

RG50.226-0007

RAISA M. BUREKOVSKAYA

- 7.00.38      My Name is Burakovskaya Raisa Mihailovno, before marriage I had name Zaslavskaya and we had four members of our family. I was the youngest. I had my mother, my father and my brother Mityz. He was older than me by 6 years. I was born in 1934.
- 7.01.20      Beginning of war my brother already have told you but I remember it different than he does. I do not remember events of beginning war like him, obviously because I had completely different impressions of June 1941. I was involved with my own life because just finished first class of music school. I did not attend primary school yet and all time played piano. I understand now I had no talent for music but only great desire to play piano and no one could tear me away from this instrument.
- 7.01.48      I remember is was a special day for me. I played my piano concert on the radio and felt wonderful. As it was a special day we decided to go to a photo salon to make a picture of all of us. Unfortunately my father was away on business that day and we did the picture without him. It was June 1941 and this picture was the last and almost one and only memory of our family we had before the war. Because nothing kept safe but only few pictures including this one.
- 7.02.10      And peaceful life was finished by this event. And about life before the war I kept only good memories in my mind involved with my childhood and lessons of music.
- 7.02.29      And after June 1941 we departed to evacuation to Poltava through Cremenchug where lived my grandfather and grandmother. But I do not remember this very clearly our meeting with them and also I have not good memories about time when my family left taking with my brother and when my father left to war. Unfortunately these events did not keep safe very good in my head.
- 7.02.48      After these events began others. They were composing of lists. My mother must go all the time and to register our names. And was warning for all Jews of Poltava if somebody did not appear to registration, even one time he will be killed at once.
- 7.03.04      Man's voice asks behind frame: What kind this registration was? Who did these lists?
- 7.03.10      Raisa answers: I do not remember very good how it was because I was only 7 years old but I know exactly my mother went to registration all time and she was afraid not to go.

- 7.03.20 When we moved to Poltava we began to live with father's brother before he was evacuated. Next to father's brother lived man who worked with him before war in government. I remember at first we lived next to this man and then I do not remember clearly but we began to live separately in small house with small yard.
- 7.03.50 One day we have known necessary to be on the registration place with all our family like other Jews of Poltava. We did not know what to do. And my mom decided to get advice from man who was uncle's flammate [?] and ex-college thinking he was a good friend. But mom did not get help she expected.
- 7.04.25 This man talked to my mom: Asya Abramovna believe me and do not worry and go only to this place without fail. And not necessary to be afraid because everything will be ok. He talked our family will get home and job and everything we need when we will go to special place with other Jews. And my mom after those words assured him of course we will go but she understood clearly necessary to go completely other side.
- 7.04.50 Next day after this conversation before daybreak my mother woke me up. When she went to the toilet what we had outdoor one woman approached to her. I did not know if she knew my mom before or no. And this woman asked my mom if we go to special place with other Jews today. My mom answered no, we do not go. Then this woman told to my mom she does not ask where we go but only asks to take her daughter whose name was Bronya with us.
- 7.05.20 Bronya was 16 years old girl, very pretty, with light-brown hair. By the way, I had light-brown hair too. This woman also had two boys who had 8 and 10 years old approximately. And with these boys she decided to go to assembly point for Jews.
- 7.05.40 And we together with Bronya came from Poltava. When we only went out from town my mother explained us what to say if people will ask us. In case of any questions we must say we are not strangers but rather neighbors and we heard about some place where there is hospital with injured people and we hoped to find our fathers there. So we went to hospital having this version. And we even must not to mention who we are in actual fact. I meant none of us neither Bronya neither my mom and me had not ours real names. I got name Galya. Bronya's name I do not remember. My mom called herself Skorina Zinaida Alexandrovna. I do not know why she took this name and I think maybe some from friends had this name.

- 7.06.50 So we went to opposite side of assembly point. I do not remember where we went but I keep in my mind mountainous area behind us. We went asking everyday in new house for night and trying not to stay in each place too long. And all time we asked about places where was not too many German soldiers. And all time we told our story about 'hospital' where we went. I do not remember our direction and I even did not try to remember events. More I wanted all time to forget everything connected with war. All I wanted was to wake up one day and to forget those events as a nightmare. And I could not imagine I will ever be able to forget many of war events. But it happened and now after many years after war I do not remember many horrible events and say Thank you God for this.
- 7.08.30 One day we stopped in one village and lived there maybe three weeks or maybe month. My mom with Bronya worked in field everyday and people around that place were very friendly to us. But although life was not bad in this village for us my mom understood we could not stay here much time.
- 7.09.05 We left village without Bronya. My mom gave Bronya address of Russian man from Poltava who was our's uncle's ex colleague and who kept our stuff. So we said good-bye to Bronya and left village.
- 7.09.30 And again we went village to village and door to door. We were very careful and if we could not leave village after one night we tried even to change house.
- 7.10.00 I remember very good one day we stayed in one house whose owner was very old woman who was school teacher. We lived in her house 3 days and after these days woman asked us to live with her more time but my mom could not make it. She understood this woman could not provide us all time. So we have gone from this woman.
- 7.10.40 Again we went long time and was very cold. I think I it was December or January of 1942. Snow was deep.
- 7.10.56 One day we knocked on one house and saw woman and man inside and we were invited to join their company because they had birthday. We were so much afraid but we did it. When was morning, man began to speak with my mom. He told her he was from Dobas and also he said many people like my mom and he were killed recently here because they were Jews. So only chance to be alive we have to go through line of front. He explained route for us and talked about from was now under Kharkov.
- 7.12.20 Then this man asked my mom how many years old she was. When my mom answered he said his sister who was owner of this house had two years difference of age. And man asked my mom to take with her passport

of his sister whose name was Rusanova Tatiana Ivenovna. Can you imagine this? I can not explain this act all my life. Now I am trying to very much to find this woman and I do not know if she is alive. I did inquiry to Poltava society of Jews but did not get result yet. Even if she is dead now she had children and I hope I will find information about this family.

- 7.14.20 So with this passport with new name now but with her own pictures my mom together with me went to Harkov. Very often my mom showed her passport and everything was ok so far. But one day when we asked to stay for the night in one home people who lived there called the police. And they took us to commandant's office.
- 7.15.25 There my mom was beaten and she had question about her passport because stamp inside passport had damage after picture's replace. My mom answered passport was found and she wanted to return it all time.
- 7.16.20 After interrogation people from commandant's office took my mom to Gestapo of Karlovka. The weather was very cold and place where we lived 3 days was very cold too. After 3 days we were ready to be killed and at evening we listened quiet voice behind door. Voice said: Do not worry. I will help you to go from this place. In few hours after it door was opened and we came to room where one man wrote certificate for my mom. This certificate was about Skorina Zinaida Alexandrovna and her family was checked by Gestapo and now this family continues her trip. We could not believe we were free! And also this man gave advice for us we went without stops 30 kilometres.
- 7.18.15 And we went to east. These places had titles Remigi and Miroshniki. There we asked permissions for lodging for the night too. We lived there since June 1942 to October 1944. I remember the dates because my mom kept few of papers since war. Place where we lived was free from German soldiers since September 1943. But almost year after it our family did not know Jews could live there like other people.
- 7.22.40 One day my mom was Poltava in 1944 and she saw Jews going by streets without fear and mom asked them if it is really safely. And she was so much glad when they answered her yes, of course. Then my mom went to Soviet of Poltava and talked about us. People from Organ promised to do documents for us with any name my mom would want. But this will be possible only after war.
- 7.23.00 And it was true. My mom got certificates about where our family lived since 1942 to 1944 and how much hard life we had. But before war was finished people from farm hid us.

- 7.30.00 Man's voice behind frame: Don't you think your life was safe because you had Ukrainian name but not Jewish?
- 7.30.28 I do not know. But it helped of course. My mom had new passport with Ukrainian name Rusanova Tatiana Ivanovna but she looked like Jew all the same. Her head was covered with shawl ll time and it helped too. And one thing more. People around us in most cases were friendly, humane and understanding.
- 7.33.00 After war we lived in Poltava half of year. I studied in school and mom mom worked. And it was incredibly but we never have been starve during war because people from all places gave food for us and they tried to take care of us as much as they could.
- 7.33.40 Do you remember man who gave advice for my mom to go to assembly point to Jews? He kept our stuff. When Bronya asked him to return her stuff he answered he will do it only for my mom. But when my mom asked him to return our stuff he answered he has not anything, all stuff was taken by Germans. We could not make nothing with it. So you can see what kind person this man was.