

## **Interview with Valentina Sinevskaya**

**RG-50.226.0034**

01.00.30.

I was born in 1912, in Brest-Litovsk. My father was a war doctor and my mother was a teacher. In 1914, my family left Brest-Litovsk and we moved to Chuguev of Kharkivs'ky district. There lived my grandparents. I was the only child in my family. In 1914, when the First World War began, our family evacuated to Zhitomir. As my father was a war doctor he was taken to war. After the war he returned home but he was very sick and he died soon after.

01.05.21.

I did not begin school until I was 7 years old like other children because my mom taught me at home. I began to go to school for the first time in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. I had finished school in 1928. After it I took a few courses. Then I began to work in a children's home as a governess.

01.11.50.

I got married in 1934. As my husband was a serviceman we lived in different places all the time. In 1941, when the war began my husband was taken to war and he was killed in 1941. In spite of my husband's death when the war began, I had not known about his death until the war was over.

01.15.30.

I am not a Jew but there were many Jews around me since my birth. Many people were taken to prisons only because they were Jews. Many of them died there.

01.18.30.

When the war began I worked in the children's home and I was in a panic because we could not evacuate our children's home and we had to think what to do with the kids. Some of them were found by their relatives and were taken to live with them, but a few kids still had lived in the children's home. I took a few children to my own home where they lived for a few days with my family. Then we found the relatives of those kids.

01.23.40.

The day when the Germans entered our town I will remember for all my life. Everybody understood that a peaceful time was over and all we could expect now was German cruelty.

One day, a woman from the town asked me to organize a children's home for children who lost their parents since the beginning of the war. Also there were a few other women who helped us to organize the children's home. It was a difficult job because we had no help from the government as we had before the war. Our children's home was located in one big building that included 3 big parts. There were the Germans in one part of the building and we were allowed to organize the children's home there. We worked for free and we had not enough food for the children. But at least the children had a place to sleep and some people helped us with food.

01.29.40.

When the Germans had began to live in Zhitomir many Jews were killed. Also many Ukrainian and Russian people were taken by the Germans and were killed too. From time to time we discovered new Jewish kids in our children's home. Some of them escaped from horrible executions and lost their parents. Some were taken to the children's home because their parents could not take care of them thinking that would be better for their kids to be in our place. Each time when I discovered that we had a new child who was a Jew I gave him a new Russian name because I understood that it was dangerous to be a Jew those days. Nobody from the children's home except me knew we had Jewish kids.

One day, a small girl was taken to our children's home. She was a Jew and all her family had been killed. I gave her a Russian name and she began to live in our place. But in spite of the having girl Russian name I was afraid to keep her in the children's home so I took her in to my own place where she began to live. At the same time I had written a letter to her relatives. They sent me back a very kind letter with many words of thanks for their girl who survived because of me. After the war was over my girl's relatives came to Zhitomir and we met each other. The girl, whose name was Ljuba, loved me and although she already had found her relatives sometimes she lived in my place. I had no kids and Ljuba was like a daughter to me although she remembered her parents very well. She called me Aunt Valentina.

I know that a few children from the children's home were adopted after the war. As for me I have saved four Jewish kids during the war.

