and the shooting started, and everything in the room ___ it became dark - from dust, from all of this, and at the same time, a local old man was stoking a tin stove -**Burzhuika** [RUSSIAN: potbelly stove], here in the center of the room it stood because it was cold, it was winter, and he stoked the stove. And then (happened) another raid, shooting. And he is hit by a bullet or a splinter, or something, I don't know, and he dies near the stove. [not clear]

Q: And the **Germans**, were they still on the farm at that time, or had they already retreated?

O: They were already retreating, retreating. But the fighting continued - they resisted. Well, then again the raid begins, and, on top of it, the shooting, and a woman dies there too. I saw it all. Then everything calmed down. And I ___ we didn't have where ___ I didn't have enough space, some people were standing, some were sitting wherever they could. I was standing with my aunt near the back of the chair, and a local woman was sitting on it. And she got up and stepped away. I don't know where she needed to go. Anyway, I say to my aunt, "Sit down! It's hard to be standing for so long on your feet." She sat on this chair. And this woman comes back and says: "Get up! This is my spot!" My aunt obediently stood up and gave her the place. And here was another raid, and terrible shooting began, and this woman was hit - I do not know with what - but she did not even utter a sound. She remained sitting in this place. And my aunt got only a scratch under her eye: either from a bullet or a splinter. Nothing happened to me. So we kept standing behind the back of the chair, and my aunt stayed alive. This is fate!

Q: How long were the fights going on? Don't you remember, how many days? Weeks?

A: A few days. This lasted for several days. It lasted for several days, and at night we were leaving the place. Because even stronger fights began at night. We went into the basem(ent) (*technical disconnection*)

Q: Please continue!

A: All right.

Q: Were you hiding in root cellars?

A: We were hiding in root cellars. The people there had root cellars outside their houses, and there, a hatch was opened, and into that cellar, everybody went down and hid themselves. My mother and I and my aunt, we had so little room that we could barely stand. And it was night! Near the entrance stairs that's where we were standing. And there, there were even special buckets which people used as toilets. Such a place it was. At that time, when we were hiding from the battles, dad was already with us, and he said: "Nobody will do me any harm, I am of no use to them." And he said: "I will remain in the house." And he stayed in the house, did not come [to the cellar], did not listen to us, and ___ my sister was in another cellar, and at dawn she came out of her cellar, went to check on dad and found him dead. He lay dead with his face down. And so she returns to us, opens the hatch of the cellar, where we were. Says: "Dad is dead." And at that time, an artillery projectile or something, I don't know, is hitting close to her, and she gets wounded seriously in the spine.

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Q: Ouch!

A: And she, of course, was very seriously ill. At first, there were military doctors there. There were really no doctors, no doctors at all. They provided some help, but she still could not stand it, and (*sobbing*) she died.

Q: And shortly afterwards, did the **Soviet** detachments come to the farm?

A: And as to the **Soviets** ... we did not even see them either. They quickly moved, as they say, on the offensive. This battle of **Stalingrad** lasted for several days. Meaning, it was a hot hard fighting, everything was in flames. Well, we buried. The military dug a mass grave. Right there in the same yard, where we were. And they buried the killed military men, and my dad, and this man who had stoked the stove, the potbelly stove. Those were our ___

Q: And it happened approximately in the spring of 1943?

A: Yes, yes it was in (19) 42, no. It was probably already 1943.

Q: But you still could not move away from the farm, because the war was still going on?

A: Yes, yes, of course: There was a war, and we had nowhere to go. We stayed there, and when this area was completely liberated, we moved to **Stanitsa Bokovskaya** to live there. And there, in **Stanitsa Bokovskaya**, my mother and aunt also worked. There remained the three of us: we had buried my sister and my father. There we already worked, moonlighted. We settled in with a Cossack woman. She lived in a house. She also had a family who rented part of her apartment. He was a teacher of history. A blind man with his wife. She was as an assistant to him.

Q: Was this an evacuated family?

A: Oh yes, yes.

Q: And where did they arrive from, don't you remember?

A: I do not know them. I did not even know their nationality. In any case, she settled us in, she had a sort of a summer house - a chicken coop. Below, the chickens lived, and above them, we were placed on the second floor. We stoked there a little stove, burned firewood in it. I went to the riverbank with the boys, and chopped wood to heat the stove. And then, when it was already warm, I also went with the boys into the field to graze cows for the local people, and she gave me a small jar of milk. And already there in **Stanitza Bokovskaya** I went to the first grade. I even remember my teacher. Her name was **Varvara Peloleevna (ph) (Panteleevna)**

Q: Was the teacher local or from the evacuees?

A: No, she was local, an elderly woman.

Q: Were there many children in the classroom?

A: I do not remember, not really. In any case, there were no textbooks; there was nothing to write on. We wrote on newspapers. Then this history teacher gave me his old summary notes: they were clean, the paper was clean, only perforated, with holes, special cardboard. I learned to write on this cardboard.

Q: Why was cardboard with holes?

A: Blind people write and read with their fingers.

Q: Was the teacher blind?

A: Oh, yes, yes. Therefore, he gave them to me, they (the teacher and his wife) gave their old summary notes to me, those they didn't need.

Q: In September of 1944, you went to school, and when were you able to go home?

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A: We went home when Ukraine had been liberated, after I finished, must have finished the first grade, so it must have been already 1945. The war was over. Everyone, of course, was very happy, was overjoyed. It was over! And we even began to receive letters. My aunt received a letter from her son **Boris**, and then even disagreements began about which **Boris** it was: ours, my father's son, or hers. There were **two Borises**. And they couldn't figure out which one __ But then, when they read it, they realized that it was her son.

Q: Where was he, **Boris**?

A: He was in the military. Yes-yes. He had been drafted. He was 21 years old. And then they received a letter from the daughter, **Lisa**. She worked as a typist in the military units. And she even sent us paper to write letters, and I got a little bit of that to write on, blank paper.

Q: Are you talking about the time when you arrived home?

A: No, it was still in **Bokovskaya**, where we lived. Then they received a letter from **Raya**, who said that she was alive. So my aunt got into higher spirits. So that was the connection we had, but I should have already __ when I finished the first grade, it was already the end of the war - there was a victory, we decided to return to our homeland. This area (the farm) was located 170 km from the railway. This was **Millerovo railway station**. We were given a truck, and we drove to the railway station. From there, we arrived home to **Zvenigorodka**.

Q: Were there many people returning, were there many people traveling back to the west?

A: Back? To the west? I do not remember. Of course, there were a lot of people on the trains, but I don't remember anything special about the way home.

Q: How long did it take you to get home?

A: I don't remember it either.

Q: And you arrived at which station?

A: We arrived, this is **Korsun-Shevchenkovo (ph) (Korsun-Shevchenkovsky)**, and from there, a suburban train went to our train station **Yerki** - somewhere near **Zvenigorodka, 12 km from Zvenigorodka**. And our __ when we arrived, our house was intact, only everything that was in the house – there was nothing left. The house had a grand piano - it wasn't there. We even recognized it in other people's home in the village.

Q: So, I wanted to ask about this, did you see your things later with someone?

A: No, nobody wanted (to give) anything to us, didn't return anything to us.

Q: But you saw your things in other houses, right?

A: Oh yes-yes. Well, basically a piano, and as to the rest that could be (of use), beds or whatever, we didn't really look for those.

Q: And you had a grand piano, and who played the piano before the war?

A: Obviously, my sister was playing. Well, what else was there: the house had other dwellers – it was occupied. They cleared space for us. We occupied with mom one small bedroom, where they __ we lived. And the rest of the place was occupied by tenants, and they already began to pay us for housing.

Q: Did your aunt's house remained there?

A: And aunt's house, too. She had a half-house there. She had a small house: two rooms and a kitchen. It was also intact, and she settled there too.

Q: Did **Raya**, after the war, come back to your aunt?

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A: **Raya**? Yes, after the war she returned to my aunt, and before the war, **Lisa** lived in **Kiev**, worked. So, she came back to her mother, stayed for a while and went to her sister in **Kiev**. There she married and had a daughter, **Lida**, who now still lives in **Israel**. And **Raya** has also evacuated to **Israel** with her husband. The husband is in a nursing home there, and the daughter works and lives ... her granddaughter was born and great-grandchildren. In general, they live ___ the citizens of **Israel**, they have become.

Q: Tell me, Yefim, did many people evacuate from **Zvenigorodka** (during the war)?

A: Oh yes-yes. Those who evacuated, returned.

Q: Did almost everyone who evacuated returned?

A: Yes, basically everyone returned. They returned: the **Gutartsev** family, then the **Golovonevsky** family returned, when they arrived, they even lived in our apartment, at the beginning. Then they got housing. Then the **Sakharovs**' family returned, near our house, they lived. Then the family of **B(P)aranovatykh (ph)** - they also lived with the **Sakharovs** in the same house - they had half a house.

Q: Tell me, how did you find out, from whom did you find out what had happened to your grandmother?

A: We found out ___ the local population ___ I think the woman who lived with us before the war, she was there in **Zvenigorodka**. She told my mother something, I don't remember what happened.

Q: So you don't know the details of how grandma died?

A: No, but she apparently died just like all the Jews who had remained in this place.

Q: Namely, what do you know about the fate of these Jews? How did it happen? What happened?

A: They, too, seem to have been gathered together and shot. Where and how, I don't know the details either.

Q: Do you know whether many of them stayed? Or did most of them manage to evacuate?

A: Many evacuated. Maybe, somewhere around half remained, because in our house ___ well, when we arrived, a woman lived with two girls, her husband had died. Then after the war, her brother returned. His family had stayed in **Zvenigorodka** - all of them died. So he stayed with his sister to live and raised these girls.

Q: Yefim, tell us about your brothers. Firstly, about **Lyonya** and **Yasha**. They were right away drafted, weren't they? Were they drafted immediately to the army?

A: They, before the war, served in the army.

Q: Already?

A: Yes, they did military service, so before the war, we received photographs (of them) in military uniforms.

Q: And when the war began, did they remain in the army?

A: Yes, yes, they continued to fight.

Q: That is, when you were in the evacuation, you did not have any information from them, did you?

A: No, no messages, nothing. No one knew anything. Then we began to look for them too, but again we weren't given any information about where they had died and when.

Q: It means, a notice came saying that they (brothers) were considered missing?

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A: Yes, it looks like that.

Q: Both?

A: Yes, the younger brother served in tank units.

Q: Younger - **Yasha**?

A: No, this is **Joseph**

Q: **Lyonya**?

A: Yes, **Lenya**. He was very brave. And during the capture of **Kharkov** __ they say, there was a newspaper that his tank was the first to enter **Kharkov**. And nowhere else anyone knew anything about him.

Q: And **Yasha**?

A: And **Yasha** served in the cavalry. I don't know what kind of cavalry there could be. He is in the uniform of a cavalryman with a saber, on the photograph.

Q: And no information about his death either?

A: No, nothing. So, I came to **Zvenigorodka** with my mother, with my aunt, and I went to the second grade to study. We lived there: mom and aunt earned money, tenants paid us, and on that money, we lived. __ (Mother, ph) (in 194)8 was sick. She had a stroke, and that was it, (*sobbing*) and (**Roolya**) - she was buried (*crying*).

Q: And you were left alone?

A: Yes, I remained on my own, and the elder brother **Nikolay** arrived from **Kiev**, they let him know. In general, we had had no communication with them. They learned that our dad was probably not alive, so we had not had much communication. But the younger brother, **Boris**, he had returned from the war as an invalid of the second group, on crutches. He was near **Sevastopol** and got wounded there. In honor of the victory, he, in **Sevastopol**, was awarded the title of an **Honorary Citizen of the Hero City of Sevastopol**. Hence, he could not come to the funeral, there came the elder brother **Kolya**, who lived in **Kiev**, and they lived in the underground basement. He also had no extra space to dwell, while **Boris** lived in a communal apartment, in one room. Altogether, there were five neighbors there (in the communal apartment). So, there was nowhere to live either. My uncle, my mother's brother, came to the funeral, and of course he wanted to take me with him.

Q: Was it uncle **Itzik**?

A: Yeah. And **Kolya** also wanted to take me up, but I saw that my uncle also lived in one room and without any conveniences: toilets were outside on the street, and two daughters with them. All in all, there are four of them - where should I go? And so I, to avoid offending either of them, decided to stay there (in **Zvenigorodka**). At the beginning, I went to eat to my aunt, she __ dinner, I went to dinner. The rest I mostly [cooked] at home myself __ so that __

Q: Did the tenants continue to live at your place and pay you?

A: Yes, they continued to live and pay me, and then I started trying to get __ got some help in receiving some pension, an allowance. I, through the military registration and enlistment office, sent a photograph of **Lyonya** to Moscow, and they gave confirmation that yes, there was such a serviceman, and that was all. And he died. Where and when, of course, was not indicated. And after that, I was assigned a pension of 122 rubles 50 kopecks.

Q: Was that in old money?

A, Oh yeah. It was 1949 or 1950.

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Q: Were you about 14 -15 years old?

A: Oh yes-yes. And so I lived in **Zvenigorodka** until graduation. Yes, I was told that I could not live on my own, so I had to have a guardian. I studied together at school, in the same class, with a friend, his name was **Lyonya**, well - **Golovanevsky** was his last name. They lived with us, when my mother was still alive, they arrived after the war. So, he was my guardian – **Lyonya**'s dad.

Q: Why couldn't your aunt be your guardian?

A: My aunt, well, she __ first, she was an old woman already, and she __ her son returned from the army, got married, and his wife graduated from an institute or university in **Chernivtsi (Western Ukraine)**, I don't know, and was given work in **Chelyabinsk (Russia)**. And they went over there to live in **Chelyabinsk**, and took their mother with them. The girls lived in **Kiev**, but she left to live with her son.

Q: With **Boris**?

A: Oh yeah. So, I also visited __ The **Golovanevskys** also used to cook dinner for me. I had my dinner with them. I paid. He was my guardian. He was a member of the [Communist] party, he was __ (people of) **Zvenigorodka** knew him well. He held leadership positions. They also had many friends. They had one friend, his name was **Vanya Zabelo, Ivan Zabelo**. He married a woman with a girl whose dad had died. He adopted her [the daughter], and she took his surname and patronymic and became **Anna Ivanovna Zabelo**. She graduated from medical school and came to **Zvenigorodka** to work. And she worked as a pediatrician, then she got involved in __ she was in the hospital __ she worked in the hospital treating meningitis tuberculosis. Children's hospital was like that. And no matter what my illnesses were, she put me into the hospital.

Q: Did you turn to her?

A: Oh yeah. She put me in the hospital, into her ward. She sent me to the sanatorium twice. I was taken to a sanatorium, escorted by someone from the **Komsomol** (Young Communist League, ages 14-28)) district committee. Adults did. Well, I still was...

Q: A teenager?

A: A teenager.

Q: Tell me, **Yefim**, what year did you graduate from school?

A: In 1954, I graduated from the secondary school. I went to **Kiev** to enter (educational institution). I applied for being trained as a geologist at a technical school, they provided uniforms for free, the scholarship was good, but I did not pass. They explained to me that I had passed oral [misspoken, should be "written"] exams, and as to the oral exams, they failed me. I didn't pass, and in 1954, they opened secondary technical schools - this was done on the basis of industrial vocational schools where they organized a year training. They prepared (students) during the year in certain specialties. When, [I was] at this school, I got housing, lived in a room, [had] three meals a day, clothes - fully provided.

Q: And your house in **Zvenigorodka**? Were the tenants still residing there at that time?

A: Yes, the tenants remained there __ Well, they lived __ The **Golovanevskys** lived in **Zvenigorodka**, so they took care of the house. Well, the house was already old, of course, a lot of repairs was needed. While they were taking care of the house, I graduated from vocational school and was assigned to work at a military plant.

Q: In **Kiev**?

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A: Oh yes-yes. According to my specialty: turner for metal. And they hired me at the plant, and I literally got a hostel and a permanent registration - everything was documented as required. And I literally had worked for only two weeks and then the draft notice came and I left in 1954-55 for the Army.

Q: Where did you serve?

A: I served __ The first year, I served in **Moldova**, then in **Western Ukraine**, I served. Every year, the place of service changed, because during these years there were reductions in troops. And where the places were empty, there they moved us.

Q: And in what military units did you serve?

A: I served in tank units, moreover, on those tanks which, only in the last days (of the war), participated in the war. It (the tank) was called **Joseph Stalin 3**. And these tanks were in **China** too. So, all the participants, all the officers left **China**, leaving them (the Chinese) all the equipment but got the new one. Well, since I had graduated from high school and a vocational school — a technical school, I was assigned to a communications platoon [to work] on a switchboard, and if I had served for three years (there), I would hardly have known what (military) service was about. We had round-the-clock duty. And as the (troops) reduction went on, so I again got into some combined unit, and there they began again: going through the course of a young fighter, sort of. After that, I already got into a battalion, in a tank battalion. Those who served in a tank battalion usually had completed the training school, but I had not received any training, so I was a private – a loader. The crew (of the tank) consisted of four people. These were heavy tanks. I was doing the service in the Army when **Hungarian** events happened. We were sent, during that time, to the collective farm to help with a harvest in the **Odessa region**. It took us about three days to get there but, on the way back, when it (the Hungarian events) was taking place, it took us __ less than a day. They brought us to our destination. Mechanics-drivers were in full combat uniform - in full combat state, and we, too, were in that state. And many units left for, of course, for Hungary - they suffered damages. Our unit was not involved, because we had heavy guns. They were of no use for them.

Q: And were the **Hungarian events** discussed in any way among the soldiers?

A: Oh yes, of course.

Q: What were the opinions regarding what was happening?

A: People did not want this war and this massacre. And of course, the spirits were very low. After the Army, I was discharged in 1958.

Q: You served for three years?

A: Yes, I served for three years, got discharged and went to my brother **Boris** to stay __. All the belongings I had were from the military service: pea jacket, overcoat, boots - all my clothes. Because everything I had had when drafted - they took it all away and threw it out — I don't know where they had thrown it away.

Q: I guess you would not have fit into that.

A: Of course, but they did this to everyone and me. So, I returned and came to the factory to get hired back. There was a law: (after the discharge) they were to return a person to the same place from which he/she had been drafted. One could return or one had to return. I had no other choice, and I came back to the factory, they said: "We do not need a turner."

Q: Ay-yay-yay!

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O: I say: "Well then? I was drafted from the factory and that's it. I belong in here. Housing - I need it and that is it. "No, we don't need them (turners)." And that was it. The human resources department says: "Go wherever you want."

Q: And what should you do?

A: I "What could I do?" I went to see the military commissar at the military registration and enlistment office. I say: "You took me to the Army - from here - why aren't they taking me back? - How? It cannot be! (unclear). Go! You must be taken back. Again, I come back to them (the factory). I say: I have been to the military enlistment office. They told me that only you must take me back. - We do not need you! Why do you keep coming to us? Then I thought: "What should I do?" I think: "I live in the capital of Ukraine! I will go to the Supreme Soviet (parliament). And the Supreme Soviet - then **Kovpak** [the WWII partisan hero in **Ukraine**] was in there. They would not even let me in anywhere __ there there were lawyers working. They say: "Why did you come here? You have the right __, you have the right to come back to work and live". I say: "Put it down in writing!" - "But we do not write down anything". I come again (to the factory), and I say that I was in the **Supreme Soviet**, and (still) they (the factory) would not take me. They again say: "We don't know, we don't need you". What should I do? I went to the prosecutor. The prosecutor says to me: "They are not taking you back? Well, what is their reason?" I say: "I don't know, but they have refused to give me housing and that's all." Well, he says: "You may go, and I will talk to somebody". At this point, I realized that I needed to get a certificate from a passport official that I had lived in their hostel and was registered there. So I take a certificate from her, she gives me one, and again I go to the prosecutor and say: "Here is the certificate (to prove) where I had lived and where I had worked properly. (He said) "I am calling up the head of **ZHKO**, (and) the head of the Human Resources Department". He invited them all and me and said: "How could you". In general, he gave them a good thrashing, and the head of the **ZHKO** replies to me: "You know, I need a plumber, will you work as a plumber? I say: "I did not study plumbing, I (__ the technical school) as a turner." And he says: "Can you operate a hammer and a spanner wrench?" I say: "Of course. Why not?". He says, "No problem, relax! You will learn! " He was a retired military officer, this head of the **ZHKO**. And in this way, they made me a plumber in the hostel, where I lived.

Q: **Yefim**, decipher, please, what is **ZHKO**?

A: **Housing and utilities department**, the factory had it. Anyways, I began to study, learned it, became a plumber, and worked as such.

Q: You could not get a turner's position at the factory, could you?

A: No, I could no longer be a turner. They would not hire me again, I could not go (to work) anywhere, because I had no housing (of my own).

Q: In general, everything was related to (one's dwelling) registration: registration was related to work, work - to registration.

A, Oh yes-yes. Vicious circle. And it lasted for two months. Then I spoke with **Golovanevsky**, my guardian. He said: "Well, **Fima**, Do you think about returning back to **Zvenigorodka**?" I said: "Of course not" - "Well, then you have to sell the house." "A house" was just a name for it." It was junk already. The roof leaked, everything collapsed. And the rent was not enough to restore it. And there was no one to take care of it. He, too, did not really care about it. So, he sold the house for me, I got these pennies. So, my brother **Boris** says: "I don't need anything. Buy

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everything you need, clothes, and live. The older brother may have thought that I should have given him some money, but I saw that he, too, no longer needed it that much. In general, I may have offended them or not. All in all, I did not share (the money) with anyone. I used it on my clothing and everything I needed. That is what happened!

Q: And the fact that you were not hired at the factory could be a manifestation of anti-Semitism or __ What do you think?

A: Only, only that.

Q: Just that?

A: Oh yes-yes-yes.

Q: Do you recall any other manifestations of anti-Semitism?

A: I lived in a hostel, waited in line for housing. All (the workers) were provided apartments. The plant, there was a lot of construction around the plant, and they settled the people who lived in the hostel, (came) from nearby villages, those who worked at the plant. As to me __ Our department was not provided housing. Then I, when I met my wife, it was already 1960 __ 1960, and she lived in a communal apartment, she had a separate room, and in 1961 we got married. I told her: "Can I still get housing?" I thought: "I lived in a hostel, and here is a communal apartment - it's not housing either." I could not get any (clear) positive answer to that, so I checked out from the hostel. And I got registered ...

Q: At your wife's.

A: At her apartment. After that, our department began to be allocated housing. __ they started giving apartments, people started getting their housing. And I realized that this was also connected with this.

Q: And when you served in the Army, did anti-Semitism manifest itself somehow or was everything normal?

A: No, no! Then at that time in the army everything was very calm and good. We had officers who had been through the war, already participated in the war, so everything was very __ everyone treated others as their equals and for everyone __ everything was the same.

Q: And then, when you and your wife got married and moved into her room, how long did you live there in that room?

A: We lived in her room until it (the house) began to crumble. It was a 5-story building, and cracks began to appear in the stairwells and everywhere else. And we were resettled - it was in 1970, resettled into a new building of mass planned constructions in the **city of Kiev**. We chose a new building __ at this time I received a plot of land from the plant – five "**sotok**" (RUSSIAN: 5/100 parts of a hectare in size) [very small indeed], so we had a plot near Kiev, the dacha was it called. Well, we worked there during all the weekends, all the vacations until **Chernobyl** [Explosion at the nuclear power plant]. And we already had good crops, and there was a hut and (in it), there was light, there was gas, and there was everything. All conditions. I thought when we retire, we would live there in summer. And it turned out ...

Q: That means, after **Chernobyl** happened in 1986, you couldn't be there or grow anything, right?

A: We kept coming over there, we were growing [something], but, in any case, during vacations we already would go to some place in the South, we tried. To **Yevpatoriya [Black sea]**, **Berdyansk [Asov sea]**, because there [near **Chernobyl**] the vacation was not the same.

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Q: Your decision about emigration, did you make it because of **Chernobyl** or for some other reasons?

A: No, we decided because there was a terrible anti-Semitism. My son graduated from college before school.

Q: After school.

A: Yes, after school. He graduated from the eighth grade and entered the shipbuilding technical school at the **Leninskaya Kooznya** (RUSSIAN: Lenin's Forge) factory, and there he practiced in mechanical workshops, the one he found useful in America. Well, he graduated from college, and he was drafted into the Army. And after graduating from the technical school, he was given a referral to the **Stroydormash plant**. It was also a regime factory [an enterprise with classified production), and with me, working at a regime factory, they did not hire my son because he is a Jew.

Q: Even though he had a referral?

A: Oh yes-yes. That was it. He was referred to the research institute ... There was a scientific-research institute at the plant. Well, he got into the department of welding, and he worked there. In general, what else I had (happened to me): My wife already made me continue studying. She said: "Well, are you going to work as a plumber all your life?" My son entered the first grade, and I entered the construction technical school, majoring in my specialty, of course, and I graduated from it and received a diploma. After that, I am at the factory __ also working, I say: "I graduated from a technical school, now I can get another job – of a __ foreman or any other [profession]. "No, we don't need your specialty. We have everything. You won't do for us." So, I transferred ... There was, next to our plant, the **Design Bureau of Control Devices** that was subordinate to **Moscow**. And it made parts for space and other things. Even the cosmonauts visited us several times. But I had nothing to do with it. We were responsible only for the maintenance, be heat, water, or ventilation - that was my responsibility. I worked at the department of the chief power engineer.

Q: But the fact that you were not allowed to get promotion at the plant and the main reason, as you consider, was anti-Semitism, right?

A: Sure.

Q: And where did your wife work, Yefim?

A: And my wife worked as an accountant at the **Housing and Utility Administration**.

Q: Did she encounter __ also any cases when anti-Semitism manifested itself in some way?

A: No, she did not feel that way. I, too, among the people, among the workers, I did not feel this. That existed at a different level.

Q: And in what year did you decide to emigrate?

A: We decided to emigrate __ It was somewhere in the 90s. When already our son got married. Our son got married in 1986, and it turned out that her older brother __

Q: Of your daughter-in-law?

A: Yes, he had left for **America**. He left __ already here, and she (he) lived. In 1986, after **Chernobyl**, the sister of my daughter-in law's father left for **America from Kiev**, and he __ She kept saying that we should go, she kept writing us. And then her older brother made up his mind and left. He left and settled here too. He is a programmer. He settled down well and began to draw up documents for us to leave. And there were supposed to be eight of us to leave. These are

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the parents of the daughter-in-law and us. We had one mother (grandma) for all of us. Is it too bold? And one grandmother for a son. So, we had to pack and move. But before I left, of course, I could not leave (go abroad from) these enterprises, I switched to work at a book factory. When I was being hired at a book factory to work in the department of the chief power engineer, the chief engineer said to me: "Are you going to leave (for abroad), Why have you come to us?" I said, I'm not going to, my son should be drafted into the Army". 1979 year (**Afghanistan** war)! My son was taken into the army in 1980, and I worked at the factory until 1992. The son returned from the army, married, the grandson Sasha was born.

Q: In what year did you emigrate?

A: We left in 1992, just around the October holidays (The October Revolution of 1917). On October 6th, we were in New York.

Q: Yes! Here is a story!

A: The specialty helped my son. Also, they helped him to get hired at mechanical workshops to operate computer-controlled machines. Well, my son went to college after the army. Also, he tried to enter the institute, he tried to enter the construction college. So, they told him: "You know, you will not be accepted with us, go to **Poltava** (a small town in central Ukraine). There you will make it". Can you imagine? I said: "They usually go from **Poltava to Kiev** to enter college, whereas he has to go to **Poltava** though he has his parents and a house here and all of it". Then he turned around and left. So, at my work, at the factory, a woman worked in accounting, she said: "Efim, do not worry, let your son go to **Kostroma**. My son went to Kostroma, and he entered college without any problem". "Well, I say, I am not sure, we will consult about it". All in all, he made up his mind and went to **Kostroma**. And he graduated by correspondence from the Institute, majoring in mechanics. When he arrived in America, they helped him get a job in a machine shop or a workshop owned by an owner, to do metal processing with which he had already been familiar. There were machine tools with software control. But he got it all quickly and learned. After that he studied, went to study as a programmer, studied in the evenings, and worked in the daytime. He graduated and entered a good company, this is a **CITY** company, and he still works there. Here in **America**, a granddaughter was born - **an American**. We named her in honor of my mother - exactly 50 years after the death of my mother, a granddaughter was born.

Q: What is the name of the girl?

A: **Michelle**. They did not want **Maria**. But they kept the first letter.

Q: Oh yea, Efim, thank you very much for your story. Thank you very much for sharing. I understand that it was not easy, remembering everything, going through all this, but it will all be saved for your family and for educational purposes, for future generations. That's why it is so important. Once again, thank you very much. I say goodbye to you. And now I will end up with a phrase in English, and we will disconnect. Thanks again and stay healthy!

With this, we conclude the **Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Yefim Chudnovsky on May 1st, 2019.**

**End of File Two
Conclusion of Interview**