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Mikhail ("Moishe") Langer

Summary by Joseph Bradley

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Mikhail ("Moishe") Langer was born 12 December 1935 in village of Yanovka, now Ivanovka, in Ivanovskii district of Odessa oblast USSR, now Odessa, Ukraine.

Family members. [A few of 72 extended family members]

Father Igal (?) Langer, b. 1908, shoemaker

Mother Eva Langer neé Khevich (?), b. 15 August 1909, homemaker

Brother Senya(?), b. 25 December 1930

Maternal grandmother [name not given], murdered in 1919 during Russian Civil War, along with her mother and grandmother

Maternal grandfather [name not given], b. in nearby village of Severinovka, survived Civil War and later remarried

Aunt Dyoba (mother's sister) b. 1912, married Abram Golder and had two children, Sonya and Vladimir ("Vova")

Uncle Petr ("Petya") (mother's older brother), lived in Tashkent, as did older brother of Abram Golder

Baba Liuba, (mother's aunt), lived in Odessa

Uncles Petya and Issac (father's brothers), lived in Odessa

Mikhail describes his prewar life and his memory of his father. At the beginning of the war, his father was drafted. In mid-July, 1941, Mikhail, his mother, brother, and other family members including Aunt Dyoba, Adam Golder, Sonya and Vova, left Yanovka in carts. Mikhail describes the evacuation that took them to Morozovka, near Stalingrad, and eventually by carts and freight train, to Tashkent, where they arrived 12 December 1941 and were met by Uncle Petya. Mikhail describes life in the Jewish colony of Tashkent, where he lived for the duration of the war. The Jews that did not evacuate from Yanovka were killed by their neighbors (Ukrainians) in ravines. Mikhail states that of 2,000 Jews in Yanovka, only 12 survived, several of whom were saved by Baba Liuba by bribing the Romanians in charge of the region.

After the war, Mikhail along with most of the family members who evacuated in 1941, returned to Zatish'e, a village near Odessa, where they were met by Uncles Petya and Isaac. Then they moved to Odessa. Mikhail describes his postwar schooling, military service, and jobs, while all along facing anti-Jewish discrimination from the Soviet authorities.

In the 1950s, Mikhail learned the fate of his father. The family had thought that he had been killed in action. However, according to the Soviet authorities, he was MIA. The absence of an official document certifying that his father was killed in action was detrimental to Mikhail in his pursuit of education and employment. But what really happened was that his father escaped a POW camp near the Ukrainian town of Melitopol, returned to Yanovka to find his family only to be betrayed by a neighbor and sent to a concentration camp near Yanovka where he perished.

Mikhail married and had a son. In 1979, his mother and brother emigrated, Mikhail describes the trials and tribulations of the exit visa application process; he even wrote a letter to Brezhnev. He was a refusenik until he emigrated in 1987.