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Summary

Hanna (Rafalowicz) Shevach was born on November 1940 in Magnitogorsk, Russia to parents who had fled from Łódź when the Nazis invaded Poland, as her father was a Communist. Her father was Rafal Rafalowicz, her mother, Zipporah. Her father's parents died in the Łódź ghetto. Six brothers and sisters of her father survived by fleeing to Russia with most eventually going to Israel. Her mother's father was Chaim Tobias. Hanna's father worked in a Russian armaments factory. Hanna was not aware of her Jewish heritage while young. Conditions were hard but she did not feel underfed.

In 1946, the family took a cattle train back to Poland accompanied by Hanna's infant sister. Hanna's mother took her to visit an old family homestead occupied by Poles, but they were not permitted to enter the flat to recover a family portrait. She became distrustful of Poles as she saw more anti-Semitism while living in Łódź. Her father found work in a knitting workshop, but soon applied to go to Israel as he joined as he had become a Zionist before returning to Poland.

Though Hanna spoke Russian, Polish, and Hebrew, she could read nor write no languages until after she arrived in Israel, via Haifa, in 1949. Hanna and her husband first moved to Australia via Adelaide in 1981 as she was uncomfortable knowing only Hebrew, and her mother had already died. She had two boys, both of which eventually moved back to Israel.