

LINE FIVE: THE INTERNAL PASSPORT
The Soviet Jewish Oral History Project of the Women's Auxiliary
of the Jewish Community Centers of Chicago

SHAMAIL (SASHA) DANILOV

Heating Engineer
M.S. Azerbaijan Oil and Chemical Institute, 1975

BIRTH: September 25, 1953, Baku

SPOUSE: Yelena Chernolutzkaya
born July 6, 1954, Baku
married April 21, 1981

CHILDREN: Raya, 1983, Baku
Paul, 1988, Baku

PARENTS: Daniel Danilov, 1915-1977, Cuba, Azerbaijan
Raya Micheva, 1925, Shemacha, Azerbaijan

SIBLINGS: Galina Danilova Benjaminova, 1945-1979
Paulina Danilova Yelizarova, 1946, Baku
Ilyahu Danilov, 1948, Tashkent
Ishmail Danilov, 1951, Baku

MATERNAL GRANDPARENTS:
Alchanon Michiev, Shemacha, Azerbaijan
Sona Michiev ?

PATERNAL GRANDPARENTS:
Manasher Danilov, Cuba, Azerbaijan, 1887-1943

Maria Danilov, b. Iran

JEWISH ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS (IF GIVEN):

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Women's Auxiliary of the Jewish Community Centers of
Chicago

NAME: **SHAMAIL DANILOV**

DATE: May 16, 1991

INTERVIEWERS: Elaine Snyderman, Margaret Witkovsky

INTERPRETER: Sarah Krive

Present: wife, Elena; Judy Fleisher, JCC staff member

(I'm going to call you Sasha for the interview. I'm going to begin by asking what your earliest memories are growing up in Baku. What did your parents do?) My father worked as a shoemaker. He worked at home. That is, he repaired shoes. My mother was a housewife because in the family there were many children, five children. I'm the youngest of all the children. She didn't have time to work outside the home. Naturally, she stayed at home.

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(Was it a comfortable life, or a hard life?) We had a very difficult life because our apartment was small. There were seven people in the family, including me, five children and my mother and father. We lived in an apartment that was fourteen square meters. That's a very small apartment. The living conditions were very bad. We had a small, tight yard, very little room for the children to play. One could say that we were poor. My father didn't earn very much, and my mother didn't work.

(Was there enough to eat?) We had enough. I wouldn't say that we went hungry. (What was your diet? What did your diet consist of?) That was a long time ago, so it's hard to remember. We had a small choice. Bread. In the morning we'd have bread with butter, tea. Then I would go to school. At school we also had breakfast. I don't like kasha, I must say. The usual, like Soviet children in general. I remember that we had a hard life, but nevertheless, I studied for a long time. I finished the ten grades and went to work. That is, I had the possibility to study without working at the same time.

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(What is the population of Baku, and what percentage were Jewish?) In Baku there are a lot of Jews. It's hard for me to say the population - I don't have the latest figures. But I think that maybe a fifth of the population of Baku was Jewish. That's earlier. Now many are emigrating, going abroad, because the situation is very difficult. There are various nationalities.

I want to emphasize that there are different kinds of Jews. There are two synagogues. There are Ashkenazi and Mountain Jew. I'm a Mountain Jew. TAT. That's what goes in the passport. That's the synagogue of Mountain Jews. (Did you actually live in the mountains?) Maybe they call us that because our ancestors lived there once. Our Jewish language differs from Yiddish. (Not Hebrew and not Yiddish?) No. Like Farsi. (So maybe a combination of Farsi and Hebrew?) No, no Hebrew, more like Farsi. (So the family had some Iranian origins?) Yes. (We know that one grandmother was Iranian...) Yes.

(Do you know any family stories about your grandparents and their origins and the kind of work they did?) I never saw my grandfathers. I only heard that my

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grandmother lived in Iran. In general, no. I went to the synagogue myself, but I don't know Hebrew, because we don't have schools for it. My father could read and understand Hebrew, but he couldn't teach me. (Was that because it was against the law to teach you?) No, they didn't forbid anything. We had legal synagogues. During the Second World War we had Jewish schools. Then they were closed. In Baku they were closed. In the Soviet Union there are Jewish schools, in the far East, in the Jewish autonomous republic. There they teach Yiddish.

(Do you know if your father's work was possibly the same as your grandfather's work, that shoemaking was the family trade? Is there any information about that?) I don't think so. I have very little information about my grandfather. My father fought for a long time in the Second World War. He was an invalid of the war. (Where?) He got to Berlin. He was somewhere in Czechoslovakia. (Did he tell any stories about the war?) Sure. He told various stories about how hard it was to fight, that often there wasn't anything to eat. That there would only be something to drink. Usually vodka, liquor, they'd give to the officers. It was war. War is war, as they say.

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(Were your parents married during the war?) Yes, it was during the war. My mother took part in the war too, but she didn't fight. She was at the rear. She helped out.

(Do you have any family pictures?) At home, here in Park Forest.

(As a young boy growing up, did you feel that the Jews had a different life from the other people in Baku? Did they stick to themselves or was there mingling between the Jews and non-Jews?) In principal, Baku is an international city. In Baku lived many Russians, Jews, Armenians. Lived - past tense. Georgians - very many. Now, of course, there's a horrible situation in Baku, because now there are nationalistic problems between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. It's a horrible situation, many Armenians have been killed or chased out of the city. (This is recently, but when you were growing up was it peaceful?) Yes, everything was fine. It's just recently that this problem has come up. This problem is really ancient, and goes back very far into the history of the Azerbaijani

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people. Maybe there were isolated incidents, but nothing big happened while we were growing up.

(After the Soviet controls were loosened, maybe that helped things rise up again?) Yes. The idea itself of *perestroika* is a good one. But there wasn't a base. That's what I think. Because first you have to change people's way of thinking. The people weren't ready for it - for *perestroika*. Our consciousness. They were especially unprepared for the new economic policies.

(When you were growing up, did you hear political discussions in your household? Do you remember if they talked about some of the events that occurred when you were small?) They didn't really discuss things. (In 1966 Kosygin said that families may emigrate in order to reunite families.) I knew about that. My family wasn't interested in politics because my mother was not literate. She couldn't read the newspapers in Russian. About what Kosygin allowed - in 1966 he signed it, but it wasn't until 1969 that people were allowed to start to leave. As far as I know - at least in Baku that was the case. In 1969 the first families started to leave for Israel.

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(In 1969 there was a letter from eighteen Georgian Jewish families to the UN requesting the right to emigrate to Israel. Did you know anything about that?) I heard about that. But naturally I didn't think about it because I was young. I was fifteen years old. I didn't have any thoughts of leaving. My family didn't either. The family didn't talk about it. We didn't have relatives in Israel, therefore there was no discussion about it. That was just the beginning of the emigration.

(Did you have any wishes as a child of what you wanted to become when you grew up? Did you have a plan for yourself?) Basically I wanted to become a theoretical mathematician. (Was your mother in favor of this?) Yes, of course. (What happened? Was it not possible because of money or what?) After I finished school, a mathematics school, I wanted to go to Moscow. But I just didn't have the opportunity to do that. I decided to apply to the institute with my friends. (Were your friends Jewish or non-Jewish or both?) One was Ashkenazi, another Azerbaijani. (Did you ever feel it was a bad thing to be Jewish when you were growing up?) No, that didn't

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constrict us. Now the situation has become more acute, because the nationalistic problems have become more acute. It difficult to describe.

(While you were growing up in this cosmopolitan community, were there Jewish rites of passage, like Jewish weddings or funerals, circumcisions, going on in your Jewish community?) Yes. In Baku we celebrated only the Bar Mitzvah, only for boys, not for girls. (Were you bar mitzvahed?) Yes. (This is the first!) My father was a religious man. We celebrated at home. He knew all the rituals, read in Hebrew. I brought the Torah with me, only I can't read it. (Was there a *moil*, a ritual surgeon?) The rabbi did it. I held the baby myself in my arms. (Your son?) No, another's. We have a ritual that if a relative dies, ahead of time you have to get a [trau]. I hold the baby in my arms, and the circumcision is done there. When a person dies, for forty days someone wears black in mourning. A relative wears it. [YELENA: There are situations where you have to take off the [trau] earlier, let's say, you hold onto it for a year, that's the way it's done. But if you have to take the [trau] off early, then they do this ritual - in the arms of this

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person the ritual circumcision is done, and then the [trau] is considered removed.]

We celebrated all the rituals at home. (So you observed the Jewish holidays like Pesach? You had matzos? Who made the matzos?) Yes, we had Pesach. It was made in the synagogue.

(When you applied to the institute, did you worry about being let in, or were you treated like any other student?) There were some difficulties. Especially in Moscow and Leningrad. The fifth line - nationality. They paid attention to it. (What is the Russian for Mountain Jew?) *Gorsky evrej.* TAT.

(In school were the professors fair, or did you feel some discrimination?) This is considered a very good institute in both senses - academically and socially. It's a very well-known institute. Many scientists have graduated from this institute, many Soviet scientists, because Baku was an oil city. During the Second World War, Hitler wanted to take over this city because it was an oil center. It's raw materials for tanks, in general for all

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machinery, airplanes. (This is the major industry in Baku - most people are employed in positions related to the oil industry?) Yes.

(What do your brothers do?) My older brother is a tailor. He lives in Tashkent. The second brother is a metalworker, a repairer of gas equipment. A kind of mechanic. (In a factory?) No, for residential housing. (And what was your sisters' education?) My older sister, who died, after school she married right away and stayed at home with the children. Her husband worked as a waiter in a restaurant. (How did she die?) She became sick. She had heart problems. Galina works in a store now as a cashier. (Her husband?) He works - it's hard to say, at the market as a seller.

(Where did you meet Lena?) We met at a party. (How old were you when you met?) I was twenty-eight. It was 1981. No, wait a minute - I was twenty-four and she was twenty-six. She was a classmate of my friend. We met and went out for a long time. I couldn't get married because first my father died, and then my sister died. (What caused your father's death?) Arteriosclerosis.

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(Yelena, were you working when you met?) [Yes, I was working as a store. My career progressed from young salesperson to the head of a section. Then I worked in an office, somewhere between manufacturing and an store. For the past few years I haven't been working because Paul was a baby. And then we decided to move here.]

(What kind of wedding did you have?) We had the civil ceremony at ZAGS. (So a rabbi did not marry you?) No, because a marriage in a synagogue is not considered a legal one. (So what kind of celebration did you have?) We had a big party afterward. In the South we usually have big celebrations after weddings. Usually there's a men's celebration and a women's celebration, but we had just one. We had around 200 people, a lot of relatives, especially from my side. I have a lot of cousins. You have to invite everybody.

(Did you have special foods that you would consider Jewish foods or just the traditional foods of Azerbaijan?) We had the usual Azerbaijani dishes. Sometimes my mother made Jewish dishes at home. It was hard for us to keep

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kosher, practically impossible, because it wasn't possible to get food in the stores that was kosher. We ate Jewish things during the holidays. We wouldn't eat bread throughout Pesach. We bought meat at the synagogue at that time. It was considered kosher. The rabbi would slaughter the cow and chicken himself. (What did you consider Jewish food? Because Iranian dishes might be different...) For example, there's a dish you have when a baby is born. When the first tooth appears. Grandmother said that those are Jewish dishes, this is from my mother's side, not the one from Iran. She would prepare these dishes and offer them to all the relatives. They consist of many components - grains, flour. Vegetables with eggs. We didn't have much food selection. Some sweets. In the South we had lots of vegetables and greens.

(Soon after you were married, you started thinking about leaving Baku. What year did it occur, what made you decide to leave the country?) We didn't decide right away. The situation in the country was worsening. Things at work were more difficult, and it was more and more difficult to raise a family. With the economic situation, recently it's become practically impossible even. Lena just spoke with

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her friend, who said that a kilo of butter costs 30 rubles. It's difficult to explain. For example, I can explain that in the past three years we've been receiving ration tickets. But we've been using ration tickets for meat since 1981. We receive ration tickets and every month we can get one-and-a-half kilos of meat, three pounds, and three pounds of butter.

(So it wasn't for political reasons, it was simply that life was becoming very hard there?) The political problems have intensified recently because of the nationalistic problems. It's a more acute situation now. Every republic wants to secede. They say, "The Azerbaijani republic is for the Azerbaijanis, the Georgian republic is for Georgians," and on and on. We worried about the future of our children. That forced us to make a decision. I came to the conclusion that our children wouldn't have a future if we stayed in the Soviet Union because we sensed this. We lived there, we could sense that there was no progress being made. [Lena: They talk about progress, but right now it's just words and talk. It's too long a time for us to wait.]

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(Let me backtrack a little bit. When you finished the institute, did you have any problems getting work? Was it easy to get a job? Did you have to take an assignment?) In the Soviet Union, after graduation from the institute, every student should work for three years wherever he is sent. (Where did they send you?) To Siberia. I worked in Siberia for about three years. In Surgut. It's very cold there. (It was a change, wasn't it?) Yes.

(Did you have to get a new wardrobe?) Yes, of course, otherwise I would have frozen! The average temperature there is 45 below Celsius in the winter. Very cold. (What is the temperature usually in Baku?) Baku is very warm. In the winter, the temperature is usually... snow usually falls for maybe a week, and then it quickly melts. (What was life like for you in Siberia, in Surgut?) I went to Surgut after I graduated from the institute. I worked in the taiga, the large forest. The taiga is different from the forest because it's a kind of forest indigenous to Siberia. There are many kinds of trees that are different from other kinds of forests, many animals.

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(Can you name some of the species of trees and kinds of animals?) Very many coniferous trees. We usually collect pine cones there. Cedars. A special kind of tree, very large, from which you can collect their resin. It's very healthy for the face and body, for cosmetics. The tree itself is very hard, like an oak. (What was your work?) I worked in the taiga, a place you could get to only by helicopter. About 150 people lived and worked there. It was an oil-transport station. Three large oil-transporting pipes run through Siberia. At this station are three huge pumps which send the oil further. Because Siberia is very large, and the route very long, you have to push the oil further and further, so that's why this station was located in Siberia. Because the winter is very cold there and the viscosity of the oil changes, the oil had to be heated. We had an oil-heating system, and that's where I worked. I was the boss of 26 people. There were men and women who worked at the heating of the houses we lived in, and of all the oil. (What did you use for heating?) We used raw oil, it's very expensive, but it's cheaper there.

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(Did you have decent accommodations?) In huts. Two-story huts made of wood. Round. The conditions were pretty good. They forbade us from drinking any alcohol at all. (That was before Gorbachev, wasn't it?) It was forbidden in that place. Not in the Soviet Union, but in this place where worked, because it was connected with work, and if something happened it would be very dangerous. (What else did they give you in its place - what did you have for entertainment?) We had a club where they showed movies and had dances. We sang songs. Talked. It was a place we met after work. Hunting. I hunted mostly wild game, birds. Hazel grouse. We had special whistles. When you whistle, the birds fly to you. Maybe that's bad, but I wasn't married then, and it was a romantic time.

(So you were there from 1975 to 1978?) Yes. Then I moved back to Baku. (Was there a job waiting for you or did you have to look for a job?) I had to look for work. (Was it hard to find?) In my profession, yes, because you have to have friends, you have to find out what's better, what's worse. But in general, work in engineering in the Soviet Union pays very poorly. I found work at a project institute. (What does that mean?) That's an institute

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where the construction of commercial and residential buildings is studied. All the parts of building, heating, ventilation. We did drafting only by hand, because we had very few computers. I saw computers and would like to work with them. I worked on IBMs, but only as an operator. I thought I'd learn that here, because I know drafting very well by hand. (So this is something you'd like to do here?) Yes.

(Was your work there good work? Did you feel good about what you were able to accomplish, or did you feel you were working below your level?) No, it wasn't satisfying. It didn't pay well, and that doesn't really stimulate a person to work harder. There was practically no progress, because we worked with standardized sketches. We'd have to re-draw things that had already been done. It had been drafted for one place, and then it would have to be redrawn for the new plan. With minor changes. It's not creative work. But I had to live somehow, had to work. (It wasn't like a school?) No, that's just what it's called.

(Was this the worst time for you, or was there another time that was worse? Was this time part of your decision

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for leaving? I know you mentioned the economic problems, but was this a bad time for you?) You know, the decision wasn't made right away. The thoughts pile up continuously, and then at some point a decision is made. Of course it was very difficult. In general, when I thought about getting married, I wondered how I could take care of a family on that salary. It was a problem. (So even before you got married you thought about leaving?) There were those kinds of thoughts, but they weren't concrete.

(Were people you knew starting to leave? Did that influence your decision?) Some left right after graduation from school. Now they live in New York, some of them. They left because they left with their parents, not on their own. That was in the 1970's, twenty years ago. We had a lot of Jews in our class. They left right after graduation. Some of them had relatives abroad. Not just because they wanted to and left. Many would have left if they could have, but it wasn't simply a matter of desire. You could be forbidden from leaving. We waited two years. (Two years it took to get the documents?) Yes.

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(After you applied for the documents and during this two-year waiting period, were you treated any differently at work?) I didn't work anymore. People didn't treat me any differently. (Why?) Because the bosses have a certain attitude to that sort of thing. They have instructions from above. (Once you applied to emigrate, you weren't welcome at the job?) The relation was different. It's nothing official, but the boss' attitude toward you changes, and you have to leave work. Just about everyone, when they start to collect the documents, the attitude changes.

(Was it hard to live? You weren't working...) I looked for work, here and there. When there was drafting to do, I'd do some drafting. (So that wasn't a great time for you?) It's always difficult when you don't know what lies ahead. If they'll let you or prevent you from going.

(How long after you got your papers did it take for you to leave?) After that we were forced to wait around six months. The problems were connected with getting tickets. It's very hard to buy tickets - practically impossible to get tickets from Moscow to New York. (You

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had to go to Moscow?) Yes. (Did you fly to Moscow?) Yes. (And you had your tickets when you left Baku from Moscow to New York?) They gave the tickets to us on credit. We have to pay them off in three years to HIAS. After six months from our arrival, we have to start paying them off. To buy them for rubles was impossible - either you wait a year-and-a-half for them, or order them and pay five times more for each ticket. That's a lot of money. (Did you have to sell things in order to be able to make the trip? Did you have to sell things to gather funds together?) To buy the tickets? Even then we wouldn't have had enough. One ticket costs 1,000 rubles, and now for each ticket you have to put 5,000 on top of that - for one ticket. [Lena: 25,000 rubles to have enough for our family. Our life isn't such that we would have enough. If we worked our whole lives and saved all the money - none on food, clothes, it wouldn't have been enough.]

(What were you able to bring with you from Baku? Do you have anything that was in your family?) What we could bring with us was very limited. [Lena: Each person could bring two suitcases, 30 kilograms each, and one 10-kilo carry-on.] (They let you take the Torah out?) Yes. We

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got through. We put it in, we weren't sure. If they said no, then no. The same with the photographs. I wasn't sure they'd allow them through. Because they don't give you something which details the things that are allowed to be taken out and those that aren't. Everything is kept in secret.

(Did you have courteous treatment going through customs?) In general, the treatment was proper. But it's like a lottery. Maybe every third person's bags are searched. We just didn't have time, so they let us through quickly. [Lena: When our bags were packed, we saw in the airport a sign that said that it's forbidden to bring electric appliances. But we had five electrical appliances - I brought a sewing machine, a small lamp, a small adding machine, a water-heater, and an iron. Five things. I put them in. If yes, then yes, if no, no. They asked how many electric appliances. I answered "Five." They said Okay. When we arrived here, we realized that our electrical current is completely different from yours, and we can't use the things. To put a transformer on the appliances would cost around \$100.]

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(So you came directly from Moscow to New York?)
Through Frankfurt. (How long were you in New York?) One week. (What was your impression?) Of course we had read a lot, and seen a lot on TV. I used to be interested in politics, had received letters from friends, so I had a bit of an idea about life here. I knew that the life was very different from ours - wait, what does "ours" mean? Between here and the Soviet Union.

(You stayed with friends or relatives there?) We stayed in a motel for a week. We had to go through medical examinations there, because our medical cards had already expired. They forgot to put new ones in our documents. So we had to give blood again, et cetera. Of course it was a little bit difficult in the motel with the children, because they had temperatures. We had a little adventure: our airplane broke down in the air, and we landed on an island in northern Canada. New Foundland. We were there five hours. It was Pan Am. Then we flew into New York.

(Now that you're in Chicago, it's only a short time. How do your living conditions compare to what you had before?) [Lena: It is beyond our expectations, what we have

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now. We have all stuff, all furniture, and people help us very much. We thank all the people who did all this.]

(You have to find work, right? But first you have to learn the language. How is that going?) Yes. I'm studying at South Suburban College. (How long does it take to get there?) Maybe twenty minutes. (Had you studied English before?) [Lena: I studied in school.] (What do you think is going to happen now, in the future?) We want to get our language better, and get familiar with American life and become Americans; because in any life, in any system, you have to know the subtleties of human nature, because there are differences and similarities between people. Sometimes you have to know the character of an American, because you might say something wrong and be misunderstood. (You mean you might offend someone?) Well, that's always bad if out of ignorance you offend someone, out of impoliteness. I think any person who wants to communicate with another tries to act in such a way that he doesn't offend him, so that they understand each other. That's very important.

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(How would you describe your personal philosophy?)
It's difficult to describe. In general, I love people. That's just the beginning. It's hard to say it all at once. I think that human happiness lies in human contact, in meeting with people to talk. In that lies human happiness. Not in what they have. Some people, of course, find happiness in having a big house, a lot of cars, something else, a lot of different kinds of things. But I think that human happiness lies in the possibility of talking with other people. Therein lies my weakness, because I don't know English.

(Aside from your language, what do you miss from Baku?) Right now I wouldn't say I miss anything because there's such a large flow of information coming in. [Lena: We hope that homesickness will not appear in our minds.]

(Do you expect any other members of your family to come from Baku?) The fact is that right now that's very hard to do. But my mother and sister and her husband are probably going to Israel. Because my mother wants to live with my nephew, who now lives in Israel. Valery. He's the oldest grandchild, and her favorite, because usually

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mothers and fathers love their grandchildren more than their children.

(There are certain questions that were appropriate to ask to Jews who came from the European part of Russia, so I'm going to ask you if there's something else I should have asked about life there?) About the difference between say, a Moscow Jew and me. Basically, in Moscow, in the Ukraine, live European Jews, Ashkenazi. Many Mountain Jews like me live in Central Asia, like in Samarkand. They're called Bukharski Jews. There's a city there, Bukhara, an ancient city. They have a Bukhar language. It's possible that a family from Tashkent might come here (to Park Forest). I don't know their last name, but maybe they're European Jews. I think that our synagogue is conservative, there in Baku, maybe even Orthodox, because there women aren't allowed in synagogue. (They're separated from the men...) Not separated, only men are allowed. In European synagogues, men and women are separated, Ashkenazi, but in Baku only men.

I wanted to go to synagogue in Baku, but I didn't have any special desire because there weren't Jewish schools,

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and there it's mostly old men sitting around talking. It was like a club for old men. Because during the holidays the rabbi would come and translate from Hebrew into their Jewish language, because all the people who sat in the synagogue didn't understand Hebrew. You couldn't blame them for that because there weren't any schools.

(Now that you're here, what kind of Jewish education would you like your children to have? Do you want them to have a traditional or Orthodox education or would you be comfortable with reformed Judaism?) That's difficult to say because in Baku, and I think in the whole Soviet Union, there isn't the same type of distinction between them. It's only here that there's Orthodox, conservative, reformed, traditional. We still haven't figured it out. We know, approximately, that Orthodox is more Hebrew, that conservative is a bit less, reformed a bit less, right? It will take time.

(It seems to me you have a very strong Jewish orientation, which seems unusual from what we have seen. We have seen it, but very often people would say, "they made me Jewish on my passport, but I was a Russian." In your case,

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you're clearly Jewish. Why did you choose to come to the United States and not go to Israel?) Many Jews who live in the Soviet Union are probably right in saying that they were Jews only on their passports, because they don't study Jewish traditions; their parents don't speak Hebrew or Yiddish. Maybe earlier they spoke it, grandparents. Their children study in Russian schools. And if in the family Yiddish isn't spoken, the children won't learn it. No one celebrates the traditions. I know them, but I wouldn't have known them either if not for my father. You could say I was lucky. But others, you can't blame them for not knowing. It's the governmental system.

(Why did you choose Chicago, the U.S?) Chicago we didn't choose. Instead of Israel - that's a good question. Here there are many reasons. First, there's a huge flow of emigration to Israel, not only from the Soviet Union, but from all over the world. I know that from Poland and Czechoslovakia, from other places, and that flow isn't regulated. That is, anyone who wants to, goes there. In general, my impression of Israel was directed. I don't know very much about life there. I had more information about life in the United States because I have friends

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here. Next, in the USSR we saw more information about the U.S. on television, in newspapers. But absolutely no information about life in Israel. Next, I considered this country more democratic. So we decided to come here, although we actually had Israeli visas. We couldn't have left any other way. We had to get Israeli visas and come here.