

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

LYUBA KHOROSHKIYA GINSBURG

Mechanical Engineer
Polytechnic Institute of Kharkov, 1958

BIRTH: August 23, 1935, Friedrichhofka, Ukraine

SPOUSE: Isaac Ginsburg, born March 2, 1936, Kiev
Married November 3, 1957

CHILDREN: Anna Friedgan, January 18, 1959, Kharkov

PARENTS: Boris Khoroshkiy, 1901, Proskurov, deceased 1975

Mirrel Stolyarova, 1902, Odessa, deceased 1975

SIBLINGS: Yevgenya Seglina, born 1931, resides Afula, Israel

Alexander Khoroshky, born 1931, resides Haifa, Israel

MATERNAL GRANDPARENTS:

Yudka Styolarov, Odessa, Financial officer, deceased
1925

Genya Styolarova, maiden name unknown, deceased

PATERNAL GRANDPARENTS:

Grigory Khoroshkiy, born Proskurov?, shoe repair man,
deceased at Kharkov, 1942?
No information on grandmother

JEWISH ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS (IF GIVEN):
Ezra Habonim Synagogue

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Women's Auxiliary of the Jewish Community Centers of
Chicago

NAME: **LYUBA KHOROSHKAYA GINSBURG**

DATE: March 11, 1991

INTERVIEWER: E. Snyderman

(Do you go by your maiden name now?) No.

(You were born in the Ukraine, in a town called Friedrichhofka, on the border... How many people in the town?)
Actually, we lived in Volochissk, near Friedrichhofka. I think there were maybe five, ten thousand people. (And how many of those do you think were Jewish?) I don't know, but it was many Jewish people because it was Ukraine. This was a province, in this province lived mostly Jewish.

(What was your father's occupation?) My father worked as editor of the newspaper in our region where we lived.

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(That was the Chmelnitzk region?) No, just Volochissk. The village newspaper, and he was editor. (Was it a Jewish newspaper?) No, no. It was town newspaper. (Do you remember the name of the publication?) No, I was little, three, five years old at this time. (And he made his living from the newspaper? That was how he earned his livelihood?) Yes, yes. Official work as editor.

[tape turned off and on] [HUSBAND: After the Revolution, many people didn't need education to take some position. And nobody asked them about what background they had. If you can write and read, it was enough to start. It's a very small place, so not too much people are educated in this place, maybe some teachers.] (So you're saying that when you lived in the town you were born in, in Friedrechhofka, even though he wasn't well-prepared for the job, he could still publish the newspaper. Did he write and edit for the newspaper too?) Yes. (So he had enough knowledge to be able to do that?) He didn't know. He finished Seventh class. He studied in *cheder*, and after that he studied in school. It was enough. He was very energetic. Khrushchev didn't have much education either,

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and he was leader of the Soviet Union. For my father it was enough because he was literate enough.

(I have to imagine your father was a smart man even without an education. After the war when he was in this planning department, did he miss the newspaper?)

(Can you describe what your house was like when you were growing up? You had an older sister, Eugeniya, who was about four years older than you...) We lived in an apartment. It was two rooms in a three floor house. I don't know what else. Two rooms and a kitchen. (So it was a small apartment and in it lived your mother, father ...) And three children. My sister and my brother. (Your little brother, Alexander.) Yes. (Did any grandparents live with you?) No, no. My father's parents, mother died before I was born. His father lived in Kharkov with father's sisters. Parents of my mother died before I was born, in 1925 or 1924, I don't remember exactly what year they died.

(Do you know what your grandfather did for a living?) I saw my father's father in the beginning of the war when we evacuated from Volochissk to Kharkov in '41. I saw him

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several times. My father's father was a shoe repairer. My father's mother was a homemaker because she had six children. My mother's father was *incassatoe*. His name was Judah. It's [HUSBAND: a financial office. The person who came from bank to shops and brings the money to the bank.]

(Was there any sense of Jewish tradition in your home when you were growing up?) Very small Jewish tradition because we didn't have grandparents. They could keep Jewish tradition. Mother and father worked. They didn't have enough time for this.

(Do you remember any family stories, any history of the family, that's part of your earliest memories?) I know some details only. I know that my father studied in school, not Yeshiva, preschool, Jewish school. I don't know what it's called. *Cheder*. Father went to cheder but mother went to gymnasium (like a high school), it was not a Jewish school. (So they learned how to read and write...)
[HUSBAND: It was before the Revolution.]

(Before the Revolution they could study Yiddish and Hebrew...) Yes. (Do you remember any stories they told

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you about what their life was like?) I know that their families were poor and had many children, six in father's family, and in mother's family were four or six, I don't know exactly. They lived poor. [HUSBAND: They worked hard before Revolution. And very close to the Revolution there are in this place near Odessa a lot of *pogroms*.]

(Did they talk to you about those pogroms?) Yes. They talked about *pogroms* as they must go to downstairs when there were *pogroms*. They hid downstairs. When the *pogroms* finished... (Is this after the Revolution?) During the Civil War. In 1918, 1919. Many *pogroms* in Odessa. [HUSBAND: This is the place where the government was changing very fast. The communists come, the Whites, Ukraines...] Cossacks, White Guard members.

(Can you remember any descriptions that stand out in your mind?) Mother talked about when they went from downstairs to rooms after *pogroms*, they saw all the mirrors were broken. All the sinks were destroyed. When somebody cannot hide, they were killed and it was a very dangerous situation in this period.

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(Were things calm in the early years of your childhood, before the war? What do you remember growing up yourself?) We lived in middle house. I remember that I went to kindergarten. (By middle house you mean average household?) Yes. And I went to kindergarten and my brother, too. He began to go to kindergarten because he was four years old when the war started. My sister went to school before the war. (This was a Russian school?) Yes. It was public school. (Were you treated any differently because you were Jewish? Did you have any sense of being uncomfortable?) No. I was too small for feeling different. (When you say kindergarten, here that's when you're five years old.) In Soviet Union it's three.

(So up until the war, you had no problems because you were Jewish...) No. I was too small. (When the war broke out, you had to move...) When the war started, we emigrated from Friedrichhofka to Kharkov. In Kharkov we were two months in 1941. After that we evacuated to Kazakhstan, in the Far East. (Who went with you to Kazakhstan? Your parents and brother and sister...) Yes. Father evacuated with us. In the first year he lived with us. We lived in a village near Kustanai, in Zatobolovka.

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(Your father was with you for one year?) He went to war in 1942 from Kazakhstan. He was in the war until it ended. In Zatobolovka we lived with mother, I, my sister, my brother. (Did any other family members come with your mother? Her other family or father's family?) Our relatives, no. We lived in Kharkov about two months. In Kharkov lived two sisters of my father and their father.

They were evacuated to the Urals, to Sverdlovsk. (Do you know why they went there? Did they have to go there? Were they told to go there?) They worked, and they received directions from work to Sverdlovsk. (There were factories there...) In Kharkov there were big factories and they evacuated out of the city. (So they were doing work for the war and got away from the Germans at the same time...) Yes.

(So your mother was really alone with her children...) It was a very difficult time for all of us because we didn't have enough food. We didn't have enough clothes. We were always hungry. (What was there to eat?) What we received from government with a special card. But in this village where we lived, we received too small pieces of

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bread, flour, vegetables. It was very small portions. It was not regular. My mother worked in an office. She was a typist and secretary. She was in the office, and in the evenings she sewed. (To make money...) Yes. She sewed clothes for residents of this village. Residents of this village were Russian people, rich people who were sent out from the Don in the period of collectivization. They hated the Soviet government. They hated Jewish people.

(Because they felt that the Jews had been leaders in the Communist way of life and the collectivization of these farms under Stalin caused many people to starve to death because the policies were so harsh.) Yes. Before the war the *kulaks* lived near the Don very well. [HUSBAND: The Russians gave them a name, *kulaks*. But there are other historical roots of their hate for Jewish people, much earlier than the Soviet. Because in place in Russia, the people who lived in this place, Kazaki, they hated Jews from the Middle Ages. There is a story how in the Middle Ages they killed Jewish people, like in the time of second war in Hitler's Germany.]

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(Do you remember then a sense of being Jewish and being treated differently?) I remember the day when my father went to war. On this day somebody caused our stovepipe to block up and we could have suffocated. My mother woke up and felt something abnormal and she opened the door and she saw that smoke came into room. She understood that we could have been made very ill. It was at night. She opened the door and got something out of the stovepipe.

(Did you get to go to school during those years?) I started school in 1943 and when I started school and studied in school, many children in my class very often told me that I was a "zhidovka". It's Russian: "zhid" for boy, and "zhidovka" for girl. And they said I was a "zhidovka", and why did I come to them? I must go back from Zatobolovka. And very often they hit me. My teacher had evacuated from occupied territory and she was fair.

(Who besides you in the class was Jewish? Was there anybody else?) No. I was alone. When I go to school, she told me that I could meet her and go together with her to school to protect me.

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I remember what happened once with my brother. There were guys, they took my brother and hung him by the feet. (Big kids?) Yes. (And he was a little boy?) Six years old. And they put him on a horse upside down. The horse wasn't going very fast, but he was afraid and he cried. In this time mother comes back from work and she took him. She cannot do anything because all people around were not friendly, they were mean-hearted.

(Were there any other incidents?) In this time there were many incidents with my sister. She studied in school and in her class were two Jewish children. But all Russian children hated them, hated them. I remember one more episode from this time, when Russian children sicced a dog on me, a very angry and big dog. The dog put his legs on me, jumped on me. I was afraid too. One of the Polish women that worked there, she shooed the dog off of me and saved me from the dog. My mother had many heavy episodes in her work and in our life. But I didn't remember many about this time.

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(Did your mother say something to you that gave you some comfort? How did she talk to you about these episodes?) We kept together, the three children and mother. We kept together very close, and mother all the time tried to save us from these dangerous situations. (So you felt your mother was there for you, that she protected you as much as she could. You didn't feel as if you were struggling by yourself. You were part of a family unit. Is that right?) Yes, yes. We were as one part. We waited for better times. (Is that what your mother said?) Yes, she said that. She said when the war ends and father comes back, things will be much better.

(And is that what happened? How did you know when to go back? Did you get a letter from your father?) We received a letter from father. One period we didn't receive letters. We thought that he was killed in the war for some period. When the war was finished, we received a letter from father. He was in Byelorussia. He was injured in Byelorussia before the end of the war. He lived in one of the cities there, in Bobroysk. After that, he worked in Bobroysk.

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When the war was over, he came to Zatobolovka, and he picked us up and took us to Bobroysk. (You went by train?) By train. When he came to Zatobolovka, we stayed one month because we didn't have clothes for coming back. (You needed warmer clothes?) Any. We didn't have any clothes. Father brought with him some fabric and mother sewed clothes. (Did she have a sewing machine or was it all by hand?) She had a machine, a hand-sew machine that she took with us because she knew that she could use it for our living. She sewed some clothes for me, for sister, for my brother, for herself. After that we came to Bobroysk in Byelorussia.

When we came to Bobroysk, some time we lived in one small room, and after that father received an apartment in a downstairs, because our windows were half in the ground. (Almost like a basement...) Yes. Wet and not very warm, but mother and father made repairs, some, and we lived in this apartment. It was one very small room, and one bigger room. We lived in this apartment until 1953.

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(Was your father able to go back into the newspaper business?) No, after the war he worked in the planning department as a planner. (For what, reconstruction?) Yes.

(Was your father frustrated because he was not at this newspaper anymore and was working at this planning work, or was he content with the work he had?) He was satisfied with his work. (And your mother, was she working then too?) Father was willing to do any job. He was a hard worker. If he could do it, he did it. Mother didn't work before the war because of having small children. During, and after, the war she worked as a typist, secretary.

(Do you remember when your father came back to Zaborovka? Do you remember the day when he came back?) Yes. I remember the day very clearly. It was in the beginning of July. We met my father at the train station. (What year?) 1945. We came, our whole family, to Kustanai, where the train station was. And we waited for the train. When the train came, we saw father. It was a very happy day for all of us. We knew that our difficult time was finished.

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(Compared to that time, life after that was a change. Was it a change for the better?) It was a better time because we knew that our father survived the war. It was very good for all of us. Father worked. Mother worked in this time. We studied in school. I started in third class, my brother started first class, and my sister started seventh class. But it was after the war, not very easy time because in Bobroysk there was very much damage, and Byelorussia was occupied by the Germans. [HUSBAND: And battles. It's one of the locations of the great battles of the Second World War.] We received special ration cards and we received some bread, some meat, flour. But it was not enough food for us, and I remember we ate in general, potatoes and herring. It was main food for us.

(Were you healthy children through the war and afterwards?) During the period of war, my sister was ill very badly. My brother was ill with scarlet fever, my sister was ill with tonsillitis. And in one period of the war, mother was ill with boils. On her whole body. She cannot put on some clothes, and she cannot go to work in this time. I and my sister, we went to the market and sold some things that we had for some food, bread and some milk for

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all of us. (What did you sell, clothing?) No, a lamp that we had. Some clothes - I forgot. A kerosene lamp and glass to cover it. It was during the war. One time when my sister was ill, I went with the family of one of my friends to the forest and I collected some things in the forest, wild berries... [tape turned off and on]

(So you were actually able to go out and find berries in the woods and come back...) Yes, and we went with my sister to a field in the spring and we collected potatoes from the ground after winter when the tractor went along the ground and turned up the ground, and we pulled from the ground potatoes after setting in ground. And we made pancakes from those potatoes. But it was not very fresh potatoes, it was potatoes... (they had started to spoil?) Yes. Because it was lost from the harvest. It lay on the ground too long - Fall to Spring. On the ground was too much snow and it was very freezing, about 40 degrees Celsius. Too long and too cold.

(But apparently you managed with what you had. Somehow you stayed strong and healthy, and you were able to go to school. How long did it take before there was enough

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food? How long did it take after the war before you had enough to eat and you didn't have to go into fields and look for potatoes?) I remember, it was about 1950's because when the card was finished, when rationing was over, we had to buy all food at the market. In the store it was not enough food in the city. I remember that only in the beginning of the '50s we could be not hungry.

(How did this affect you in school? Were you able to do good work in school? Were you able to perform properly in the classroom?) [HUSBAND: She performed very good - she was the best student.] I studied very carefully in school. I had many friends. In this time, after the war, in Bobroysk, lived many Jewish people. There were many residents that had lived there before war. In my class, about 50% were Jews.

My parents tried to give education for us. After the war during one period we received parcels from the United States. It was some period. All people in the Soviet Union received some food, some things from the United States after the war. Some things we took to the market and sold. And they exchanged it for books for us because

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we didn't have enough books and paper for school. They didn't have any relatives for helping and they both tried to give us an education.

(Did they give you an idea of what career you should choose or did you have a wish to do a certain kind of work and study certain subjects?) We chose ourselves, I think. But the place for continuing our education was Kharkov, because in Kharkov lived my father's two sisters. When my sister graduated from school, she came to Kharkov and began to study in the Polytechnic Institute. It was in 1949. She lived in the home of my father's sister. When I graduated from school, I came to Kharkov too for continuing my education.

(You knew you wanted to go into engineering? This is the field you wished?) I wanted to be a mathematician. But when I graduated school, I was one of the first students in my class. But it was a very hard time in Soviet life for Jewish people. It was after the Doctor's Period and antiSemitism was increased very high.

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I had to receive a special medal for graduation from school, a gold medal, not winning, but an award for good students, for all A's. But the Board of Education department, they gave me two B grades instead of A's. (So your records were changed?) Yes. (Even though you had the A's and the gold medal in your hand...) Yes. And I didn't receive the medal because I was Jewish.

After that I received my high school diploma and came to Kharkov. When I went to university, when I wanted to apply to the math department of Kharkov University, they told me that they cannot take my diploma because I came from another city, from another republic. But it was only an excuse. And I had to go to Polytechnic Institute in engineering. I went there and had several exams, and I remember all of these exams as hard execution for me because the teachers that made the exams were very anti-Semitic. They tried to give me harder questions. When exams were finished, I waited for the result and after that I knew that I didn't make the list of students who were admitted.

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(But still you got in?) Yes. After some period, my father came to Kharkov and he went to the Principal of the Institute and asked about me. The principal said it was a mistake and after that they let me enter in another department. I applied in Electrical Engineering. (So not Mathematics. It was Mechanical Engineering.) Yes.

(How was it there for you? Were you a member of the Komsomol?) Yes. It's automatic. (The Jewish students were accepted in Komsomol just like Russian students?) Yes, automatically. Where I studied in school in the Seventh class, when I became fourteen years old, I came to the Komsomol automatically. The whole class. All students in our class were in the Komsomol.

(During your school years did you feel any prejudice against you while you were at the Polytechnic Institute?) Yes, I was feeling this because Isaac and I met. We studied in the same class. We met in the second level of study. When we had exams with some teachers, they showed us that we are a people of a second sort. Some teachers tried to show us that we were on a lower level. Some teachers that were anti-Semitic. When we wanted to go to

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practice, to Leningrad.... [HUSBAND: One teacher wanted us to go with him to Leningrad to practice [for an internship] because he wanted us to help him to do some part of his Ph.D. work. She was the best student. And we are good in math. So he wanted us to help him. (And that would have been a good thing for both of you?) Yes, we liked the city, we wanted to go.] Very interesting city, very interesting place for practice. We wanted to go. But we didn't receive permission. (What year was this?) It was 1957. (The year before you finished?) Yes. Between our classes in the institute.

(So you were disappointed then?) [HUSBAND: It was very disappointing. I know why they didn't give us this permission. But she was more hopeful.] (laughs) I had many illusions.

(When did you make your plans to get married?) We planned to get married when we were in the fourth level at the Institute. (The last year?) No, that's the fifth. After the fourth level, I came to my parents and I prepared to marry. When we started fifth level, I married Isaac. (Was that after the school year, or during the school year?) It was in the beginning of the fifth class. (Where

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was the wedding?) It was in Kharkov at home. Our wedding was at home. I lived in the home of my aunt, father's sister. And we made our wedding in her home. (That's unusual that you didn't go to a wedding palace?) No, to the Office of Registration. (So it was in your aunt's home, the actual celebration?) Yes.

(Was there anything Jewish about your wedding?) No. (The food that was served, anything that might be considered Jewish?) Usual festive foods, not Jewish, for weddings, from the market, from the store, all food prepared by Isaac's mother and grandmother, by my aunts, my sister. (Well, some people have gefilte fish...) Gefilte fish, etc. Strudel. Many foods. [HUSBAND: These foods you can't classify as Jewish because...] (Is that the cooking of Russia or Poland?) No. (If you were to go to a friend's house that was not Jewish that was celebrating a wedding, would they have gefilte fish and strudel?) No. Only Jewish people.

(About food... One of the foods that's absolutely Jewish is matzos. When did you first taste matzos.) We didn't have matzos. I tasted matzos at home. My mother

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did matzos because she remembered matzos from childhood.
(And she learned how to bake matzos...) It was not exactly matzos that's made here, but she made it as she could.
(Did she do that in connection with Pesach? Did she try to observe in some way Pesach?) Yes. But she made matzos, bouillion, and fried matzos and the gefilte fish. (So she was trying in some way, even though it was very limited, to bring some of this from her childhood to you.) Yes.

(Did you ever hear the story of Passover? Was it told to you?) No. She didn't tell me the story. I think she knew few details about it. (Was she afraid?) No, she didn't know. (And your father also?) Yes. (Although he went to *cheder*..) [HUSBAND: In the beginning he went to *cheder*, and after that he had a strong influence from the government, from the newspapers, so strong that people changed their opinions.]

(It would be interesting to know if it was because they were anti-religious, or afraid, because I don't believe they forgot. If they were in their teens at the time of the Revolution, they knew all this...)

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(When you were growing up, did you hear any political discussions at home? Did your parents talk about what was going on in the country? Were they critical?) No. (Was it because they were afraid, or they just agreed with the policies?) My parents, they believed and they think that everything's all right. (Isaac and your parents did talk a little bit...) Isaac had more educated area in his family. He had a very smart, very educated and very critical uncle, and his parents, too, were more educated and more minded about political situations than my parents. My parents had not the opportunity for it. Yes.

(So they accepted the teachings or the propaganda that was being published in the Soviet newspapers of Khrushchev, etc. What about you? Did you accept this yourself?) I began to criticize this situation when I graduated from school, from high school. (What made you question?) It was when I graduated school, I waited for a year to receive medal and good list and I didn't receive. When I came to my teacher for signing my diploma, they asked me why did I not receive gold medal. I said I didn't know, but one of my better teachers was Jewish, and she said it was because I was Jewish and I must understand this. From this time I

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began to ask myself and I began to think more deeply about the political situation, about national politics in the Soviet Union. I began to understand who is Jewish people in Soviet society.

(And then in 1956 some of the anti-Stalin information began to come out. The 20th party congress, and that began to change things in the country... So all of a sudden people like your parents probably had to rethink their views.) I lived in this time without my parents, and I couldn't listen often to their discussion about it. (Did you ever get to talk to them about it later on?) I received letters from them, but in the letters they wrote about life, not about politics. (So you never got to discuss this with them?) In my family we didn't talk about it much.

(When you came out of school, did you have trouble finding a job? When you graduated polytechnic institute?) We didn't find jobs, we received a list of jobs from personnel department. (You were assigned a job...) Yes. [HUSBAND: But we didn't receive what we wanted.] When we graduated school, I received red diploma. If it was right,

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I could have the opportunity to choose, but I did not. (I know you would have liked to have gone to Leningrad. But that was out. But the next step would've been, if you could've gone anywhere you wanted, where would you have gone?) [Husband: She wanted to work on her Ph.D. She could because she was a red diploma, but she couldn't because she was Jewish.]

(What would you have done with your doctoral research?) In Mechanical Engineering. (If you could've chosen where to go to work, where would you have wanted to go?) It was many institutes of science in Kharkov. I could go to science institute for work, but I didn't. [HUSBAND: When we graduated there was a list, and on this list there were a lot of places to choose. It's important that the students who graduated first can choose, they have more opportunity. We wanted to go into the modern industrial plant preparation in Kharkov. But we couldn't get it. The person from this department did not accept us because we are Jewish. But in another place, also in Kharkov, much farther from our home, there was a person from the personnel department who was Jewish also, and who offered to go to this manufacturer. And so we went.]

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Second Interview with Lyuba Ginsburg - March 18, 1991

(When we left off last time it was just about the time you two were married. It was after your disappointment not to get to go to Leningrad to do research. You were telling me how you were assigned to your jobs. I would like to learn where you were assigned and what kind of work you were doing and what the workplace was like.) We received a job to one of the Kharkov factory, and I was a design engineer in technology and my husband was draft engineer in the metalworking shop at this factory.

(So you worked in the same place in different capacities?) Yes. (Did your work come together at all?) We went to work together, but we worked in different departments. (How big was this place?) About five thousand. [ISAAC: I think that's too much. I don't know how much, but for Soviet Union it's a middle-sized factory.]

When we worked at this factory it was a smaller one. When we left this factory joined with another factory.

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They did related work. After that it is about five thousand people at this factory now. When we worked it was smaller, maybe one or two thousand.

(What was the end product of this factory?) Cranes for building industry. (So Lyuba, you did design for these cranes?) I did design for the metalworking shop in this factory, special features, punches, drill jigs, special metalworking jigs. I worked several months as a design engineer at this factory. After that I went to rest because I had a daughter. [laughs] I took care of my daughter and for several months I didn't work. After that I began to work in the project bureau, an engineering company. (So you did not go back to the same place?) No, this factory was too far from the house where we lived. It was very hard to ride to this factory. I went to another company that was very close to my house. I went to work in fifteen minutes, I walked. I began working as a design engineer. I participated in several projects for mechanization of manufacturing processes.

(What was the end product here?) The product was projects and drawings of machines and mechanisms, only

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paper and documentation. (So it was more theoretical? So did you see a physical, tangible product at the end, or was it concepts, ideas and drawings that went to somebody else to follow through on?) I saw this project at the factory. For that I made drawings. Sometimes. [ISAAC: It's not scientific, it's engineering. They do projects for some machine. Then the drawings go to the shops which pay this company for this project. And they make it in metal. If there's something wrong, somebody on this project comes to the company and you help them to understand. When the machines begin to work, their work is over and they go to another project.]

(So what you did was very technical, and it had to do with making equipment that was used to do other things?)
Yes. (So because of you factories were a little more efficient? These were new ideas you were coming up with?)
Yes, it was very new ideas and information and experience that the engineering company had. I don't experience the engineering company. I took my....

(So your designs wound up as components in machinery?)
Yes. (What kind of factory might use your design?) We

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designed projects, for example, for tire manufacturings, automobile tires. Bearing manufacturings, for small bearings and big bearings for train cars, wheels. Agriculture manufacturing, metalworking shops, foundries, and other ones.

(You had a lot of responsibility. Did you feel satisfied, rewarded, because of the kind of work you were doing?) Yes, it was very interesting because at times I learned new technology in machinery and it was very interesting for me. It increased my experience, education, and I liked it. I worked in a good team. I had a good supervisor, a Jewish man. He was a hard worker and had good qualifications, and we worked very productively.

(And your daughter was fine at home, being raised by whom?) She was at home three years. We had her great-grandmother, Isaac's grandmother, we lived with Isaac's parents, and his grandmother sometimes came from Kiev to us and she helped us. When Anna grew up to three years, she came to kindergarten, which was in the same building where we lived. In this kindergarten Isaac's mother was a pediatrician. In this district, she worked in the medical

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office as pediatrician, and this office served this kindergarten. So she could see her granddaughter. It was convenient for all of us.

(So this would have been in the late '50s or early '60s. In 1962 Solzhenitsyn published One Day in The Life of Ivan Denisovich. Were you able to get hold of a book like that at that time?) I read it and I was surprised because I didn't know about the *gulag*. I didn't know before that so many people were in the *gulag* and that there was so much suffering in the *gulag*. We read this book with great interest. We read several stories in the magazine Novy Mir (New World). The editor was Tvardovsky. They published a few stories of Solzhenitsyn. (So among your family and friends were you passing around these magazines and discussing them?) Yes. (Were people getting agitated or upset with what they were reading?) Yes. [ISAAC: Because it was so different from the readings they had up until that time. It's not dangerous because it's not a dangerous magazine.]

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It's the time of Krushchev, it was "the thaw," *otpepel'*. There is a novel written by Ilya Ehrenburg with this name. It's also something about that time.

(So with this new knowledge, how were you changed?) I became more open in our surroundings because we received new knowledge about our life before and in this time. I began to think more, to criticize life, the government, all our organs in the Soviet Union. (Were you a member of any organizations at that time, like at work? Social organizations where you couldn't talk about these things?) [ISAAC: In the Soviet Union there are Communist Party, komsomol, Pioneer, trade unions.]

(Were you a member of a trade union?) [ISAAC: Any people who work were members of trade unions. There are no people who are not.] (So was that the only one you belonged to?) Yes. (Did you talk about any of this repression, your government....) Only with our friends, in our family, with our friends when we met with them. Not in the wide circle.

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(Now, in the late 1960's we're starting to see Sakharov's publications...) [ISAAC: Nobody in the Soviet Union read any of this. We only listened to the Voice of America.] (And there you heard about Sakharov?) On the Voice of America, the BBC from Britain. We had more knowledge about the world.

(In 1969, eighteen Georgian Jewish families sent a letter to the UN requesting the right to emigrate to Israel. Did you know about that?) No, we didn't know anything about it. (So then pressures heat up to let Jews emigrate. Were you thinking at all at that time of emigrating?) In 1973... [ISAAC: We couldn't at that time because I worked in the military academy. But some of our friends could, and they did it in 1973. They went to Israel.]

(In 1973 the Yom Kippur War took place, and that's when the Soviets hardened their line against Israel and supported the Arabs. Were you aware of some change in Soviet policy toward Israel?) No. [ISAAC: Why are you asking these questions?] (This is just my curiosity. The Yom Kippur War was in 1973. At that time the Soviet Union

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supported the Arab position, and I think it was at that time that they began to harden their line against Israel. Did you notice this in the press, a policy change?)

There was increased anti-semitism in the Soviet society. It surrounded us, that you are "*zhid*" and you must go out from Soviet Union. (Where did you hear this?) On streets, on the bus, in the train. (You personally?) No, not against me personally, but against Jewish people. We had in my company many people that were big anti-Semites. They lived in Kharkov at the time of the second war, and somebody supported the fascists and when in this time the Soviet Union became to support the Arabs, they could talk louder about their feelings for the Jewish people.

(In the late 1970's they had the trial of Sharansky. Did you know anything about him or what he stood for?) We listened about it only from Voice of America and BBC. In the newspapers were other things. (What was that like to hear one thing on the BBC and see something different in the Soviet press? How did you feel about that?) We felt not comfortable. We knew that our life can be changed but we couldn't do it. We couldn't talk against this wrong

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information, against this order, because we could have our life like Sharansky. (So you were afraid?) Yes. (Were you aware at that time that there were Jewish organizations, people teaching Hebrew, there was a revival of interest. For instance, were you able to get matzos for Passover?) No, only from the black market. (So somebody was baking it and feeling they wanted to observe this Jewish holiday...) Yes, it was a risk.

(Sharansky was released the same year as the Chernobyl disaster...1986.) There are no ties between Sheransky and Chernobyl. It was the beginning of *perestroika* and Sharansky was freed and permitted to live in Israel because *perestroika* was beginning. (I think that was an important event for the Jews of the Soviet Union that he was freed and allowed to talk about things.... Two months later the Chernobyl accident took place...) the 26th of April. (And because it's *perestroika*, it's not as secret, what happened, except that they don't tell you right away?) We heard about Chernobyl in the beginning of May. Ten days after it happened. [ISAAC: But we knew at the end of April because some of our relatives lived near Kiev. Also, some of our friends were in Kharkov. We had big shops that

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made machines near Chernobyl, turbine engines. In that time, some people from this shop were in Chernobyl, on a business trip. One of them came back, but he died from radiation. He was a driver on the big bus... which has equipment from the Japanese and they measure the vibrations, etc., and at that time they were in Chernobyl. The person who was at that time in the shop was of course dead. Another engineer died too. The driver, he was not a young person, very experienced. He stayed in the bus and left right away, but when he came to Kharkov, it was the 28th, I think. In a few weeks he was dead too.]

(Kiev is about...) 500 kilometers... Kharkov is about 500 kilometers from Chernobyl, Kiev is about 600 kilometers. [ISAAC: But the flow is not from the east to the west, so they didn't have too much.] The wind was in the other direction, to Byelorussia, the northwest.

(Was the radiation being measured in Kharkov?)

[ISAAC: Yes, and it was average. After that people began to talk that the radiation in Kharkov is bigger than average because there are some places that used the instruments. Some instruments use this element, uranium.

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But when the time for this instrument goes, they keep them in one place. This place is not far from the green zone of Kharkov. But when people come to test the radiation, they find the radiation in this place is bigger than average, but they cannot tell before about that.]

(Lyuba, you're more sophisticated than the average Russian, you have a wonderful background in engineering. You're also a mother. Are you concerned about your daughter at this time? Are you worried about her safety or her exposure?) [can't hear answer] (You have a grandson. Are you worried about him?) Yes. (When does it become a concern for you, or do you just put it out of your mind because you can't do anything yet?) We tried to know the level of radiation in Kharkov and we know that it was not so dangerous. Our son-in-law wanted to pack up our grandson to middle Asia. He has relatives in Tashkent. But we made the decision that it is not so needed. (You didn't feel it was critical at that point...)

[ISAAC: I want to explain my point in this case. That was the first time that we heard officially that there was an explosion, but you know there was a lot before.

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There are in the place far from Kharkov, but except for explosions there are many other things that give radiation. At Kharkov is a big physics institute, one of the important research institutes of the Ukraine, the same kind as in Kharkov. They have an accelerator, where electrons are made to go faster, for research. So sometimes it was destroyed and it was in the air. We don't see it in the paper, but we have friends, and we know that. Before that, anybody, if he wants to think, knows that in the atmosphere of the Soviet Union, but not only the Soviet Union, but the United States, France, other countries, there were explosions for years. But in the Soviet Union, exactly in the place for testing, who knows what the level of radiation is.]

(Your thinking was that you have a situation here, but if you go all the way there, you might not have a better situation...) Yes. (So you had to put this out of your mind, but was this before or after you made your preparations to leave?) [ISAAC: No, our decision to leave is not the bad conditions of the environment. It was not physical and it was not economical. We cannot live in the atmosphere when we couldn't say what we mean about the

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order, about the government, and how the government, and especially, the living of Jewish people, they cannot in the Soviet Union, live like equal people with all others. They many times feel that they are people of the second type. Even the environment in ... is good, and the people are good. Also, they feel like second type.]

(So it was really to gain equality as a citizen of a land that you wished to leave Russia?) [ISAAC: Yes.]

(We talked a little bit about leaving the country. Paulina had to leave a diamond ring...) [ISAAC: It's a little ring she had from her mother-in-law. So it's old.] (When you were getting ready to leave, I know you took your pictures. Was there anything else, anything, not just jewelry, anything from your family that you wanted to take with you, and were you able to?) [Here Isaac translates the question into-did you have anything valuable or expensive that you brought with you...] We didn't have something special from our grandparents because they were poor. They didn't give me anything like this. We brought our wedding gifts, two crystal vases. (Any old Hebrew books?) We had a little one, and we took it with us, a

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gift from our friend when she left the Soviet Union. A small gift.

(Does anyone in the family speak Hebrew?) No. We couldn't study Hebrew, we couldn't know about Jewish traditions.

(I would like to have an overview. When you look back on your years in the Soviet Union, what was your worst time for you while you were there?) I remember the worst time, it was the time during the Second World War, the time when I graduated from high school and went to the institute, when I couldn't become a student from the first stack. I received much trouble in this time. (So there were two separated periods. One was when your father was away as a soldier, and your mother was struggling to keep you fed and clothed....) [ISAAC: It's when she began to understand that Jewish people are not like other people.] (So as bad as the war was for all people, on top of it you felt the hate of the Russian people around you because you were Jewish.) Yes, yes.

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(Then at the institute, not being able to choose where to go when you were the top student, you learned that...) I couldn't choose the institute for study and I couldn't choose the place to work. I begin to understand it.

I had many not very satisfying times because I felt I couldn't go on business trips to other countries for my job because I was Jewish. I made projects and other people went. (One of the rewards at your job was you could travel to see where it was being used in other countries? What countries?) This was Italy, France, Cuba, Hungary, Bulgaria. (So people were travelling who worked on the same thing you did, and they were given the opportunity. Did their husband or wife get to go?) No. It depends how long. Sometimes it's a year, then they do, but not if it's a short period.

(Now looking back, what was the best time there?) I want to talk about two times that went ... My living with my family, my living with my husband. When we got married, we were happy on this day. I couldn't talk about bad times in this period in our life. But in our work, in our

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society living, we had several not very good times in our life.

(Coming here, what have been the rewards, coming the U.S., to Chicago...) Big reward that our children have a good job and we saw that our children, our grandson, have a good future. I hope and I believe in this. I think so, that for them, it was right decision to go to the United States. For us, now, we have some disappointments because we cannot receive a job so far. When we receive job, I think we will be more happy and satisfied.

(You said what the hard times and good times were in Russia, your family was good. How do you explain the way your family stayed strong and together? We know that in Russia there's a lot of divorce, just like in the USA. How come you could work together with such good feelings even when there were difficulties?) [ISAAC: Because she has a good husband!] [all laugh]

(There has to be some philosophy...) We try to have a life independent of each other. I think my daughter's family should be independent from us. I want to say it's

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not materialistic. It's spiritual. I always try not to get involved in the decisions being made in my daughter's household. We always try to give them advice, but subtly and delicately, in my view, so that we don't give rise to negative feelings on their part. We live on friendly relations. They must be free in their decisions.

(Is there anything else you would like to talk about before we close the interview?) I want to talk some more about my parents. They had a hard life and when they came to Kharkov, it was in 1964. They wanted to live in the same city with their children, because I and my sister and brother lived in Kharkov. They lived before in Kazakhstan, where my father worked. (What years did they live in Kazakhstan?) From 1953 to 1964. They lived in Jeskazgan and after that in Parlodar.

When they came to Kharkov, they received a small apartment and once my father was hit by his neighbor. (Why?) Because he was Jewish. She hit him... (What did she hit him with?) With some dish. I forgot what. (How old was your father?) He was 65. (Did they have a conversation first?) She considered my parents' apartment

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too noisy because she lived below them. She came out when father was going down the stairs, she came out and said some hateful things and hit him. (Was he able to walk away?) He fell down and went back to his apartment. He was Okay, but it was an example of anti-Semitism without any other reason.

(What do you miss from the Soviet Union?) I miss only my job and my friends, some relatives I left in the Soviet Union. My cousin lives now in the Soviet Union. We were friendly with my cousin. I left my parents' graves. I took care of their graves. This is what I miss in the Soviet Union.