

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

MARINA P. REZNIKOV

Construction Engineer
Institute for Building Construction

BIRTH: May 23, 1966, Moscow

SPOUSE: Sergey Reznikov, October 8, 1965, Moscow

Married, 1990

CHILDREN:

PARENTS: Leonid P., 1937, Leningrad

Svetlana N. P., 1937, Moscow

SIBLINGS: Mikhail, 1968, Moscow

MATERNAL GRANDPARENTS:

PATERNAL GRANDPARENTS:

JEWISH ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS (IF GIVEN):

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Women's Auxiliary of the Jewish Community Centers of
Chicago

NAME: **MARINA REZNIKOV**

DATE: March 12, 1991,

INTERVIEWERS: Margaret Witkovsky and Sarah Krive

Husband Sergey is present.

Translation in transcription is by S. Krive

(Marina, you were born in Moscow?) Yes. (How long has your family lived there?) My mother is from Moscow, and my father is from Leningrad. When they married, my father came to Moscow, in 1964. (Where did you live in Moscow?) We had an apartment not far from the center of the city. There was a quiet and calm place nearby, one of the great vast parks of Moscow, Sokolniki. (Was your apartment communal or private?) Private. (Who lived in the apartment with you when you were little?) My parents, little brother and I lived in first another apartment with

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two bedrooms, which we later swapped for our last one, which had three bedrooms, so we could live with our grandmom.

(What was your grandmother's name? Which parent?) Mother's mother. Rosa. Her maiden name is Mazirova. (How about the rest of your grandparents?) My grandad's name is Pavel. He had a Jewish name, but when this was dangerous he changed it. I know that my grandma, my mother's mother, she never worked in an office. My grandfather went from place to place. He worked very hard. He worked in various places and stayed there on business for long periods of time. He stayed in one place maybe a year.

(What kind of work did he do?) I don't know his business exactly, but I do know that the last job he had was in the design and construction of the Moscow metro. Grandad worked very hard. He was at home very rarely. So grandmom couldn't work because of the children. She had three daughters. My mom is the youngest of the three. Grandmom needed to raise them. (What are their names?) The older sister's name is Taisia, a Greek name. The second sister is Betya, and my mother is Sveta.

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(Did they live close to you in Moscow?) No. The middle sister's family lived very far from us. Taisia's lived closer to us. When my mom was little, her parents, two sisters and herself lived together in a two-room apartment. My mom attended the music school and her piano and her hideaway bed stood in a tiny storage area. There were no windows there. During the day she would fold up the hideaway bed and get out a stool so she could practice the piano. And right there, with the lid closed, she would do her homework. Time passed, and the sisters grew up.

The eldest married and went to live with her husband. After some time the middle sister got married too, and also went to live with her husband. And when my parents got married, their grandparents gave them their apartment as a gift, and themselves moved into a single-room apartment near the Preobrazhensky metro stop.

The family got along well. Everyone liked to get together and they did this often at grandmother and grandfather's small but very cozy apartment. It was always loud, merry, and full of people.

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(Do you know anything about your father's family?) I never knew my grandfather because he was wounded at the very beginning of the war and died. His name was Mark P. My grandma, she now lives in Leningrad. Her name is Basya Mirkina. That's her maiden name. (She's how old now?) She was born in 1904. She's 87. (She's well?) Well...

(Does she live alone?) No, she has a second husband, and they live together in Leningrad. He's 87 too. My grandma, she was a singer. She was popular in Leningrad. Many people knew her.

(When did you start school?) I was seven. Near my apartment. (Was your mother working then?) Yes. She's a music teacher. (Did she teach from your apartment or in a school?) In a school, plus she had a few students that she taught in the apartment. (When you were very little, who took care of you?) I went to preschool from the age of three. That was near our building. (Did you play with other children from your building? Did you have friends at home?) I have a brother, I played with him most of the time! And I had a few friends my age. We played together

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in the yard and in the forest-park called Sokolniki, which was near our home.

(So where you lived it was all apartment buildings?)
Yes, big buildings with many floors, and a lot of people.
(Did your parents have Jewish friends?) My parents have many Jewish friends, they often got together, and they enjoyed parties. They sang songs, danced, had a good time. Sometimes they sang in Yiddish, but I've never heard that any of them spoke Yiddish or Hebrew. (Did they know any?)
I don't know about my parents' friends. My mom cannot speak Yiddish, but she understands it. Both of my grandmothers knew Yiddish. I heard my mom's mother speak in Yiddish to her friends on the phone. I often listened to her with great pleasure. (Do you know any Yiddish?)
No, unfortunately.

(Did your parents have Russian friends too?) I think they have some. My mom has one close friend, a Russian woman, and they are childhood friends. My parents have good friends - a Russian couple. They've known each other for a long time.

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(So you started regular school when you were seven?)
Yes. (Did you have any chores at home?) Oh, yes. I like to clean. I tried to help my mother clean the apartment. (The shopping?) Yes, sure. I remember the time my mother sent me to the store by myself for the first time, and for some reason the sales clerk sold me a really good piece of meat or something, and after that my mother was very proud of me and joked that only I will go to the store to buy the meat! I was six years old at the time.

(Did you know other Jewish families that lived around you?) I knew a big family with two children that lived in the same building, above us. They are nice people, but I didn't have friends among them. The girl was older than me, and the boy was smaller, and we couldn't find anything interesting for all of us to do.

(Do you remember any historical events and the effect they may have had on you? Like *perestroika* and *glasnost*? Did anything change?) I think yes. I became interested in Jewish culture and when *perestroika* began, I went to a few Jewish organizations. This was in August 1988, after my graduation from the institute. It was good.

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The Moscow Jewish Cultural and Educational Society and the Moscow Society for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Israel. (What did they do?) Both, like many others opening up at that time, were directed at waking up the Jewish people from fear, to "shake" them, open their eyes to freedom despite the rise of anti-semitism, to help people discover the facets of Jewish culture, history, Jewish origins.

The Moscow Jewish Cultural and Educational Society was located in the private apartment of one of its organizers - Yuri Sokol. There are two rooms and a kitchen in his apartment; and he lives in the kitchen. He gave both of the rooms on behalf of our Society. The library is in one of the rooms; an exhibition dedicated to the Holocaust is in the other one. And even in the hall there is an exhibition about Jewish Heroes of the Soviet Union during World War II.

In the library you can read many books about Jews, our culture and history, in Russian, English, Hebrew, French,

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and many other languages. Also you can attend series lectures on Judaica. We invited many interesting people to give lectures: Americans, Canadians, Australians, Israelis, and, of course, Russians were among them. We had a few groups to study Hebrew and English. Teachers were volunteers. I gathered a group of young people together and organized activities, mixers, and put on "tea evenings". Different interesting films about Jews during World War II were shown by video a few times a week.

We organized musical performances, and invited Jewish people to take part in them. Many well-known musicians came and took part in competitions. Toward the middle of 1990 the Moscow Jewish Cultural and Educational Society had 1,500 members and guests.

The second one - The Moscow Society for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Israel - was located at the apartments of a few members. Members of the Society arranged meetings with representatives of the Israeli Consulate in Moscow. Israel has no official embassy in the USSR, but it has an office in the Dutch Embassy. Many Israelis came to the Soviet Union as visitors, and came to the Society and

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told us about Israel, their life, and we asked a lot of questions because we wanted to know more and more about the country which was called "the country of Zionism," and "was" the enemy of the Soviet Union, in the words of the Soviet press. We wanted to find out as much as possible about the Promised Land, about which we had dreamed, reading secretly Exodus by Leon Uris, Glorious Brothers by Howard Fast, when these books were repressed.

Many books, Israeli publications on Russian, Hebrew, English, were in the library. There were books about Israel, aspects of life in Israel - about kibbutzes, education, industry, people, celebrations, cultural and political life - about everything.

A few groups from our Society went to kibbutzes to work there, study Hebrew and go on many excursions in Israel. We organized slide shows and videos to educate Jews about Israel, give them tape-recorders with popular Israeli singers to hear and copy them out.

Both societies arranged trips to the Vyalki, the place not far from Moscow to celebrate many Jewish holidays in

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the early fall and spring. We heard a lecture about the story and origin of the celebration, danced, sang songs, met with new people, played sports. The first time I went to celebrate, it was Sukkot, and among us the "feds" with their scowling faces looked us over with serious, attentive eyes, and followed us. But we were having a good time, and this didn't stop us, although honestly it was unpleasant to feel their "piercing gaze" on us.

(How old were you when this started?) I had just graduated from college. So I was 22 years old. (How many people came to these festivals in the suburbs?) A lot of people. We usually took the train, and we'd take up three train cars, many people.

(When you were very young in school, did you have any bad experiences because you were Jewish? Like on your school records?) I think a few teachers acted with obvious unpleasantness, but the rest hid it, didn't make it obvious. I was lucky. (Were there other Jews in your school?) I was the only full Jew. There was a boy who was a half-Jew, but they didn't take him for one. They considered him Russian. The kids would say, oh, there's a

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Jew. I didn't have close Russian girlfriends in school. Of course I was upset to a certain extent. Since kindergarten I have had one Russian friend; we lived in the same building until I left the Soviet Union. We attended different schools, and we couldn't see each other often. Now we correspond, but not often. My closest girlfriend was my cousin. (Is she still in Moscow?) Yes.

(Did your family observe any Jewish holidays at home?) No. Very rarely we bought matzos. But it wasn't approved of. (So how did you decide to be Jewish?) At the Institute. A bunch of five groups of our department attended the lectures together. We had many Jewish, and we kept together. At that time many of my friends became very religious. My parents were afraid that I could "fly out of" college because of my interest and aspirations to be Jewish. This was during my first year of college, in 1984. It was still scary.

(How did you decide to enter the institute? What did you want to study?) It wasn't the concentration that I wanted to study. I knew that they didn't accept Jews into the good departments, so I didn't even try to get in. I

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applied where there was less competition, because there they'll take Jews. The institute is in Moscow. It's a very big institute. Maybe 1,000 students. (Did you pass the exams?) I passed four exams, very well. (What did you study?) Architecture, building construction details for residential and industrial buildings. We studied exactly how to build buildings, how they work, how they react under different pressures, etc. (Did you enjoy it?) At first I didn't like it, but in the second and third years I liked it and fell in love with it. I graduated in 1988.

(Did you have to get a job someplace?) Yes. The institute sends students to different organizations. I got sent to one. I didn't really care because I was getting ready to leave. (What were you doing?) It was a small company. A small building construction group. Thirty-eight people. I drew, it wasn't interesting. I redrew sketches from other people's sketches, did calculations, but it didn't matter, whatever I did, my boss recalculated. I didn't have any kind of interest in my work because I saw that nobody needed the work I did. So I didn't really try after that. There was no chance to have lofty thoughts. I saw that my boss corrected every last

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thing I did, so what's my work for? I would do things right and she'd correct everything. It wasn't interesting at all. (Were the people you worked with pleasant?) A few people were very nice, smart, very interesting. I liked them, spoke with them. Sometimes we met outside of work, went to the movies or to exhibitions.

(When did you decide to leave Russia?) I thought about it when I started at the institute. But my parents said no, no, no, never. (Did you want to go to Israel?) I think maybe Israel, maybe America, I didn't know. It was a serious question. (Were a lot of your friends from the institute interested in leaving too?) Yes. And they did it before me. That spurred me on. When I graduated from the institute I'd decided for sure that I should leave. (Had you and your husband already met?) Yes.

(We know you met at the synagogue. Did you go there often?) When I started to attend synagogue, beginning with Rosh Hoshanah in 1988, I did it very often, every Jewish celebration, and Saturdays. Many people came together near the synagogue to talk and sing songs and dance. It was very interesting. (Did your mother and father go?) No.

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(Do they go now?) I know that they are getting ready to emigrate, to come here, so they have no time to go to the synagogue. (And your brother? Did he go to synagogue?) Yes. When I began to go to synagogue, he served in the army. When he came from the army, we began to go together. He likes it. (So you celebrated things like Passover and Rosh Hoshana at the synagogue?) Just about all of them. Rosh Hoshanah, Passover...

(What was the reason you wanted to leave?) I couldn't agree with the situation in the country. I absolutely didn't like the politics in the country. I'd become an adult and I couldn't understand why everything was happening, was turning upside-down. (You must have made this decision before you met Sergey?) Yes.

(So I wondered what you felt was not good around you, what you wanted to change?) I felt that almost all strata of society hated me because I'm Jewish. I didn't want to live in a country where from time immemorial Jews have been scorned and hated. I wanted to feel myself a full member of society, but how could that be possible if in school you were teased by being called "Jew"; if at the institute you

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wanted to get into the grades on your entrance exams are lowered, and your friends, also Jews, are prevented from getting in. Because of the fifth line on your passport, "Jew," you are rejected for a job - either they find fault with the most unexpected trivialities, or openly, right to your face, informing you that for Jews all positions are closed. When the politics of the State are directed toward destroying everything in you that is human; when Jews studying in institutes simply walking around the synagogue during a Jewish holiday are kicked out the institute for an "amoral act." As examples I have my cousin and several of my friends at the institute. How can one live in a country where a sense of freedom has been blocked since childhood by the purposeful, so called, upbringing of a patriot of your homeland? And it was called "belief in the bright future of Communism" this is what we had instead of a sense of justice, pride instead of truth.

Where people were fighting for justice, and truth, where people fighting for Freedom were considered insane and were sent away, either to labor camps or prisons.

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In public places, on public transport, in stores, people scorn you, put you down, and for this they get gratification and enormous satisfaction.

For these, and for many other reasons, I wanted to move to a different place.

(So how did you learn English, in school?) I started in fifth grade. I was about twelve. (Did everyone study English?) No. We had two groups, German and English. There were a lot of people in English. We couldn't practice. Our teachers did not want to practice. (Did you study more English at the institute?) Yes, technical English for my specialty. I didn't speak or write it, I could only read.

(When you decided to leave to come here, you had to get permission to leave Russia?) Yes. (What's the procedure?) First I had to get an invitation from the country I wanted to go to. Then I needed to get together many papers from my work, with a stamp that I worked there; and from the Residential Office, a stamp that I live at this address. (Did your parents have to give permission?)

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No. Not because I'm old enough, but because I left on a different visa. I need to fill out many papers, and my parents need to sign them, and I put all the papers together and went with them to OVIR. I took many pictures. Men have to have a reference from the Military Commission that says they served in the army. I didn't need that. Then I went to OVIR and gave them the papers.

(If you're going as a guest, it's a different procedure than if you're moving?) I don't know exactly; I think the procedures are the same, but less time to accept the visa, and when a person's going as a guest, the regional committee looks over the papers. But when a person emigrates, the KBG looks over the papers.

(Did you fly from Moscow?) Yes, I flew from Moscow to New York. Then here, Chicago.

(Can we talk about your wedding?) Sure. (When did you meet Sergey?) We met near the synagogue. It was a funny event. My friend worked at a Jewish cafe in Moscow, the first Jewish cafe. Many people went there. Sergey and his friend were in this cafe and she was their waitress.

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And they talked together and liked each other, and decided to meet near the synagogue. And she asked me to come with her, and she introduced Sergey to me, and me to Sergey, and we met. (Is she still friends with Sergey's friend?) I'm not sure. He lives in Boston now, and he's married. She lives with her husband in Toronto, Canada. (How long did you know Sergey before he left?) About five months. (When did he leave?) January 21, 1989.

(What do you do in Moscow when you're dating someone?) It depends on many things, for example the season, the weather. You can go to the movies, the theater, to exhibitions or a cafe or to different musical performances, film festivals. I liked to walk on Moscow streets, or in side-streets, or in Sokolniki. Sometimes we went to parties or to see our friends.

(So did he invite you to marry him? Did you know you were going to marry him?) I really did not know, because a lot of time had passed, and he could change his mind. The first time we looked and realized what had happened, and finally we decided to get married.

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(Where were you married?) Oak Park Synagogue. It was a big party, about sixty people, many of them American. (They made you feel welcome?) Yes. It was very interesting. I had never seen before how to get married in synagogue. I see and I participated in it. I was stunned by it all. [has pictures - explanation of *chupa* to Sarah] [going through pictures] (Did you break the wine glass?) Sergey broke it. (So when you first got married did you move to this apartment?) At first we moved into this apartment from another, and then got married. (Who made the food?) Sergey's parents had it catered. Everything was delicious.

(Where are you going to school?) I'm taking a clerical course at the Business Career Institute of JVS, located on the corner of Devon and Damen. It's very far from here. (You take public transportation?) Yes, I take the bus, subway, and bus again. (Are you learning something?) Yes, I take courses on typing, accounting, computer software, business writing. We have English lessons. During the lesson we speak about many interesting things, also we watch videos and discuss them.

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(When are you going to start looking for a job?) When I finish this clerical course, I'll begin to look for a job. The course finishes in two months and then I will look. (You're doing volunteer work at the Federation?) Yes. I work one day a week. It's very interesting, only American people around me. New place in new country, new kind of job. I work with the Xerox copier, fax machine, and mail letters. (Is that what you think you'll be doing in the future, something similar to that?) No. It's only for right now. I am planning to be admitted to a university in Computer Science. (Do you want to go to the U. of C.?) Yes, I really want to. It is one of the best universities in America. (What college would you want to go to too?) University of Illinois or Northwestern. I think I can pass out of a lot of subjects I've already had. I'll study in the third or fourth year.

(What do you miss? Your parents, I'd imagine.) Yes. Parents and brother. But I hope they'll come in maybe half a year. I miss my cousin, my other relatives, my friends in Moscow.

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(What do you like here and what don't you like?) I like to see friendly people with a smile; many of them say "hello" to me, although I don't know them. I like our University area. The university's buildings are like castles from the Middle Ages with towers, belfries, many internal yards with a fountain, with plenty of entrances and arches, passageways. Everywhere you can find tennis courts and play tennis.

Here there is what's called "The Point" near the lake. It's a nice place. I like to walk there. It is a little peninsula. Many people like to go there.

I like downtown Chicago. Many architectural styles combine in the downtown area. It is amazing!

What I don't like here is the weather. Too hot and humid in the summer; very cold, with strong wind, in the winter.

(Is there anything you want to talk about that I haven't brought up?) It's easier to answer questions! (We ask most people if they heard about Chernobyl, and how you

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heard about it and what you felt about it. Did it affect you?) Yes. We knew about Chernobyl not right when it happened. But after a few days or maybe later, it was a very terrible misfortune, a calamity. It was a frightful blow for the whole country. I studied a little nuclear physics, so I could imagine what it was. I was really upset because I understood what happened, and that the U.S.S.R. was not ready for this catastrophe. There was silence in the press about the extent of the explosion and its consequences. After a year many books and articles came out, analyzing the Chernobyl disaster, causes of the breakdown. They described the heroic attitude of the people there, who really didn't know that death air surrounded them.

This misfortune explains that the government and ruling elite don't care about members of society, about people who work at nuclear power plants. It was one of the pushes that helped me to reach the final decision to leave the Soviet Union. (Here they talked about the problems with Sweden and Italy, so I was wondering if you were worried about things like food...) Yes, we were. Most food came from Byelorussia and the Ukraine. Food supplies

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were affected, maybe not to the extent as in Chernobyl itself, but quite close. People had no Geiger counters to measure nuclear radiation in the soil, ground, air. Collective farmers had continued to harvest. And it is not their fault, because they, poor people, knew nothing. But other people knew too much, and they kept silent, I thought it must be shouted as loudly as possible, "Stop! Don't do this!"

Second Interview with Marina (Reznikov)

DATE: May 2, 1991

(I forgot to ask you anything about your father. He went to Moscow in 1964 before they got married. Where did they meet?) It was an interesting case. My parents' parents had a vacation together, and they said, "We have a daughter and we have a son, maybe we should introduce them." Then my father came to Moscow and met with my mother. He's from Leningrad. (What kind of work does he do?) He is an engineer technologist. (Mechanical things or chemistry?) It's building materials industry, manufacture of lime, gypsum. (He studied in Leningrad and

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moved to Moscow when they got married?) Yes. (He got the same kind of work he was doing before?) When they married it was 1964. He worked in Leningrad and when he moved to Moscow he continued to work on the same kind of job.

(And your mother taught music?) Yes. (Did she study in Moscow?) Yes. She studied at the Moscow Central Music School at Gnesin Music Institute, then in Music College, and in Gnesin Music Institute in Moscow.

(You said your grandmother on your father's side was a singer. Was she pretty well known in Leningrad? What kind of music?) She was pretty well-known in Leningrad. She sang classical songs, Romances, lyrical songs. (Was she part of a performing group in Leningrad?) I don't know. It was before I was born. When she returned to Leningrad she became a teacher. After the Second World War. (Her husband did what?) I don't know my grandfather because he died during the war, World War Two, in the first months, so I didn't know him. She got married for the second time at the beginning of the Sixties. Now she lives with her husband in an apartment. He worked at a musical instrument factory. And now they are retired.

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(You were talking about some of your friends had been treated, and that a lot of you were dissatisfied with the kind of treatment that they got at school or at work. You mentioned that you were dissatisfied with the moral situation and psychological situation. We didn't understand if you meant moral or morale, and your feelings. What were some of the things that really bothered you and your friends?) [A more detailed answer is now in the emended transcript to the first interview.] But where I worked, my boss sent only me to an agricultural work farm. It's a tradition in the Soviet Union to send the urban employees, like engineers, to do agricultural work like digging and pulling weeds.

(We heard that at certain places everybody gets sent all at once to go work on the farms, either with planting or harvesting, but that everybody is expected to go. Is it like that?) A lot of the research institute sent their employees to the collective farm from a day to a month in the summer and in the fall. Most of the people who were sent were Jewish. (Were you the only Jewish person in your department?) Yes. (Your friends had the same kind of

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experience?) Most of them went to the collective farm. These were foolish jobs because the people who supervise us did not give us gloves and instruments to work. We did it all by hand. It was crazy! Our hands hurt. (Not too productive. So you and your friends weren't treated very well by your bosses.) No. But not only that. For example, in public places and public transportation too. For example, a salesman would try to sell us vegetables and fruit worse than others. They choose them especially for us. (At a store in Moscow?) Yes, a grocery store in the area where I lived in Moscow. (Did you ever argue with them?) I can not do this. You can hear about yourself in line. People who stand in line can say all that they think about me, about my Jewish face. It's very interesting to hear it!

(Is it mostly older women?) Not always. I heard that a few times from young women, and men with intelligent faces. At school it was the same situation. I remember that in class it was interesting, because they had registration books, and our teacher would give us a grade. Most of the information about us. On the last page, the one column was nationality. And only I was Jewish.

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Teachers always tried to take with them this book. They didn't want to leave it in the class. Sometimes they forgot about it and when it happened, the students always opened the last page and said, "Look, look, look, Jew, one Jew...."

(As far as the economic side, you said, "We always got around that" as far as getting food, etc. What did you mean?) I don't know! We all, my mother, father, me, my brother, for the two last years, we all worked. And in Russian it's called "ordering of goods". In your job you can buy foodstuffs. All of us can do it. (So you had more to choose from?) Yes. Let me explain. Dairy foods and hot dogs, sausages, sometimes meat, cheese. Sometimes there were vegetables too, because our organization had a contract with a few stores and they sent us food.

(You talked about your brother, and said that he's twenty-two?) Yes. (When you mentioned the people that you miss, you said, you missed your family, your friends and relatives, four cousins and three nephews.) Yes. (Your brother has three sons?) No. (So whose children are they?) My cousin's. Are those nephews? (No. They're

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second cousins. So your brother is not married?) No. They are my cousins' children. (How old are your cousins? Are you close in age?) My two cousins who are women: one of them is thirty-six. And my closer cousin, she is twenty-six. One of the two male cousins is thirty, he's in America too, and the last one is thirty-four, I think. (Your families knew each other well?) Yes. Our families live in harmony, as one united family.

(You talked about meeting with Sergey and a friend at this Jewish cafe. Describe the cafe. We went to one kosher restaurant in Moscow that was across the street from a park. It was on a little square. Could it be the same one? This one had all young men for waiters, with *yarmulkas*. I wondered if it was the same one or a different one.) There isn't a park there. [Sergey: Later these Jewish cafes sprang up all over the place! There were so many Jews and they were so hungry for any national identity, so people would go to the Jewish cafes and they wouldn't care for the quality of the food or service, just the opportunity to express themselves as Jews.]

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(Had you been to the place before?) No. I was there only one time when my brother, who had just gotten back from the army, went with me to the cafe.

(Sergey's mother and father were very active. Did your parents talk much about being Jewish in Russia to you?) No. They tried to avoid this conversation. I wanted to know about it, but they didn't want to talk about it. (So you don't know what their feelings are about living there?) No. My parents didn't talk about it with me. (Are they worried about you being here?) Yes. (Do you talk and write?) Very often. I call them. They are going to come here. (For sure?) They're at the OVIR stage of things. The wait for an answer is about a half-year, maybe more. (And your brother is coming too?) Yes. (And you say one cousin is in the States?) Yes. (Where does he live?) Near Washington D.C. Arlington.

(After you met Sergey, did you get involved with *samizdat*, or did your parents have any of that in the house?) Maybe they had it, but I really did not know it. Perhaps they hid it from us, me and my brother. When I

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began to study in college, I knew about *samizdat*, and my friends helped me.

(What did you read?) Exodus. I don't remember - I read many books. I don't remember because in a few months I began to receive many book parcels from Israel with a lot of information. People sent them to me, and I really didn't know who these people were. They sent me many, many books. (Describing Israel?) Yes. There were books about the history of the Jewish people, about famous Jewish people, about Israel, also calendars, posters with views of Israel.

(Now, here, you have a different job. You're still taking classes?) Yes. (When does that finish?) May 24. (The job you're doing now - is it something you like and want to continue or is it just another step?) Just another step. Because I want to continue to study. (You get to speak English?) Yes.

(What do you think the future will be like for you here? I mean as immigrants, and as Jewish people, how do you see yourselves here in America? Is being Jewish important to you?) Yes. (How do you want to express that

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in your life?) First, I want to learn Hebrew, it's the next step after I "finish" with English. I think it's very important for me, and I need to do it. So we can openly go to the synagogue and celebrate all of the Jewish celebrations, not underground. (Do you go to any Hillel programs?) A few times I went to programs at the University of Chicago Hillel House. And the U. of C. Committee on Soviet Jewry. Students for Israel. We celebrated *seder* twice with American families.

(Do you look forward to having a family?) I want a lot of children. In the future. (Do you want to stay in the city?) I want to, I'm an urban person, but I know it depends on many things - where my husband will get a job, etc.

(I don't know if you'll want to talk about this, but we were curious about Sergey's parents and your parents, and what makes them so different in how they look at things, because they are about the same age, and I wonder how they react to each other...) I hope they'll find a common ground. I think my parents are afraid. (You knew you wanted to leave the Soviet Union and come here - were

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your parents against it?) I wanted - but I don't know when. I thought that I wanted to change my life, but I didn't know when or how. (Well, here you are!) Exactly.

I recall about my mom's mom. When she was younger, her parents with the whole family, there were six children - they moved to Israel. It was 1914. And for them it was a very difficult move. My grandma was nine years old. She was the eldest in the family. Only the father could work. He earned very little money, and it was not enough for a big family. And they decided to return. They stayed there only one year, and they returned to the Soviet Union. Why! (Do you know their names?) Only last names, Mazirov. Maybe when my mom comes...

And one more thing. My father was planning to defend his dissertation because there was a very tense situation at his organization. Members of the commission were raging anti-semites, so he and his bosses worked under very difficult conditions. As a result, as a sign of protest against this outrageous scandal he stopped working on his dissertation although he had it all done in his head.

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(How do you see Russians as a national group and Jews as another national group, and yourself as a Jewish person from a Russian culture living in America?) [Sergey: I feel like a hybrid.]

(In Russia, your nationality was always "Jew", here, people think of you as a Russian. Do you feel more Russian or more Jewish?) I want to feel like Jewish, but I think it's difficult. I have many Russian roots because I grew up there. (Do you feel yourself Russian because of the culture?) Yes.

(I have one friend here who's an American Jew who says he might have more in common with an Israeli than with me, even though we're both American. So because of your Russian heritage you would have more in common than with an American Jew.) I feel myself Russian when there's a occasion to be proud of something in Russian culture. I feel myself a Jew when I celebrate Jewish holidays, when the Jewish people in Israel or in any other part of the world are in danger. I feel myself American when there are troubles among Americans. It is very difficult to explain.