

Interview with Rita <sup>Gopstein</sup>~~Gospstein~~

HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Date: October 13, 1992

Place: San Francisco, California

Interviewer: Sylvia Prozan and Gail Kurtz

Transcriber: Diane Zacky

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Narration by Rita Gopstein

My name is Rita Gopstein, and I am with the Holocaust Oral History Project for exactly 18 months today. I came to the Project because my own grandfather was a survivor of the Holocaust on the territory of the former Soviet Union in the Crimea.

Being here in the Project, I was asked to help and promote interviewing Russian survivors, those Jewish people who had immigrated to the area and who were of the generation that witnessed and survived the extermination of Jews on the Soviet territory.

I knew that it was a challenge because the Jewish people who survived the war on the territory of the Soviet Union never had a real chance to tell their stories.

After the war, the Soviet government became much more anti-Semitic than it used to be before the war, and the population, somewhat, also became anti-Semitic since Hitlerism and the Holocaust on the Soviet territory, something that had been forgotten by the two previous generations of the Soviet people.

Before the revolution, Russia was so well known for its anti-Semitism, and it used to exploit it whenever it was considered of value for political games. But with the 1917

October Socialist Revolution, the situation changed, and many young Jewish men and women who, for the first time in their lives were able to get education and to represent themselves politically, came to the foreground of the social life in that new state. In many ways, they became outstanding and occupied foreground positions in the new administration; and for that reason, probably, as well as for that general, namely and nominally, progressive social structure, anti-Semitism seemed to be eradicated; though it was not, as the history showed later.

But before the World War II and the Great Patriotic War in the Soviet territory, anti-Semitism was not on the -- at least, it was not -- governmental in that society. After the war, unfortunately, it became a governmental position, and it acquired the quality of being a state anti-Semitism. So people who managed to survive the extermination of the most terrible kind that was ever seen -- those people who saw their own families and kin killed, who were courageous, and who were capable of mobilizing all their inner resources, and who managed to save their own lives -- these people, who had some hope that they would be respected by the rest of the society -- these very people suddenly realized that the authorities and the population were suspicious of them.

The attitude of the authorities was, "How come that you survived? Who did you betray to survive? What did you do to survive when all the rest were killed?"

These people were never able to speak about what they experienced openly; and even within their families, it was rather dangerous to speak about what their sad memories were like because the other members of the family might mention that, and that would be dangerous for them.

For illustration, I will just mention one social fact. After the liberation and the victory, those people who happened to live through the occupation, Nazi occupation, they were never allowed to live in the major cities of the Soviet Union. The paranoic Stalinist government and authorities subsequently always were suspicious and thought that probably these people became spies for the West, for the collapsed Germany or anybody else; so these people were refused from that official feature that is known in the Soviet culture as ascription.

So, the assumption of the people here in the Project was that probably now in a different world, the emigres from the Soviet Union would be willing to tell their stories and to sum up what they had lived through. So we began that, and we managed to arrange 45 interviews. They are mainly four-hour video interviews with the survivors from the Russian territories and one major feature for all of them is that they were never told, indeed, not even in their own families, and that, psychologically, it was very significant for these people to speak and to be recognized, if not by their homeland, but by this new society that they are in.

My own attitude to the Holocaust was very personal because my grandfather, Yefsi Yefimovich Gopstein, was the only Jewish person of 14,000 Jews exterminated in his native city, that of Simferopol in the Crimea on the Black Sea.

He managed to survive because his life was being saved within the 28 months of the Nazi German occupation by a Russian lady friend. She did that when he asked for help because 20 years earlier, my Jewish grandfather saved the life of her own cousin who was a Czarist Russian army officer and a nobility. Bolsheviki were after him, and my grandfather saved his life, and besides, he was helpful to the lady in several other ways. And so, when he realized that the situation was dangerous, he asked for similar help, and she said, do come to my house. They never thought that this would extend to the 28 months as it happened to be.

This story was not very often discussed in my family because my parents and -- I was born of a mixed marriage. My father was Jewish, and my mother was Russian, Russian Christian, traditionally, though the society by then was a-religious. Though my parents initially had some religious attitudes and education, my sisters' and brother's generation and myself, we were absolutely a-religious, and the knowledge of religion that we have by now was acquired more in a rationalistic way than absorbed from the surrounding. So it happened in more mature years for each of us.

It was very dangerous to be Jewish in the Soviet Union,

so my Jewish father always tried to vaccinate us for protection with our Russian mother's origin. He said that we were Russian, that we were born into that country, there was no choice for us but to learn how to love that country because there were very many positive things about that country. And he believed that by feeling Russian and belonging to that enormously huge ethnic group, we would be protected from the injustice that was normally in the Soviet Union shown towards all Jewish people.

However, ever since I remember myself, I always knew that my name was "Gopstein," and that it was a Jewish name and that my father was Jewish, and I always had to find the estimation of values because I knew how great my parents were as compared to dozens and dozens of people whom I came across.

So, that gap between the possibilities that average people did have because they were either Russians or Azbecs -- I was born in Azbakistan -- and the limited possibilities for people who were Jewish and the impressive personalities among the few Jewish people whom I actually knew as a child, that gap was enormous; and it made me unconsciously formulate my attitude to fairness and unfairness, social behavior, and behavior of the mob, and many other things.

In my family, that was the general attitude -- not to emphasize our Jewishness. However, I always knew that my grandfather -- whom I met in 1949 when I was five years old, and we came to a suburban Moscow region and rented a peasants

house there, and my grandfather came to see us there. When I met him, by then, I seemed to already know that he survived German occupation. I didn't know much about that. I knew that the Russian lady friend was hiding him, and that the 28 months of being in hiding seriously influenced his health. I also understood that he was an outstanding person because -- it's difficult to say -- he brought something that was not everyday atmosphere or even things into our life.

I was slightly scared to be with him because there was some significance that was difficult to understand for a kid of five. But it is thinking about the interview that we are doing right now, I still try to keep to his story, not to mine. I only want to show the atmosphere in which it -- the realization of that happened just to me.

In my family, we didn't speak much about that fact. Though it was respected, I think it was the same type of protection from -- on behalf of my parents towards us. If we started analyzing it and probably sharing it with our peers, that might be punished by the society.

My grandfather continued to live in the Crimea where he lived through the years of the war until he became quite weak, and, I think, in the year of 1959, he moved to Tushkien to join our family, and he was with us until he died, slightly more than a year after that, in 1960.

I always knew that my grandfather was a researcher, but because he was not doing the research along the lines of the

Soviet research, he had to hide the fact. He was an economist and a bibliographer, and I knew that that was the essence of his world thinking and of his life, in fact.

When he moved to my family, he brought with him his manuscripts -- and that is seven suitcases of the works of his life -- and his wonderful library. That was the most valuable library I ever came across in my life, though I know quite a number of good libraries. And that was the second library in his life because the one that was of even major value was in his apartment in the city of Simferopol, and it was left and then robbed by the Germans who sent it, partly to Germany -- as well as his other collections, all by the neighbors who also robbed the library and sold them through the secondhand bookstores.

So that first library somehow was lost after the war. My grandfather -- that was the treasure of his life. He continued collecting his books, and he managed to complete a very good library again. So by this, my family was also very different because after the war, only a scarce number of books was available, and they were of not threatening for the system character like Alexander Duma's books. So the average population were reading those books while we had something that was of eternal value for humankind.

When I was quite grown up, I began looking through my grandfather's manuscripts. That was after his death, of course, long time after his death. I think that, probably, it



is about ten years now that I began reading through his manuscripts, and I was very much impressed how significant my grandfather's works were. But I'm not speaking about his major work which is 4,000 pages and which, with the help of some American friends, I managed to sneak out from the Soviet Union.

I hope that I'll see them in print after I translate them into English, and I think that that will be of very serious social value because that is the research of the Crimea which was never done in this way and which was done -- a person with enormous knowledge in economics and social disciplines -- and it was written, being well-founded on the documents and -- but this is a different issue. I want to speak about the story of my grandfather's survival.

Among the rest of the manuscripts, I found a shorthand report dated August 16th and 17th of 1944 and done in the city of Simferopol with my grandfather. The shorthand report is the closest written document possible in 1944, the closest to the oral stories.

So with this report, I came to the Project, and later I translated it into English. I have it in English here with me. But I understood that since it was done in 1944, it probably was published, and I also knew about the Black Book series that was written in Europe after the World War II.

I started looking for the Black Books, and in the one that was published on Europe, including the Soviet Union, soon

after the war was over in '45 or '46 I believe, there was part covering the Soviet Union, but nothing about Simferopol was mentioned there.

Later I found the Black Book published only as late as 1980 in Jerusalem in the Russian language, and there was my grandfather's story, abbreviated, but that definitely was based on the shorthand account that I had at my disposal.

And what was also very nice was that several months later in 1981, the Black Book was already translated into English and published here in New York. That story was somewhat edited to look better literature, and several mistakes were done, but that was inevitable because I know that the Black Book for the Soviet Union was composed and edited by the most conscientious -- by great Soviet writers, and the two of them were Jewish Soviet writers, Etyat Aronbook and Viselia Grossman. I understand that the mistakes that I found in that publication, they were intentionally done because some of the details sounded probably incredible for the editors, so they just preferred to justify them in the way that seemed to be appropriate. Besides, they were doing that because they still were working under the Soviet framework, so they were to keep into account in their minds their possible censorship. So it was done like this.

I think probably that I'll just give a couple of biographical details about my grandfather, and then I'll read the shorthand report as it is translated by me because it is

a fuller story and because it is an oral history.

My grandfather was born in the city of Simferopol in 1885 on January 19th, and he was a person who was very much interested in culture in general, in the history of the Crimea, and in Jewish life as it historically developed in the area.

He made serious research, and he even, before the revolution, and as a young man, he wrote several serious works. I would like to give the titles of the works just to give the idea what they were like.

The works were published, printed in some cases, or published, presented to the public in other cases. In 1916, my grandfather had one of his works published, and that was on Jewish folk pictures. That was published in the periodical newspaper that existed then. Later it was cancelled.

I'm not sure whether it was forbidden, but certainly after the Socialist Revolution did happen. The newspaper was Jewish Life. My grandfather created what he entitled As a Puscula Judaica, Fragments of the Jewish Statal Dead Art and Folklore Collected in the Crimea. And that was never done by anybody else. That was never published, but I have some, by miracle, just some of the parts of that survived. I have them, some of them.

Then my grandfather gave for the preservation to Jewish Historical and Ethnographic Museum in Leningrad. Such a museum existed. He gave them materials for history of Jewish

folk art including wood carvings; engraved, embossed, chased, and filigreed silver; embroidery, cloths and fabrics, stained glass mosaics. He gave 62 plates in quarto; and among them were photos, drawings, drafts with explanatory notes. He collected them in 1915 and 1916 in the Crimea, and again, my assumption is that they do not exist anymore in the world because the Jewish population was so brutally exterminated.

I also have some parts of the work that was called Krifons. In art of Toria Synagogues my grandfather made a report in July of 1920 at the session of Toria Santific Archive Commission, and that commission decided to have it published in their proceedings, but it never happened.

There also existed -- I'm not sure whether I have it among the manuscripts that are still in the Soviet Union -- maybe that was lost, I just do not know -- elements of Biblical archaeology in the art of Toria Synagogues. That was a manuscript that he had written that was something that he spoke with satisfaction about in his diaries.

I have a very interesting research, and I also think that it doesn't exist anywhere in the world; that is, sayings, proverbs, and swear phrases of the Jewry in the city of Simferopol before World War I. That was part of my grandfather's material on folklore of Jews. That is a manuscript.

I have another manuscript that is on old Jewish symmetry in Simferopol in spring of 1934. Several of my grandfather's

works were published in Soviet time already, and those were works not on Jewry only, but on the Crimea in general. That was The Bibliography of Bibliographic Indices of Literature on the Crimea, and that was published in 1930, and I brought a copy just to show.

And the work that I mentioned already and that I defined as a very significant one is my grandfather's diaries which is 2,000 pages. Of the four volumes that he created -- and he began writing them in 1917, understanding that the 1917 Revolution was changing the entire life of the society -- and he finished writing the diaries in 1954 when it became difficult physically; his hand was trembling. He couldn't write it anymore.

And that existed, of course, in one copy only. You couldn't rely on anybody under the Soviet circumstances, not even the best of your friends, to either copy it by hand or to have a typist because many betrayals, unfortunately, happened in the Soviet society. That was always supporting, informing on somebody who seemed to be antisocial or anti-Soviet. And in my grandfather's diaries, I have descriptions of several cases when people were arrested because they made some notes on the events happening around them, and they were arrested for having at their disposal a tiny notebook of 12 pages.

While that was an enormous analysis of what was happening around him, even now that I have only two volumes of the four -- two others were lost -- it is still 2,000 pages of

very elaborate analysis, quite ready to be published except that it is in Russian, of course.

So, I have that and the diaries. He had the best traditions of the Russian literature as the guidelines in definition of his role of a person who observed, so he has a subtitle.

He says, he entitled it like this: From Old Papers, Scrap Notes of a Simferopol Inhabitant Contemporary of Soviet Power and World War II. So I have two volumes of the four that existed. I also have with me here the very serious research, very-well documented, that also is quite unique; and that is The History of the Russian Revolution in the Crimea 1917 - 1954, and that is another 2,000 pages that were created by him.

But coming to what the major line of our project is, I probably will just read that shorthand report as translated by me. So, it was shorthand report of the talk with Yefsi Yefsimovich Gopstein, a native-born citizen of Simferopol.

"Simferopol, August 16, 1944."

That is August 16th. Simferopol was liberated on April 13th of 1944, so it was several months after the liberation, and my grandfather knew for certain that he was the only Jew of the 14,000 Jewish people who were in Simferopol when the occupation happened, and he was the only Jew who survived. So he spoke about that.

Later on, in Soviet time, they began creating some rumors

about some other Russian people who helped Jewish people to survive, and they were speaking that several existed, but they know for certain that it was just regular Soviet kind of propaganda to show the friendship of people concept that the Soviet Union insistently created that it was much more resultative than -- in fact, it was not the case.

What I would like to mention is that when I realized that it was August 16th and 17th of 1944, I opened my grandfather's diary because I realized that the shorthand report still was told to somebody. So it was not a complete confession.

He felt it was his duty to speak about that because nobody else would the way he would. I also thought that probably in his diary he would mention something that would give me the idea about how it happened, who carried it, and the pages said that he did it on the official level because there were two journalists from Moscow who were asking about what it was like during the Nazi occupation in the city of Simferopol. And my grandfather thought it was his duty to speak about the Jewish issue mainly because he was the one who understood it with more bitterness and with probably much deeper insight than anybody else.

He also writes in his diaries that this interview was carried on in the presence of a colonel of Encavada. Encavada is the predecessor -- not even predecessor -- it is the KGB. Later on it became the KGB.

So I think inner censorship was present in my

grandfather's interview, and I know what it is. When I just translate that, I saw by certain figures of speech and phrases why he had to use it in such a way. That was part of Soviet realities, and that always was to be taken into account. It was dangerous to make a step if you did not quite anticipate what the consequences were, and this kind of anticipation became part of personalities for many Soviet people and especially for Jewish people and especially for intellectuals, of course.

So, again, "Simferopol August 16th, 1944." Here is the original of the shorthand report as I have it here. [Showing a page of the report.] It is a very poor carbon copy, and it is corrected with my grandfather's hand, and even though it was probably the best shorthand writer available, but you can see by the number of corrections how imperfect that was, so that is to be thought about too.

[Rita Gopstein reads from shorthand report as follows. Her comments as she reads will be in Italics.]

The Germans entered Simferopol on the evening of November 1st, 1941. For their headquarters, they occupied the building of the medical university in Railway Station Street.

*Oh, I also want to emphasize I did my best to translate it, but you hear the imperfections of my English. I'm rather fluent, but unfortunately, I really began speaking it only about three years ago, so I had a lot of vocabulary in the previous years, so please excuse my Russian accent, and it*



*isn't my grandfather's. It is mine.*

The city population learned about their arrival from those residents in the station area who had various reasons to go to other parts of the city.

On November 2nd, about 9:00 or 10:00 in the morning, the first German soldiers could be seen in the city itself. The first thing that immediately attracted the attention of the population was the accentuated neatness of the Germans. All of them were well-shaven and dressed in brand new uniforms as if they came after a parade and not from the Parecope fight.

*That was a very serious fight.*

Apparently, the city was occupied, not by the front line units, but by the rear ones; and the reason for that was undoubtedly the intention to create an instantaneous favorable impression of the Germans and their organization.

The first impression was much discussed in the city. People remarked that the Germans, who had been fighting for so long, looked very clean and tidy.

Within the first morning hours of November 2nd, the Germans spread throughout the city. There were motorcyclists rushing along the streets on errands, and it was somehow clear that the Germans were taking control of the city.

Downtown, there appeared notice boards indicating various routes to be used by all traffic, municipal as well as inter-urban ones.

It was a sunny day, still not real autumn, and the non-

working population of the city were out in the streets. At the corners, groups of people gathered, and those who understood German began speaking with the German soldiers.

Some Jewish people also participated in these talks.

About noontime, I left from my home. I wandered around downtown and watched new kinds of street activities. Then I walked along Pushkin Street, and I saw a crowd near the theater. Coming closer, I realized that the crowd had gathered at the first German order published in three languages; Russian, Ukrainian, and German. The order was framed with bright red margins and stood out on the wall.

There were several dozen people there, and it was impossible for them all to read the order. One of the crowd was reading aloud so that even if not all details, then the general meaning of that order was clear to everyone. It was a lengthy order, and it at once made an impression, at least on me, of something terrifying, scary, and dispiriting.

It was obvious that the former life of Simferopol was broken harshly as if hacked with an axe, as if some new alien extraneous trend had burst into the previous relationship of people of various ethnic groups who had lived side-by-side.

Simferopol was populated by various ethnic groups. According to the 1939 census, the Crimean population of 1,127,000 consisted of 80 ethnicities. This diversity of population on such limited territory of the peninsula had long ago come to a good working relationship, and the conflicts

that everyday life situations created were not ones of nationalistic hostility.

Into this atmosphere, the first German order initiated some new tendency that was scary and frightening.

The word "Jew" was not used in the order. Instead, "Yids" and "Kikes" was used. That first order stated that the German army had entered the Crimea, not as a conqueror, and with no intention of seizing lands, but it entered it to fight "Yids" and Bolsheviks.

Almost half of that order was about "Yids," and the word "Yid" was correctly declined in all cases; nominative, accusative, dative, instrumental.

It was obvious from that order that life in Simferopol was to be pushed into a new unhealthy and insane course. Further, it discussed prisoners of war and it forbid providing shelter for them. It was emphasized that any person hiding a POW or giving refuge to one would be severely punished.

I stopped listening to the order, and I began scrutinizing people's faces. The crowd was diverse, motley -- Armenians, Tartars, Jews, and Russians. I wanted to understand what the reaction of the crowd was, and what was the way with which people perceived and comprehended the major concepts. I was looking for the faces that would welcome that order, and I must say that I was not mistaken then, nor would I be now, by stating that the disposition of the people was not in favor of that order.

People were standing with lowered heads, concentrated faces, frowning. As far as I could see, there was not positive attitude to the order.

By publishing that order, the Germans calculated to seize zoological instincts to inside the early affirmant, but I must say that I did not see it in those first moments.

The crowd was huge, and silent, and I am not deceiving myself about this feeling of unhappiness. Such was the first impression of the Germans invading the city. Such was their first order.

I remember that what attracted attention was the statement that "Yids" were to be used for unqualified physical labor; to fill up foundation ditches, pits, trenches, to remove garbage, to pick up corpses, German ones as well as our soldiers' ones. Jews were to do those tasks, and the responsibilities for that were on the monitors, the organizers who were appointed by the German command and partially elected by the population. "Yids" were to fulfill all physical jobs.

*Some commentary. . . my grandfather says that, "I was looking attentively at the faces of the people to see if some were welcoming that order."*

*You ought to realize and understand that that was the year, that was November 1st of 1941. The years 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, and 1940 were terrible years for the Soviet population. Stalin was imprisoning people and exiling them in millions for various tiny suspicion. In fact, he wanted to*

have free labor. That was the reason people were in prison.

By then, the general population of that enormous country, of course, consisted of people who were terrified by the Soviet regime. They could never show that. And in the Crimea, as I know from my grandfather's diaries, many people were imprisoned already.

So with the occupants, with the Germans who came so elegantly dressed, so clean, and bringing some order; probably, there were some who were greeting that as a position to the unfair Bolshevik system and still reading that anti-Semitic order. And my grandfather states that he did not see anybody who was happy about that.

That's something that I think is of significance, and I think that is something that he felt was his duty to mention in the presence of that Encavada Colonel and the Moscow journalists.

By November 8th, they had put huge announcements in many streets about creation of Jewish committee. By order of Herr Commandant, a Jewish committee was formed with the staff of 13 people. The committee's functions, what it was supposed to do, were each represented the interests of Jewish people. Nothing was said -- sorry, that's my fault, translation -- nor about its tasks or duties. It was stated that such and such persons were elected to the committee, and so and so was elected as its president.

They were all Jewish, and none of them remained alive.

They perished like all the rest.

*That is about the committee.*

Several days after the formation of the committee, its first directives were issued. The directives were handwritten, and I must mention they were hand done by a huge number of Jewish volunteers who had gathered around the Jewish committee. They were mainly intellectuals, lawyers, engineers, professionals. It was perceived that they gathered around the committee with the hope of having a focus for keeping together. They went there to help the committee work. The members of the Jewish committee were simple, drab, dull, and I shall tell about how it was completed.

There was in Simferopol a person with no profession, a participant of World War I, Seltzer by name, who worked in a housing cooperative. The German command gave him the permission to form the Jewish committee. The reason for this was unknown. I assume that Seltzer had contacts with the Commandant and was appointed because of that.

It is true that Germans arrived with a great number of prepared addresses. They had them either from emigres or from relatives and dear ones of the local residents.

Anyway, the political apparatus that arrived together with the commandant had the addresses of people they wanted.

Perhaps Seltzer was found in this way and was obliged, and he agreed to form the Jewish committee. It is possible, though, that it happened in a different way. Maybe he just

went, for some reason, to the commandant. Among Germans, there were many who spoke Russian rather well. Perhaps Seltzer happened to be the first man who just spoke to them. It would be quite natural for him to do this because of his low cultural level and because of the social conditions of his micro world of speculators, profiteers, bookkeepers, and so on.

I have mentioned that the members of the committee were drab and simple and by their cultural level, they were not appropriate for the role. This was the reason for which the Jewish intelligencia united around the committee, to help if need be.

It was the intelligencia who copied the orders, and many copies were always required. When it was necessary, the notices were copied and Jewish youths with jars of paste went up and down the city; and in several hours, the German orders would hang everywhere.

An example was an order about livestock. It read, "The Jewish population was required on the order of the German command to give all information about every cow or sheep they had."

In another order, all Jewish population were required to deliver all Persian rugs to the disposal of the German command, or the Jewish population had to bring 3,000 sets of bedding, blankets, mattresses, bed linen. Those were collected for the hospital.

Besides orders like the ones mentioned, there were oral demands. Like many others of the intelligencia, I used to go to the Jewish committee. I did not work and had nothing to do. I wanted to understand the situation. I wanted to feel the atmosphere. Like many others who visited the committee, I witnessed and heard of unseemly or heard of unseemly excesses committed by the German command.

Others demands were as follows.

*That is also interesting because still the population, the people and Jewish people, they still believed in some normality. So, now, fifty years after the catastrophe, we know how terrible the situation was, and so when we just read that they were demanding that and that and that, for us it seems to be only natural; but still there was some order at least in the mentality of the people, and people couldn't believe that you can just order to bring your property and your property is to be given.*

*So, it's interesting that he sees it, because by then he was in his late fifties, and he still thought about a normal course of events, so he speaks about that as about something that is strange, you know.*

*We know that people were shamelessly robbed of everything, and that is not even surprising for me now, but then it seemed strange. People just had to get used to it.*

Other demands were as follows: to provide for the German command nine pieces of dark blue cheviot. I happened to be



present at an occasion when a police master came to the committee demanding 40 sets of dinner silver, real silver, and a certain number of table cloths and napkins. It turned out that General Manstein, who seized the Crimea, was giving a banquet for the top brass, and table appointments were needed. Where could the Jewish committee find 40 silver sets and table carvers? They wanted to have similar ones, but those were Soviet Jews. *(By then, nothing existed in Soviet Jewry.)*

The committee addressed one person, Balabon. He was director of the local psychiatric clinic. He was Jewish, and he had lots of services. I was present in the committee when a note to him was written, and two persons were sent with the request to help the committee. The messengers left. I left too, and the next day curfew allowed us out of our homes until 5:00 in the afternoon.

Next day I learned that Dr. Balabon had given the silver and table carvers.

There were other directives. The Jewish population had to give sweaters, jerseys, scarves, mittens, and gauntlets. Winter was at hand, and they began to feel that they had to get ready for it.

They began to take mittens from people in the streets; and if there happened to be a watch under the glove, they took the watch too.

A story was told to me about one engineer from whom the Germans took his gloves at the very beginning of the winter,

but by then, that engineer had been working for some German office, so he showed his card with the swastika, and his gloves and watch were immediately returned to him.

*That just shows how people learn, how they get adjusted to something that was new.*

On November 2nd, they began visiting apartments. They would enter a court and ask where Jews lived.

*The fact is that in Simferopol -- it is a one-story town. All the houses are one story. There is a general court unit and many apartments, and people know each other, of course, all families know each other, so they begin visiting apartments.*

At the beginning, they would say, where is Jewish population, then Jews. They were moving from one apartment to another, and they began their first experiments in robberies.

From the beginning, there was an order about the curfew. After 5:00 in the afternoon, nobody was to be out. Thus, the Germans entered apartments of Jewish families and absolutely, shamelessly approached each item of furniture; chests of drawers, cupboards, wardrobes. They opened everything and groped in them for things.

They would come when the family was having tea, and a sugar bowl with tiny pieces of sugar for biting would be on the table. It was a problem to buy sugar even then, so a German would take it and dump it into his pocket. If they happened to see a little jar of jam or butter also, becoming

somewhat of shortage by then, they took them. Potatoes were always taken.

Those were the first steps within the first week of the occupation -- the general line of their conduct -- from one robbery to another.

At the same time, there were notices on behalf of the German command that robberies were forbidden. On one hand, forbidden; on another hand, they were carried on officially. The Germans were engaged in wild banditry. They began with potatoes, sugar, and small items. Then they began to take women's underwear, clothes, and linen. All that was sent to Germany. Footwear, women's clothes, everything was sent to Germany -- to say nothing of children's things. Everything was taken.

On November 2nd, the Jewish population was ordered to wear arm bands with the six ray star around both arms. I wore them myself. At first, I wore them and then ceased. The command noticed that people stopped wearing them and demanded absolute obedience.

Once I was walking along Servetski Street, and there were several German soldiers laughing, eating sunflower seeds, and talking. I had a rather good coat on me, and they were discussing whether to take it from me or not. That was daytime.

One day they came to my apartment about 1:00 p. m. Usually, I hadn't stayed at home because the expectation of

their coming and the scenes of facing them were getting on my nerves. When they entered apartments, they immediately began searching. I had nothing of value for them. My library was scientific. It could not be attractive for them, and I did not have any food reserves.

My family had left from the Crimea in August. All my food stocks were about 16 1/2 kilos (36 pounds) of flour, about one and a half puds of potatoes, and a bottle of sunflower seed oil.

One Sunday I was at home. There came a knock on the door. I opened it. There were two soldiers there. I asked them in German, "What do you want?"

"Jews live here," and they moved, trying to get into the apartment. I am not a coward. Maybe it was dangerous to resist, but when he tried to get in, I pushed his hand aside and said sternly, "What do you want in my apartment?"

"We want to see it."

"There is nothing to see."

One of them was quite a greenhorn, very young, not yet hardened. The second one was older. The lad said, "We are looking for a room to live in."

Though they were forbidden to live in apartments, they managed somehow and tried to settle with the families.

I said, "I am single. It wouldn't suit you. If you need an apartment, the next one is vacant. It had belonged to a bank inspector. Besides, I want to remind you that the

commandant's notice forbids robberies. You must speak with me as an educated person, otherwise, I will take measures."

They said they were very sorry, clicked their heels, and left.

For appearances, they pretended to examine the empty apartment then said, excuse us again, and left. Several days later, it was dark, I had curtained my window with a blanket because my lamp was on. I heard a specific German rapping with knuckles on my door.

*The fact is that in Russia, the normal way to tap or rap the door is just with your palm or with the knuckles on the door, while Germans do it with their hand with their knuckles in a different way, and that produces a different sound, so he just mentioned that.*

*I think it is interesting that he describes these details because that also still shows some kind of human relationship. It is a relationship between the invaders and the population that was conquered, but still it does not predict the terrible thing that they intended to do to Jewish people. That's why people to the very last moment didn't realize or didn't believe. Nothing here shows it was possible to communicate. It was possible to forbid a German into your apartment. It was possible to show that you were a serious person speaking German and even forbid something. It still was possible.*

So I heard a specific German rapping with knuckles on my door.

"Who is it?"

"Open."

I opened. It was a Gestapo man. "Jews live here." He entered the first room, then the second one, arranged the light. I climbed to open the shutters and began to take down the blanket. He looked around and noticed the abundance of books, books on the desks, sofa, chairs.

"Your profession?"

I answered, "I am an economist and also am engaged in literature."

"All these were written by you?"

I smiled to myself, but answered, "No, it would be too much for one person to write, but I have some works published."

He stayed for some minutes more, touched the books wrapped in paper for protection from dust, shrugged his shoulders, and left.

I must mention that I worked as an economist in the system of the People's Commissariat of Communal Economy. I am a member of the research staff of the People's Economy. Economics is my profession. I also carry out research in literature and belong to a bibliography group.

About a week later, on November 8th, I think, there was a directive from the Jewish committee that referred to the German command's order about total registration of the Jewish population. It explained that all adults were to appear in

person for registration, and information about children was to be given by their parents.

The committee was situated on the Fountain Plaza opposite the city laboratory. There, Jewish people were standing in line to be registered. I went too. For the registration, the following data were wanted: first name, patronymic, last name, address, age, occupation. I do not remember whether anything else was asked. Then a handwritten remark was made in each passport.

The purpose of the registration was not known to anybody, neither to the Jewish population nor to the Jewish committee. Because they had asked about occupations, about professions, we thought perhaps they wanted the work force. Such was the life of the Jewish population before December 8th.

They demanded that the committee provide a daily work force. There were endless demands. Soldiers or officers came and demanded that young, healthy women were sent to clean premises, or several dozen men were wanted fit for manual labor.

The committee was always crowded. Besides, as I remember, all Jewish people were obliged to come to the committee.

About 12,000 people were registered. There always was a big crowd near the committee.

If 15 or 20 women were required, somebody would come out and choose . . . you, you, you, and you, follow me. He would

take them to the office and say, here are the 15 or 20. People were used for cleaning houses, for dirty kitchen work, for removing blockages in streets. The house of Estopelskes Street looked like a garbage dump crammed with rubble, the results of bombardment.

Corpses were removed. I did not see them, but they were scores of killed horses.

One day I was walking along Rozeluxemburg Street, not far from the building where the German command was quartered. There was a German standing by it. When I was passing by, he said, "Come in." I looked at him, not understanding, and asked what for.

"You'll be told inside." I entered and saw one of the local Germans who had been in hiding when Simferopol Germans had been deported by Soviet authorities. Many local Germans had done like this, thus he became a manager.

It turned out that they wanted some furniture to be carried from one room to another, so I had to take part in it.

*There was a certain German population in the Crimea as in other areas of Russia because Catherine the Great, being German herself, insisted that many of her compatriots move into Russia and founded colonies there. There were several German colonies from those times, of the late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century in the Crimea.*

*When the war began, Stalin ordered -- Stalin was great at deporting ethnicities and people. Within one day, within*



*several hours, an entire ethnicity would be deported to another area of the enormous country.*

*When the war began, the German population was immediately deported, but there were several German people who managed to hide from that and waited until the German army occupied the territory and then they, of course, volunteered to cooperate.*

When the Germans occupied Simferopol, they saw that the Jewish population there was poor. They arrived from Warsaw where Jews were rich, so they began to ask where the rich Jews were. The answer was that we had none. The Germans insisted in various languages.

The Germans did not trust the Jewish committee. While local Jews were surprised that the Germans had no idea of what the Jewish population was like.

Some short time passed, and they said they would find the rich Jews themselves. Gorvich was commissioned to accompany them and point out the better off. They wanted to enter houses and rob them. They put Gorvich in a car, and as he himself told later, he could not make up his mind where to take them. Then he remembered about a legal advisor Dufdivsky by name. All lawyers made good money, so he took them to that person. Such was Jewish life those days.

Little by little, the Germans began to enjoy robbing and pillaging the Jewish population. Some came to the Causes' house, saw Seitzler's binoculars and took them away.

There was an accountant named Fidlong. On November 2nd,

two Germans asked where Jews lived. They came to him and suggested that he give his valuable things to them. He protested. They said that he had gold. They threatened him with a dirk, and he either had to give everything to them himself or they took it from him by force. Such was life until the early days of December.

*The early days of December and the end of the city on November the first. So, it was about six weeks.*

After the registration of which I told and which took two days, the command required that the Jewish committee work on the materials to process the data and summarize the data. Several days were allowed for that.

I had been the head of the Department of the City Economics with nine years experience. Though it was economics that was my field, not demography; nonetheless, I wanted to help the committee with that. But they forestalled, and the work was done without me.

There was a person who worked as a semi-accountant or semi-economist in the state planning, Nisliovich by name. He wanted to help the committee and worked hard for them. He never skipped any work, and he was much younger than I was; so Nisliovich took the materials to be summarized, and he asked my advice on some points. At the committee he had some assistance, but though some of them were educated people, they did not understand statistics. Making summaries went slow, and it was demanded with frequent threats.

I copied the results for myself -- because he was always writing and analyzing everything, so he just copied the results of that registration too.

I copied the results for myself. They were as follows.

The total Jewish population was 14,000 including about 1,500 Crimchucks. It was not entire pre-war Jewish population of Simferopol. During the military actions, part of the population of Simferopol and other cities had been evacuated.

Like my own grandmother -- she was in a different place in the Crimea. She was on the southern shore, on the sea, and when the war began, the population was ordered to evacuate, and my mother with my two elder sisters who were staying with my grandmother, they evacuated.

My grandmother was a TB doctor, and she had been working on the southern shore of the Crimea which was the best place in the Soviet Union for curing tuberculosis. So the population was ordered to evacuate, and they managed to evacuate.

Luckily, my mother, being a pilot's wife had a lot of money to pay for that boat; and they were able just to make it, and they did it.

But some Jewish people managed to evacuate.

He just is speaking about how that 14,000 statistic, what it consisted of.

So during the military actions, part of the population of Simferopol and other cities had been evacuated. On the other

hand, there were fugitives from Herson, Niproperovsk, Yikotenkaslav who settled in Simferopol.

The rural population of the Jewish villages of Freedorf and Langendorf districts and the Yupatoria poured into Simferopol too because they had no other place to go.

They thought that here in Simferopol they were in their own element, in the middle of the Jewish community. As the result of that, we found 14,000 people, Jewish people. I do not know what was the number of Jews according to the 1939 census because it had not yet been published.

*That was the census that was carried on in the Soviet Union in 1939, and Stalin never had this one published because it showed the disappearing of many people as compared to the previous census. So it was never published officially; and even if it were, it certainly, being a Soviet statistical document, would provide some distorted information.*

*But officially, it was carried on in 1939, and by 1941, and it was the middle -- it was still not published, but that is a different issue.*

Thus, part of the Jewish population was local while another part was from neighboring territories.

On December 7th, a Crimchuck neighbor of mine, an old woman, came to visit me. Her sons were in the Red Army. Her daughters-in-law worked in consumers trade. She was a simple, uneducated woman, and she respected me, and she came to me for advice.

I asked her what the problem was. It turned out that the Jewish committee in one order beset on the German order commanded the entire Crimchuck population to appear on December 8th, and not later than December 9th at the railing point on Helvick Plaza in the Pedagogic Institute dormitory. The old woman was crying and saying, "This is undoubtedly our death. This is undoubtedly our death." I tried to calm her.

Before that, there were no rumors of anything, so I did not believe in the possibility of mass extermination.

*And Crimchucks, as my grandfather mentioned, there were 1,500 of them, a thousand and a half.*

I knew that as a member of the German army, there arrived one professor, Korasic, a Viennese university professor and a specialist in ethnology, in anthropology and ethnology. I knew about his staying in Simferopol because I had contacts with the libraries. Several librarians were my good friends, and I learned from them that some work was carried out for him in three libraries, in the central library and in the library of the Pedagogic Institute.

They, librarians, selected literature for him. I did not know what the contents of his research were, but I knew that the libraries were fulfilling this task, so I assumed that the problem concerned the population of the area, of the territory and ethnology.

When the terrible rumors had first appeared, I explained to that old woman, my neighbor, that nothing like

extermination was possible; that was unthinkable. Probably the professor was carrying on research. I assumed that the professor might go as far as measuring people's skulls.

Crimchucks undoubtedly are Jewish people, but they have a different language, and also some Tartar traditions, and they pray in Jewish synagogues in Hebrew. Their everyday speech is Tartar. The Crimchucks color of the Seventeenth Century, Lineau, had lived in Kara Su Basar. That is the Crimea.

Kariems also speak the Tartar language. The language of Kariems is the Crimean Tartar's language. In 1883, in Bakchasari in Kahn's Palace, everyday languages were Persian, Turkish, and Arabic. They were spoken by the whole court, and that made its imprint on the rest of Bakchasari media and culture.

The south of the Crimea is mainly populated by many Greeks and Armenians. The Kariems' language has many borrowed words. It used to be purer, and by its phonetics and by terms of speech and phrases, it was relative to the Naugile language. Kariems, are the results of cross-culture of Cazars and Jews, but they're not Jewish (*while Crimchucks were*).

I heard the terrible rumors about extermination, but I was of the opinion that an ethnic group of Crimchucks of 1,500 people could not be subjected to annihilation. Annihilate them? What for? That was beyond my understanding.

The next day, that same neighbor came again and said

there was an order for Crimchucks to take warm clothes and food enough for eight days and come to the railing point. The old woman kept saying, "This is our death. We shall never see each other again."

Something dark penetrated my conscience too. I fitted one fact with another. I analyzed, peered at things. "Yid" slaughter was in the air. Yidocide was in the air. My neighbor said goodbye and left. That was the night of December 8th.

Then it turned out that a similar order was issued concerning the entire Jewish population. They too had to appear on December 9th and 10th at the students' dormitory of the medical university opposite Lenin Park and also in the building of the former District Party Committee at Number 14 Goggle Street. The railing points were there. The deadline was December 10th and 11th.

There were no written notices either for the Kariems or the Jewish population. People learned about them from each other. I went to the Jewish committee where I had connections to learn things that were not available to others. There had been many difficulties, and some people in the committee used to speak confidentially about robberies and other things.

I learned that there was an order to appear at the railing points and to bring warm clothes and food. That was true. That was correct. I went there on December 9th, and they said it was true, that such was the German command's

order.

By then, the city was full of various rumors. On December 10th, there were five variants of rumors, essentially as follows.

First; the Jewish population would be sent ahead of the German army that was on the offensive to the city of Sevastopol. (*Sevastopol was still Soviet.*) The Jews would be used as a covering force.

Second; the Jews would be sent to forced labor in Bessarabia.

Point three; the Jews would be sent into the colony districts of Freedorf and Langendorf. (*That was where the German colonies, but the people were deported from there.*)

The Jews would be sent into the colony districts of Freedorf and Langendorf. Winter crops had been sown. The Jews would be just sent there to work.

Point four, rumor four; all Jews would be sent to the U. S. S. R. across the front lines.

And point five; everybody would be exterminated.

Those five variants were in the heads of the population, Jewish and Russian alike. The Russian suburban population who had close contacts with POW's and with the civilians working for the German military establishment, such as railway workers, industrial workers -- they had those contacts. Some industries escaped destruction.

*When Bolsheviks were giving the city to the Germans --*



*were leaving the city -- they exploded some industries, but some others were still functioning; and Number Nine factory and the railway depots continued to function.*

By the very course of life, many people were involved into Germanization. They gave substance to rumors. Who could know which of the five variants was correct? I, myself, did not believe in the possibility of extermination.

On the morning of December 10th, a rumor spread over the city that the gathering was cancelled. My sister lived separately from me. She worked as a chemist for the city laboratory. She had a university degree, and she spoke German. We agreed to go together.

On December 10th in the morning, I was waiting for a long time for her to come. She came only at about 11:00 a. m. or noon, and she told about the rumors spreading in the city about the cancelling of the order. She had heard this from her neighbor or from someone else. She decided that it was necessary to know from the primary source, so she went to the Gestapo at the hospital plaza.

*So, it was possible still, people didn't know. They were not even aware to such a degree, that this Jewish intellectual chemist, she speaking some German, she went to the Gestapo to speak about what was the right order.*

She decided that it was necessary to know from the primary source, so she went to the Gestapo at the hospital plaza. She went there and was shouted at very rudely. Her

German language was not very fluent. She was shouted at very rudely that the order was not yet cancelled. She then insisted that there was to be a written order. She insisted that there were no official instructions and that the suggestion for Jews to appear was rumor only.

With this in mind, she came to me.

*Again, knowing the development, it is unthinkable to imagine that, but that was the case. It was still on the human level. It was possible to say, "Where is the written order?"*

We decided, my sister and myself, we decided that if we appeared the next day, we would not risk anything or lose anything. Probably by the next day things would be better explained. Thus, December 10th passed and December 11th came, the appearance deadline.

The night of December 10th was very intense. Nerves were strained to the limit. There was anticipation of some catastrophe. There was nothing good in any of the rumors. Even being sent to do work seemed bad enough, though I thought it would be better to be sent to the Freedorf district in the Crimea than to Bessarabia. It was impossible to believe that they might send Jews ahead of their troops.

I dismissed the thoughts about execution. People were going to appear with their children and the old ones. Those who were strong and healthy, those Jewish people who were strong and healthy had all gone to the Red Army and

conscientiously and honestly had gone to the front.

I'm telling you that within those summer months, I read the newspaper, Red Crimea. Nothing like that was reflected in it. While the central newspapers were not available and one only seldom got them. Those facts (*about German behavior towards Jews*) were written about in the Provda and Isvestia, (*the national newspapers*), but as for the Red Crimea, hardly at all. So little was known about what was committed by the Germans who had occupied our territories.

I felt that it was probably politically necessary for them to create certain attitudes in the masses, but I thought that the rumors were exaggerated.

It seemed, though, that the suburbs knew more due to their contacts with the Germans either during work or other experiences, and any of the five variants was disastrous.

I was almost 60 years old. My sister was about 45, (*which means younger than I am today*). My sister was about 45. She was not physically fit for hard labor. (*I believe that she limped -- maybe I am mixing some of the facts, but I believe that she limped slightly.*)

At my age of 60 years, what kind of worker would I be in the conditions of the agriculture in the steppe and having no warm clothes? We did not have any warm things which meant that we would wither away rapidly. I knew the state of things in our districts especially in the steppes because I had visited villages in 1931. I was a planning economist, and

they had to make reports for the district executive committee. I knew that nothing more could be expected than several barracks with earthen floors.

I decided not to appear myself and not let my sister go either. For myself, I had in mind one possibility, to seek refuge with an acquaintance. In the past, I had rendered a very significant service to that person; and during all years, I had provided various smaller favors so that I had the right to count on that person's understanding and help.

*Just think about that. Never in his story he names that person because in those years, in the presence of Encavada colonel, it is a pretty top military rank, it was just very dangerous. More than that, in English you never know the gender of the person. In Russian you always know by the way you speak, because we have genders -- we have grammatical genders. And still, my grandfather uses such choice of words as to not even mention whether she was a woman or man. He somehow tries to camouflage because he does not know what the development might be, just everything, so he's very tactful about describing that, just very, very tactful.*

So I decided not to appear myself and not let my sister go either. For myself, I had in mind one possibility, to seek refuge with an acquaintance.

There were about 20 apartments in our courtyard, and the population was mixed; Russians, Jews, Tartars. I lived in that house for 28 years, and everybody in our house respected

me. I visited that acquaintance of mine on December 11th to speak about my intention and hope. "Well, of course, come," was the response.

I said, "Today at two o'clock in the afternoon I will come to your place with my bedding."

*Because people were ordered to come with clothes, so he wanted probably that small pack just to show to the neighbors that he was obeying the order and just to have it, of course.*

I said, "Today at two o'clock in the afternoon I will come to your place with my bedding. You will probably have to provide shelter for some time, but I do not know for how long." That was agreed upon. It was then time to think about my sister.

She had her own circle of friends, mainly chemists. I decided that when she would come, I would tell her about my idea; and after that, I would leave for the promised refuge.

My wife (*that is my grandmother*) had left from the Crimea earlier in the summer with my son's family. He's a pilot, and was awarded with three decorations. His wife is a young professor, a Russian. Theirs was a mixed marriage. My wife is a doctor, tuberculosis specialist, and she worked on the south coast of the Crimea.

In August everybody was ordered by the Soviet authorities to leave the city of Simeez. My wife, our daughter-in-law, and two little girls (our granddaughters) were all to evacuate.

Our daughter-in-law had some army document that gave her the right to expect that she, as a pilot's wife, would have protection in the city of Turtkule. (*That is Curacal Park. It used to be on the Aral Sea. That doesn't exist anymore. You possibly know about that. That is just desert, and a terrible place in fact, but --*) would have protection in the city of Turtkule, which was the base of our son.

Before mobilization, he was attached to the army, (*All pilots were in the Soviet Union.*) though he was always a freight pilot.

On August 19th my wife, our daughter-in-law, and the two grandchildren all left for Central Asia. I decided to quit my apartment. There was not much furniture or things there. The immediate neighbors were good people and very friendly, always supportive at difficult times.

Leaving from home, I intended to officially hand over my apartment to that neighbor, a specialist, a Russian person. Nominally, that person would live there. I wrote a paper saying that the apartment belonged to the Russian.

The elected elder (*it is a kind of janitor that was called the elder in Russian tradition*) -- the elected elder came to say goodbye to me and to remind about the official appearance because one of the police was only around in our neighborhood and had ordered to check out whether Jews had left to go for the appearance.

It was about midday already. My sister did not come. I

began to feel that it was the time to hasten because I wanted to go to my sister's place in time not to break the order. When the elected elder came, he signed officially the paper about my apartment now belonging to a Russian. We kissed several times and -- *that is Russian tradition* -- and I went to my sister's apartment, but I did not find her there.

When I began asking about my sister, I was told that in Arhevney Street, Russian auxiliary police were checking out all houses and every apartment, and they took all Jewish people with them. That meant that my sister was taken by them. That explained why she did not come to my place.

I could not wait and had to hasten. I left from there carrying my port plaid with two changes of underwear, a piece of soap, a little pillow, and a blanket. My apartment had been locked, and I put the key into my pocket. I intended to give the key to the person who would live there.

*That was August 16th report. Now the continuation on August 17th, 1944. The same group of people were asking my grandfather.*

It was about one o'clock in the afternoon. No time was left to look for my sister, and I had to go where I planned to hide from the Germans.

The next day, on my request, the person who had provided refuge to me began to visit the assembly points trying to make contacts with my sister, but all those attempts failed. My sister could not be found.

Only the last hours for the assembly deadline remained; and along all streets of the city, Jewish people were walking, carrying luggage by hand. Only a few were driving on horse wagonettes.

Several families of our courtyard hired together a horse cart, loaded it with numerous bundles, suitcases, chests, and packs; and they left. There were youths, children, old people. It was painful to see that. I remember their faces, and I also remember the faces of Russian people. It was very distressing.

On December 12th, again on my request to make the last attempts to find my sister, the offices in Goggle street, the former Communist Party District Building, and the medical university were visited. But my sister was not to be found.

They hanged seven or eight people. Not far from the city garden in Lenin Street, they hanged an old man. There was a board on his breast saying, "for not appearing on time."

My sister was not found on the 12th of the month nor on the 13th. On the 13th, a note was brought by one Jewish woman who was let go. The Germans had written a strange note in that woman's passport, "vicht nicht und gebrand."

*I do not know any of German, but it means, "not liable to annihilation," or something like that.*

There was one Professor Klapinyon, the author of a vast number of soil maps for the Crimea. He had been married to a daughter of the Frigg's family. There were five daughters in



the Frigg's family, and all of them were married to Russian men. One was married to Babrovski, another to Klapinyon. Two or three of them went to the railing point on time. They said that they were wives of Russian men, and those strange notations were made on their passports, "not liable to annihilation."

It was with that woman that my sister sent a note to my friends in which she asked about me. I kept this note and have it even now. (*It is in Moscow among the manuscripts that are there still.*) I kept this note and have it even now. That was the last that I have from her. That note was brought to me along with the information about people being hanged in the streets.

I also was told that Dr. Rosenof hanged himself in his clinic because he did not want his wife to see how the Germans would hang him. His colleagues managed to take him out of the loop, and they immediately wrote a request to the German commandant for him not to be taken as a doctor. He regained consciousness, and then they came after him and he was taken away.

After this, my connections with the outer world were broken. My life became an expectation of what to do.

On the first days of the assembly period, there was one of the Germans living in the house, and he had contacts with the inhabitants including the person who gave me refuge.

*My grandfather doesn't mention here, but because she was*

*aristocratic, she was good at foreign languages, at western languages, and she spoke German -- so there was that German living in the house, and he had contacts with the inhabitants including the person who gave me refuge.*

That German -- under the mood that prevailed in the city and that undoubtedly influenced everybody -- that German told that he had witnessed mass executions of Jews by firing squad in Bucharest. He told also that he had a friend there, a doctor who served in the Rumanian army whom he managed to rescue either from his home or from the place of execution.

The German had been in charge of an auto car park in Bucharest; and he had another friend, the driver, who was a Fascist. The German ordered the driver to bring a car, put the Jewish doctor and his family into the car and had them driven away. I do not remember where, but they were saved from being shot.

I began to realize that something like that was to take place in Simferopol. I am speaking about what was happening in the city. I wouldn't say that I was depressed. I was feeling that I was going off my head into insanity.

*Again, maybe it is my poor translation. He says, I cannot even say that it was that feeling of being depressed. It was not that. I was feeling that I was going off of my head into insanity. It was very painful. My mind could not grasp it -- the monstrous plan of the German authorities to annihilate 12,000 Jewish people.*

The city, the population were terrorized. People, even Russians were afraid to go out. It seemed that even the air changed and was full of horror and blood. In a word, it produced grievous, onerous impressions on all ethnic groups. All people were dispirited and saddened.

On those first days, many Jews did not appear for the assembly and as punishment, many were executed by hanging. After that, the police raid sweeps were introduced. At first, they took place only in the streets.

At the beginning, the field jon d'armery acted. They stopped people in the streets and requested their passports. Many were detained, not only Jews. Those were their first attempts of combing through the population in the city streets. The raids happened often in separate districts and streets at various times of the day and at short intervals.

All through December of 1941, they carried out such raids, and at the beginning of January of 1942 after the fifth of the month, there was the first mass sweep of the total population of the city. The street was cordoned. Each block, each region, they had cordons everywhere, and people were sent to definite points. At the dawn, each street, each house, each apartment, one by one were searched.

That was a total mass check of the population and a search for weapons too. It was the first one. We had to live through five of them. It was distressing, full of anguish.

The person who was providing refuge to me had to leave

home often for various needs. Trying to be unnoticeable, I covered the window of the room. It was the window into the street. The door of the room lead to a passage. The door was an olden one, an old one, very firm, and heavy with a good American lock. I always covered the keyhole. So every time when my landlady left -- *that is for the first time that he says landlady* -- I covered the keyhole so that it was impossible to see through the keyhole.

The desk at which I read and wrote was by the window. The bottom part of it was of plywood -- *and so if you look through that keyhole, probably, you would be able to see my grandfather sitting at that desk, so he was always to remember and to cover that.*

That morning I knew that they began the mass raid in the city. It was probable that the Germans might come to our place. We did not know, though, how they did it, whether they checked throughout or randomly. I was on my guard on the qui viva. There was no other way to be.

It was necessary to think about precautions, but I could not do anything because every movement was difficult. There was not a chance to get to the attic nor to the basement. I had not the slightest idea about how they would search. I pulled together all my willpower to be balanced because the possession of feelings depended on that.

At about nine o'clock in the morning, the sound of the unusual steps made it clear that the Germans came. I had

learned how to read sounds and various steps. There was no doubt that the Germans were coming.

The house inhabitants spoke some German. The house was big, and there were many rooms in it. I heard by the steps that they came up to our room. They entered the adjacent one, then approached my door and began banging on it. I did not move. The banging was repeated. I decided to stay quiet and wait.

Then I heard the German asking who resided in the room, and the answer was that a woman, a Russian, a teacher, single. She had no one, the house inhabitants who could speak German explained; and at that moment, Willie, the German who took up residence in our house meddled in the conversation. Probably he was not a bad man. He was from the Rhine, and he was very well disposed.

The officer was satisfied with his answer, but nonetheless, the officer wanted to get into the room. They attempted to open the door, but the door was very solid, heavy with that sturdy American lock. They kicked the door, but it would not let go, and suddenly I heard the most terrible -- there was a dog scratching next to him. The officer was there with his Alsatian.

You can easily understand that the dog could sense through the door; and in one way or another, the officer might recognize that there was a man inside. And at that moment, something happened that they cannot call otherwise than a

miracle.

One of the house inhabitants had a dog, a huge thoroughbred, young cheerful dog, robust and strong. All day long that dog was outside playing with children and passersby, and it came home to its owner's only by nighttime. At that very last moment, when they were pounding on my door, the neighbor's dog miraculously appeared in the corridor. Either he had been not far away, or somebody called, but the dog began such a hubbub that the German was worried about his own dog.

Willie and the officer tried to separate the two dogs. The officer was afraid to let his dog go while the soldier could not pull the other one aside. At last, they managed to part them.

Besides ours, there was only one room more to examine, and that last one was where some German anti-aircraft gunners took their meals. We knew that groups of Germans used to come there.

Several minutes passed. They left the place, and everything was calm again. Such was the first sweep for me.

The Germans never spoke to the local people about the destiny of the Jews. At the beginning, they did not contact the population. There were some barriers existing, but, of course, people could not help asking; and rumors about what had happened began circulating in the city, first in the suburbs, later in the center of the city.

I learned about them too. Vague, obscure rumors about some catastrophe, about mass destruction of the Jewish population appeared, then they became more definite. There was a talk about some Jewish women who were driven out of the building at Number 14 Goggle Street with their hands up and the guards were snatching their purses from them. They also spoke about some Jews who were allowed to keep their suitcases while another part of Jews were exterminated. It was mentioned that the people were lead out with their hands up having no belongings.

The execution was by shooting, not far from Kuerman. They said that communal graves were dug by POW's. The shooting was by submachine gun. Later they used to say that the shooting was eight kilometers away, but in what direction, I failed to learn. But by putting details together, I think that it was on Fairdorsare Road near the anti-tank ditch.

Those were the scarce pieces of information from the citizens.

In March, there appeared rumors about the spouses of the mixed marriages who had been allowed to leave, like that Klapinyon widow and others. It was being said that they would be ordered to come for the assembly too.

Throughout the city, some people were checking out for the mixed marriages and the children of those marriages. There was one, Mikeiluv, a private dorsund of the university. He had a Jewish wife. When they came to take his wife, he did

not want to let her go alone and went together with her. Nothing is known about what happened to him. I know for certain only that he never came back home.

I heard also that Engineer Sherofski's grandson perished. The child's mother was Jewish. She had divorced her husband, and it was the husband's parents who were raising the child. The child was taken from them and perished.

I heard about another situation. The husband was Armenian. His wife was Jewish. He wouldn't let her go alone, so they went together.

Several months later, I heard about another case. When a family was going to the assembly point, a daughter was left behind. She stayed outside, and a Kariem family that knew her gave her refuge.

For several months, the girl stayed with them. Then they took her to the town of Sackee, where lived a single Russian woman whom they knew quite well. This Russian woman was reliable. They asked her to protect the girl and to give her refuge because they, themselves, were afraid to have the girl in Simferopol.

I must mention that this Russian woman who gave refuge to the girl -- I do not know how the girl was registered in the village -- that the Russian woman not only provided the housing, but also found some job for the girl not far from their home.

The girl lived, and I was interested in how things were



with her. When my landlady visited the Kariem family, I always asked her to inquire about the girl's fate.

After a very long interval when there were not any contacts with the Kariem family, the girl doing housekeeping chores, went along the street in the city of Sackee and came across somebody from Simferopol whom she knew. Being a child, she greeted him. The man was very surprised, and I assume, asked her how she happened to be in the town of Sackee. The girl told him, and that very night, the girl perished.

What were the motives of that man, I cannot understand. Apparently, the Jewish people who, at the beginning had the luck to be hidden at their relatives or friends gradually were revealed.

Two days before the official assembly of the Jews, my wife's sister was planning to be hidden by a friend of hers. She had visited me to know my opinion. She did not want to go for that registration.

I asked who was going to give her refuge. She explained that she had decided to go to the Slobadak, a village, near Vorka Settlement where her son-in-law's mother lived who was Russian. She hoped to have help from that Russian woman. She hoped to have potatoes from her, but apparently she perished during one of the sweeps that were organized now and then.

I miraculously got away safely untouched by all the sweeps in the city.

During that second sweep -- I think it was in March of

1942 -- I had to leave the room. There were many rooms in the house with numerous dark, secluded corners. There was a locked closet there. During the first sweep, the Germans passed by not noticing it.

My landlady had the key from that closet. Inside there was stored a very big medical library, medical instruments, geographic maps, and also a lot of rubbish, old boards, beds, and so on.

I decided to hide in that closet, but it was not easy to get there because there was a lot of activity in all the corridors. It was necessary to catch the moment when nobody was around. We managed to do that shortly after we learned that the sweep began in the city.

They began the sweep at dawn. At about five in the morning, there was the rumor that the sweep was happening and we decided it was crucial to get out of the room into the closet. I got into the closet when there was not much activity in the house. My landlady was in the corridor on guard. She made the sign for me to leave our room. Then she went further on and was watching from the porch. I entered the closet in my coat and hat and concealed myself behind the bookcase. We had previously agreed upon that when the sweep in the house began. I was to conceal myself behind that bookcase, and I was to block myself up with a board there.

My landlady had the key from the closet. After I entered it, she locked the door and put the key into her pocket. The

Germans came into the house, and my landlady came up to the door and gave a cuff. I moved behind the bookcase, blocked myself with the board, and moved some books. I had made a seat of books and above me everything was encumbered with all kinds of objects.

I heard the movements. I heard the steps. I heard them approach that part of the apartment. I then heard them stop at the door. At first, they did not notice it, then they asked in German what that door was. A woman neighbor said, a closet, not a very big one, full of books. They asked where the key was. She said she would bring it.

Several people had the keys. The closet was opened. The German then became interested by the many books, instruments and suitcases, and he began taking books out at random. He began walking up and down the room though there was barely enough space for that. He approached the crack that I had blocked. He moved the partition, he touched the board with which I had concealed myself.

Though it was very gloomy in the closet, he apparently saw the outlines of my body. He very distinctly suddenly said, "Ah." I decided that was the moment when I would not be able to escape. It was necessary to pull together all my willpower and not to show them that Yids were clutching at life and did not know how to die. At the very last second, the following happened.

Apparently a shroud dropped on his consciousness. The

books did not let him see the surrounding. With an absolutely calm, serene movement, he put the board back to its place and said to the neighbor that in 15 minutes he would send soldiers to take away those books, instruments, and the rest.

He left the closet, locked the door with the key, took the key with him and went away.

Fifteen or twenty minutes later, five or six soldiers came, but by then, I was not in the closet. That was difficult to do because I could easily be seen by many eyes. Before the fifteen minutes were over, I had to leave the closet and not to be seen by either the neighbors nor by the German anti-aircraft gunners. In a word, I was not disclosed.

I left the closet confidently, calmly. I entered our room whose door had been unlocked in advance, and I closed it.

My hostess locked the closet and came back to our room. Soldiers came with their key and wanted the neighbor's help as an interpreter. Those six soldiers worked very thoroughly. They took away the whole collection. Books on medicine were sent to the sick quarters field hospital and the rest, as the reading matter for the hospital patients.

I am recollecting what I had to live through. I was staggered, not by the fact that I escaped for the second time; I was staggered by the participation of some extraneous force that intervened into my modest existence.

There were five occurrences like this. One time, I had to hide in the basement, the fourth time in the attic, and one

time more in another apartment into which my landlady had to move during the enforced mass resettlement of the population.

She had to move from Mugavia Street to Christianska Street. I had to move from one apartment into the other in such a way that neither the former neighbors nor the new ones could see me as well as those people who were to move the furniture. Every detail had to be thought over.

On the day when my landlady decided to move, I had to get to the attic. The door of the room was to be left wide open for everybody to see it. She was to come in the evening. The curfew was from 7:00 in the evening. That was in the end of September of 1942 or the beginning of October.

Everybody saw that my landlady moved to another apartment where she was the only renter of a married couple. The new apartment had a separate entrance. It was possible to come and not to disturb the married couple. In the second apartment in Christianska Street, I again had to live through another visit of the Germans.

In spring of 1942 on sunny days, they were looking for the apartments to live in, and they came to this one too. The owners were old people. They tried to drive the Germans off from the apartment by saying, when they came, that the stoves had fallen down and everything was bad in it. It was the beginning of the fifth hour in the evening. It was dusk.

They entered the corridor and knocked on the door. One German asked whether he could find a suitable room for him to

live. My landlady was not at home. I did not answer. They came up to the door, and the German asked to open it. The owner said they did not know what to do, that the door was locked, they had no key, and it couldn't be opened. Then the wife owner said they might try to unlock the door with their own key. The husband said, "Do that," and the wife went to bring the key.

I had the problem what to do. The possibility was as follows. My landlady had two pieces of furniture, a wardrobe and a cupboard. They stood close to each other, but the gap was enough for me to squeeze in between them. The room was not big and crammed with a couch, a bed, tables, chairs, cases; and the wardrobe and the cupboard were in the opposite end.

When the wife owner went to fetch the key, I squeezed into the gap between the wardrobe and the cupboard. If the German chose to come closer, he would have discovered me, but everything came out all right.

The wife owner was not happy to open the door when her renter was not home. When they unlocked the door, they stood at the threshold. The room, indeed, was not attractive. The owners explained that a woman, teacher lived there, so they locked the door again. The wife owner did not feel comfortable. I know that for certain because she did not tell anything about the episode to my hostess.

That alarm happened to be the last one for us. I kept

myself busy with books. I read and wrote. I did bibliography work. I had had good references about my bibliographic activities. I had published bibliographies. I had compiled several catalogs and card indices that I valued very much and that were of certain scientific importance. Part of that material we managed to save. That allowed me to stay firm and continue work composedly.

The general mood was dismal, especially when the city of Currage surrendered May 15th, 1942. Then Sevastopol, on July 1st of that year. That was the first great ordeal after the terrible days in December.

After Currage had been occupied by the Germans, the mood was very distressing. And it was even more so after they took Sevastopol.

Earlier while Currage and Sevastopol were still Soviet, there was a glimmer of hope for fast liberation. When the Germans occupied Currage and Sevastopol, they had the railways rearranged, and they renamed the streets in the German manner. I felt myself being buried.

Of course, the surrender of Currage did not mean the end of the war. There could be certain shifts in war.

The Germans probably knew that they would have to give the Crimea back. Soviet people were sure that the Crimea would be liberated, but it took some space of time to make the intellectual effort and become balanced to a certain degree.

*This sentence, I think he says because that was expected*

*from him, that Soviet people always had the belief that the liberation would come, that the Red army just, just --*

We were cold, hungry -- all population in general and my hostess in particular. (*Because she had to share her ratio in between the two of them.*) From before, we had managed to have some scanty supplies, about 16 kilos of flour, 20 some kilos of potatoes, a bottle of oil, a small and not full jar of lard that had been brought to me by an acquaintance, a Russian carpenter whom I had come across about December 3rd or 4th of 1941 not far from Fedovsky Bridge. He asked how I was doing and --

*If you remember, it was a week before the Jews were exterminated.*

I came across him not far from Fedovsky Bridge. He asked how I was doing. I said that food was scarce and there were other problems. He said he could help because he had slaughtered his boar. He promised to bring some lard and, indeed, did so.

Even more, I was not at home when he brought it, so he left the jar with a family I knew, the Canapest family, and he asked them to hand it to me. By evening time, I returned home and they brought the lard and something else. Besides that, I had about 12 kilos of groats.

*It is interesting that in the story published in the Black Book, the writer editing this story, she couldn't believe that the Jewish person could welcome boar's lard. So*



she wrote something about mutton being brought. That's interesting. But I asked my survivors just knowing that from my grandfather who ate and survived, probably thanks to that too; I asked all of my Jewish survivors whom I interviewed if they ate pork during the years; and they said, of course they had. Of course, there was not doubt in any of them, though some of them were very religious. There was not a shade of doubt whether they were allowed and whether it was justified to eat pork and -- but that's just -- so that was about all the food that they had.

All that food lasted for about three months. That was how we lived. We had one meal a day, boiled potatoes and peeled. We added some flour for dumplings, then some groats, a spoonful of oil. It resulted in some eatable slops.

Then attempts were made to restore the work of the Pedigorgic Institute, and my hostess was involved as a librarian. She worked arranging the library, and she received a ration bread card. We shared that bread. We each had 150 grams. (That is one third of a pound of bread; that's all.)

Later she had some private classes. She taught for being paid with food. We were -- (Again, I think that she taught the German language because there were many people among the population, he felt it was necessary for them to speak the language of the invaders. That was the new regime, and they were eager to take and pay even with food for their classes of German.)

Later she had some private classes. She taught for being paid with food. We were half starving. It is difficult to speak about that. We cooked only in the evening. The stove had no chimney curves, and when we finished stoking it, all the warmth immediately disappeared. I was afraid to move not to make any sounds. We had to spend evenings in the dark, not to have any light. Such was our life for two and a half years (*Twenty-eight months exactly*).

I read newspapers regularly, not only The Voice of the Crimea, but also the German Deutsche Kremsitung. The German newspaper had some anti-Semitic attacks. It was published for average people, and the Germans apparently directed propaganda along various lines.

As for the Russian Voice of the Crimea, that was very anti-Semitic. Previously, before the war, I had read anti-Semitic publications. I had happened to read the anti-Semitic New Time as well as the Toi Kiev news by Emdor, who was a fanatical monk and turned to be a rogue and who terrorized the Czarist government.

*My grandfather speaks about pre-revolutionary publication of Czarist time.*

Thus, I knew some pre-revolutionary anti-Semitic literature, but what the Voice of the Crimea published could not be compared to that. It was something terrifying. If you read the newspaper regularly, you saw what the newspaper was like.

One anti-Semitic article followed after another. It is difficult to even imagine to what extent they cultivated anti-Semitism, to what extent they focused opinions. For example, those papers under the command of the German representative Morick who headed the Bureau of Propaganda, his father had been a good doctor, oculist -- a good eye doctor -- there in the Crimea. In 1920 he had left for Germany, and his son was brought up there. That urchin got to Germany in 1920, and now he returned here as an activist of the Bureau of Propaganda.

In 1920, when Hitler had just began making the first steps, Dr. Morick died. The family had difficulties, and the widow got a job with the Fascist movement. Such was the background of the Morick son's education in Germany. Then he arrived here as the representative of the Bureau of Propaganda.

That creep produced such concentrated anti-Semitic publications that one can hardly imagine. Each line was course anti-Semitism, rude and vulgar, with no accounting for base propensities.

This was the major theme late motive throughout all the publication's articles, satirical matter, and so on. It was obvious that the group of people who were editing that newspaper had a definite goal, to create a psychic screen for what the Germans were doing in the Crimea.

It was a camouflage, disguise, Yidocide. It was a screen

created by a number of coordinated efforts. They submitted all channels of life to this newspaper.

In the editorial office, they had a young woman, just a junior staff. She was there in the vice-editor's office with the only purpose of thoroughly copying all anti-Semitic phrases from Dostoyevski's diary, from Sovorian, Rosenof, Smarkov's writing.

Those were thick books, and the woman was reading them all day long and writing down quotations for the articles of Vikovich and others.

Hitlerism influenced, not only the economy, but also the mentality of the population. It was a testing laboratory in which poisons were produced. Those poisons did not pass without leaving a trace. Their anti-Semitism poisoned public mentality. People absorbed the printed words without understanding all falsehoods and lies.

Destruction of buildings in Simferopol, explosions, fires had begun long before.

In the end of December, 1942 --

*Again, you can see in that shorthand report what questions were posed to my Grandfather. Sometimes he just gives the answers like this.*

*Destructions of buildings in Simferopol, explosions, fires had begun long before, so probably he was asked the question, "When did that begin?"*

In the end of December, 1942, and in January, 1943, there

were several Soviet landings. The situation of German was so strained, that the local German command were ready to start packing their suitcases. If the Soviet command had made a more energetic descent, the Crimea could have been liberated.

*That is a daring thing for him to say because everything that was done by Soviets was to be estimated as sacred, as wonderful; but he says that if the Soviet command had made a more energetic descent, the Crimea could have been liberated.*

In Simferopol, the Germans were ready to fly about January 7th, but time was given until the tension discharged. Then the Germans were sent reinforcements from Leningrad environments.

Had our command made the descent more energetically, the Crimea would have been liberated much earlier.

After the second time, our troops were at Pairakof. Fires in Simferopol started as well as the destruction of buildings, but especially aggressive activities began on the eve of the surrender of the Crimea.

And finally, on April 12th -- *that is 1944* -- 400 of the biggest buildings were set on fire. The horizon was throughout a sea of fire. Archives were being burned. At various parts of the city, buildings and stores were burning. And to complete it all by nighttime, submachine gunners were driving all over the city throwing bombs into residential buildings. They acted feverishly.

On April 13th, 1944, partisans, guerrillas engaged in

combat, but not a big one, and it was over within an hour.

Not far from the Archives Bridge, the partisans had carried the battle and won, and by the evening time of that 13th of April, I got out for the first time after my 28 month-long confinement. I walked along the city. I saw several acquaintances, Russians, who met me with tears, embraces, handshaking.

On April 14th, I went to my former apartment. The attitude there was good. Russian people embraced me, cried, "We're amazed," met me with kisses and hugs.

My apartment was inhabited by a Tartar family. The Germans had broken in the door, partly destroyed my books, those that were on the desks and chairs. A part of the books was filched and sold through secondhand stores. But the part in the bookcases was still there.

At the beginning, they had opened a casino for a limited number of people in my apartment. The casino existed for six months.

All my belongings were carried away by people from the Housing Department, and the books were given to the central library. Now they began returning them to me.

My books have bookplates on them. In the central library, they collected books for the Pedigoric Institute and the Communist Party office, and when they came across mine, they put them aside.

My library was 20,000 volumes, and behind that was 40

years of work, the meaning of my whole life.

Very many books were lost as well as part of my manuscripts and of my collection of the maps of the city of Simferopol which I had been collecting for a long time. Unfortunately, all that was ruined.

NARRATION BY RITA GOPSTEIN

And that is the end of the shorthand report as I have it here. I probably would like to show you one of the books that returned to my grandfather after the war, and that was the prayer book that was given to him because he was a Jewish boy. That was the prayer book that was published in two languages, Hebrew and Russian, in the year when he was born, in the year of 1885.

I have it here. I had it sneaked from the Soviet Union by another American friend of mine because they do not search the suitcases of Americans so thoroughly as they do the suitcases of Soviets, especially Jews, even now.

And this is the book [showing book]. This is my Grandfather's prayer book.

Q WHAT DOES "E. R." STAND FOR?

A That is for his name. He was Yefim Gopstein. It is in Serialic.

And here is the mark that he mentioned that says "Ex libris, from the book of Yefsi Gopstein," and this book's number is 395. And it is in Hebrew and Russian, and here is the year, 1885.

So I have it here with me.

I also think that it was wild to show my Jewish side of my family because I have some pictures that, again, I managed to have here, somehow.

Q HOW DID YOU GET THIS MANUSCRIPT?

A How did I get this?

Q YES.

A My grandfather's writings were the essence of his life. It was very dangerous to write them and to protect them and to preserve them under the circumstances of Soviet realities. So before the war began, my grandfather also had to hide those. So in small bundles, he brought them to several places, several relatives, several friends. Somehow, they were kept there.

When the war began, that Russian lady, Varvara Maximava, she was saving my grandfather's life and his manuscripts because the key was for her to have and, I assume, he never says that in names, but I assume that she was the Russian person to become the owner of that apartment, nominally, at least.

She managed to bring -- and I know that from his diaries -- she managed to save some of his manuscripts, to bring them from one apartment to another because she was believed to be the official owner of that apartment, so she could come to that apartment and leave it until the Germans opened that casino there.



So she saved partly that manuscript there. That one exactly, that was written in 1944, and I assume the copy was given to my grandfather to just make his corrections which he began doing. And that was among the manuscripts that somehow were created after the war.

I also know that after the war -- it was still Stalin's time -- it was still dangerous to mention about being the author of something substantial and not officially known.

The entire Soviet historical science was lying. The history of the Soviet Union and of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was rewritten four times depending on what the official purpose was. So it was dangerous to speak about that.

So my grandfather, when people who were scientists asked about the destiny, about the fate of his manuscripts, he preferred to say that they were destroyed, that they were not saved. But, in fact, a very significant part of them was saved, including the bibliography, including the indices of the people who are no more. Not every Jewish person is in his indices, but many are. Those who were outstanding and who had publications and were of known of value, they are in his indices, and those manuscripts are still in Russia.

So this one I brought -- you know how I did it? We had a couple of suitcases with only clothes and nothing just more valuable than that. This one looked, I just assumed that it wouldn't show that much on the x-ray. It was a tiny notebook,

just a tiny notebook like this. So I put it on the bottom of my suitcase.

More than that, we were not officially allowed to immigrate. We had return tickets to come back to Russia for 40 days, my son and myself. And the customs man, they were searching very thoroughly people who are immigrating.

We were nominally the visitors, so they didn't want to spend a lot of time with us; however, they didn't let my son take his silver spoon that was given for his first tooth when he was eight months. And his first tooth appeared -- there was a tradition to give a silver spoon, and he was given that silver spoon, and we had it with us. And when the custom guy saw that, he said, "What's that?" And I explained, and he said, "Oh, no, silver should not be taken out of the country." So I said, "Okay." My niece was seeing us to the airport. I said, "Why don't you take it," and she took it.

They didn't allow my son to take the tapes of his favorite singer, though the tapes were available in every music kiosk in the Soviet Union, but I just thought that if the worst comes to the worst, and they say, "Take that out, that is history;" that was my niece seeing me at the airport, and they'll give it to her; but it didn't come, so I managed to sneak this one.

I had a couple of books of poetry on the bottom, so when he asked what kind of books they are -- because you have no right to take out of the Soviet Union the books that were

edited earlier than 1946. That is one of the stupid regulations, but that is to be followed. So I just had a couple of books of Russian poetry because I knew that I would always be able to buy dictionaries here.

Whatever, it's a question of money, but poetry, I thought about my son. He was about 16 years old then. I thought that it was necessary for him to know some poetry in his native tongue, so I had a couple of those. And he asked, "What books are they?" And I said, "Some volumes of poetry. Want me to show?" And he didn't bother because he all saw the suitcases from above. He saw what kind of clothes; inexpensive, not very good quality, just regular Soviet clothes that people have, so he decided no; and he felt somehow ashamed of that silver spoon situation. Because he said, "Why do you take it with you in America?" I said, "Oh, my son would become a godfather for an American boy, and he would give it to the American boy, you know, as continuation of the tradition." And he said, "No, no," so he felt ashamed for that somehow, so he decided to let us just go. But I was thinking about that variant; if they insisted that I had no right to take that with me, then there was my niece, just to take it. That's how I brought this.

As for how other manuscripts, I would prefer not to mention that because many people were involved in that; and we have many manuscripts still left in Russia, and we are trying to arrange ways, and many people understand and do their

utmost to do that even today with all the believed freedom of the Soviet Union.

Q DO YOU KNOW WHETHER ANYBODY ELSE KNEW THAT YOUR FATHER WAS HIDING?

A My grandfather? No.

Q YOUR GRANDFATHER.

A No. I am absolutely certain that nobody did know. I also thought, psychologically, how difficult it was for Varvar Maximava. She was, of course, an outstanding person herself, absolutely, and undoubtedly she was in love with my grandfather. I know that she was. I'm not sure whether there was any physical relationship. I cannot be sure because when I said something to a friend like this in the way that I say, I say, "I am not sure whether they were lovers," and that person, he laughed, he said of course, they were -- he was only 16 years old.

I did not even comment on that, but he was 60 years old, and she was about the same age, but they had 150 grams of bread a day. I do not think that it is possible to be lovers when your food is that limited.

But again, that is not the reason. I know that she was in love with him in the highest sense of that word because years after my grandfather died, I came to visit.

My father -- the pilot that was mentioned in that story -- he always helped Varvar Maximava, with money and supported her, and she asked for one book that she loved among

my grandfather's library.

That library was moved to my house in Tushkan. She asked for, of course, the New Testament that he had, and we had several. We have the Old Testament -- wonderful edition -- there still. But she asked, and my father gave that, and the icon that always was in my Grandfather's house. It was the protector of sailors, Saint Nicholas. So she had that.

She wanted a few things, but the major thing my father managed to arrange it with the City Council of Simferopol that the apartment in which my grandfather lived became her property because the one that she had after the war was just terrible. It was a meager, tiny little room, so she moved into his apartment. And later on, she died in that apartment too.

So years after my grandfather died, I came to visit her, and when she opened the door, through her face of a Russian aristocrat, I saw undoubtedly the Jewish face of my own grandfather. It was all here, and I mentioned that to her. And I said, "I see my granddad's face on yours," and she said, "Of course, because I think about him everyday." And I was thinking about that love of hers that made it possible to save and support his life and his works for so many long days and months, 28 months.

But I also think that it was impossible to discover anybody after a certain time. You know, at the beginning when they had all the sweeps and they found the spare Jewish people

who were in hiding, they probably didn't punish the hosts. But with time, it was even impossible to betray, to discover that, so you had to go on. What else can you do?

I am absolutely sure that there was a great love, but it was also impossible to say that -- I just thought that a piece of bread like this for your entire day and everyday only that. You are hungry. We know that many people are capable of unpredictable things for food when there is real starvation. And it was, of course, her very high morality and spirituality of course, that, and it is a strange situation. It is, I was thinking about that, and I continue to think about that.

Q WHY DID YOU GO TO SIMFEROPOL?

A My family, my father was born in Simferopol. My grandfather was born in Simferopol. My parents met in Simferopol, and besides, it was just a wonderful place. It is only about 25 miles from the seashore, and on the way to any seashore place, you flew to Simferopol. That was the only place that had an airport.

That is also interesting because my father was a freight pilot, and he had to join the army as a freight pilot on the fourth day after the war began. And my father flew to the last hour of surrender of that city of Sevastopol of which my grandfather says he felt desperate when that city was given to the enemy. And my father knew that his own dad, that his own father, my grandfather, was in Simferopol, and Simferopol was occupied.

And he said how bitter he was to fly over the territory. It was dangerous because there were enemies, of course, and they could fire at him and other things like this; but also he knew that he would never be able to land because if not the enemy fired at his plane, then the Soviet troops. Because if your own plane lands at the place that is under the enemy, that is also a dangerous situation. So he knew that his father and his aunt were in that city, and he felt helpless and bitter. And he flew to Sevastopol to the last hour, and I know the stories of that. But that is a different story.

Q TAKING YOU BACK TO THE TIME WHEN YOU MET YOUR GRANDFATHER IN THE CITY, IN THE SUBURB OF MOSCOW, WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THAT?

A I remember the date quite well. That was 1949. I know that because I was less than five years old, and my brother was less than three years. So I remember it quite well.

I remember the place. That was a Russian isba, or log house, and my family was renting it. It was on a beautiful, beautiful river, the Istra River; and the day was bright.

That might be a mistake because old childhood memories are bright in color, but I remember that I woke up. That was not a very happy summer, for certain reasons --it was a happy one, but like everything in childhood, I had both parents. I had my two sisters and brother and a boat and the woods and green grass and the wonderful bowl that my father brought from

Moscow -- because we didn't have any toys after the war.

I remember that I woke up -- and my father continued to fly. We were renting that house, and my mother was staying with us, but my father would come and visit when he was in Moscow. So he would come.

And there was my father, sitting, and my grandfather, and I knew that it was my grandfather because he was to arrive. And he saw that I woke up, and he threw an object at me, and that object was a wonderful bronze medal.

I still remember the design, because he always gave us exquisite gifts, gifts that were the culture of the humankind. That was an exquisite, ancient medal; and he threw it. It was pretty heavy on me. I felt it. And I also know it was heavy because I suffered. It was after the war, life in the Soviet Union, in Russia, when everything was in shortage, everything.

And of course, we got lice from the peasants' family that rented the house to us. They shared that house with us, and their children, all of them, had lice in their heads. And so all of us had that, too.

And on one of the preliminary visits when that was discovered -- my mother discovered this -- my father came, and he had shaven all our hair off. I suffered. It was very difficult. That was such a -- It was such a forceful activity against my personality. I suffered very much, not only aesthetically when I saw myself with that bare head, but also I suffered because it was something physical enforced on me,



so I knew what it was to be not very big, helpless, and your father -- That was painful too, because he was doing that with a razor, and I believe just soap foam, and we were privileged, of course. We were a pilot's family; we had soap and everything.

So there was my shaven head and that medal, and here was my grandfather. And then he seemed not to be a very handsome man. Later on, I changed my opinion, but I have pictures I'll just show. So that was it.

And my grandfather also brought something that he was able to buy in Moscow, and I'm not sure what they are in English. Probably they would be called stencil pictures -- the ones that you put into water for some time, then you apply them to paper, and then you rub. Maybe you do not even know. You certainly do not know. But in former years, they were not just applied and moved. You had to make some long and very, very steady movements, rubbing that paper surface from it, and then it would remain on paper. So that was something very beautiful that I did not see in my life before.

So we were doing that on the porch, and my grandfather was restricted and interested in us, but my feeling was that it was not just regular emotional attitude. I think that he probably just was asking about what kind of individuals we were. Because -- I'm not quite sure, but I think that had slightly to do with that.

And then I saw him again in summer of 1951 when my family

came to the Crimea. We stayed in his apartment, and I remember the wonderful apartment, the books covered with some cloths and wonderful pair of deer antlers, reindeer antlers. It was Crimean. That was on his -- on some -- I don't remember whether it was a wardrobe or on some piece of big furniture. I remember that; that was very impressive. I saw the shutters that was not part of Dushcant life. I don't remember that I ever saw them. I saw the shutters open and close when people opened them and closed them just according to the time of the day or whatever.

It was also a wonderful arrival. We arrived by train, I believe, from Moscow. That was the long way, and our grandfather was meeting us at the hired horse cart, and that was very Crimean, very elegant, black leather and maybe even lacquered, details, and the horse had a wonderful Panama on the head because in those days animals in the Soviet Union were taken care of.

Later, with the entire deteriorating of the society, nobody thought about the animals. But then horses were -- there were not many cars, in fact, and, of course, horses; but they were taken good care of. So, I remember that. It was amazing somehow.

And we came to his apartment. I remember that apartment. That was in Nucrosf Street, Number 22 Nucrosf Street, and the apartment was Number 13 I believe. I think so.

And my mother and my father and my second sister -- the

eldest was not with us, my second sister was. I think, that I was seven then. My brother was about five years old. We were left with our grandfather; and my parents and my second sister, they went to the seashore to find an appropriate house for us to rent.

So they left us for that day, maybe even for two days. And my grandfather gave us raw eggs and taught us how to make two holes and to sip it, which I never liked. But that was his belief that children were to eat raw eggs, and they were very fresh, so we had that kind of breakfast.

Then he took us for a sightseeing tour of Simferopol and he took us to that river Solyer. It still existed; it doesn't anymore.

And on the way back, we stopped at the Russian Orthodox Christian Church, and we went inside, and he showed something. I know that it took place. I don't remember more than that. I also remember how he made us climb a steep hill over there and just some other details, but they were not significant to his personality. It's just my way of trying to understand.

Q HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE HIS PERSONALITY? WHAT KIND OF MAN WAS HE?

A He was undoubtedly an outstanding person because, being educated and having that analytical ability, he thought it was his duty to register what he saw in the society. And he did it in a very scholarly way because he proved everything with documents.

He supplied the documents and the manuscripts. They contain all kinds of notes, and the notes are done in the best scholarly manner possible. And again, being a realistic person, he understood that never in his lifetime that would be published, and he continued doing that. And that was very dangerous.

So it was -- and it is an enormous labor, and on the surface, he knew all the Party to the State knew.

He had practically no clothes. I remember in one of his episodes in his diary, he says with soft irony, says that a colleague of his, a woman, a young woman and very much a Soviet product, saw the old raggy ends of his sleeve, and she said that it was time to buy another one, and he had to say that it was not possible; but she, of course, also knew that was not available, but believing in the future of that country, she just somehow felt it was her duty to see the better side somehow.

So, with all the insanity of the society, he was an outstanding person. In 1938, there is an entry in his diary. He says that -- he refers to that ancient Greek folklore Odyssey. He describes the episode just -- not even close -- he mentions the episode when Odyssey coming to his wife's -- Iliad and the Odyssey. So in Odyssey, when Odyssey returned to his wife's house, and he was said to be deceased -- nobody believed that he would ever return -- and there were those numerous bridegrooms who had feasts in his wife's house and

other things. So, fighting the bridegrooms and getting rid of the bridegrooms, Odyssey began to burn sulphur -- I believe it would be in English, sulphur -- in the house to purify the house of the memories of the bridegrooms who had their feasts and everything. And my grandfather, in a very soft and nice way, says, "I know that there will be a day when this society will get rid of Bolsheviks; and I think that, like Odyssey, they will burn sulphur to get rid of the memories and of traces of the terrible feasts that took place here."

So he had no doubt that that would happen. While everybody else believed that that was forever. He had that analytical ability. He described in a very scientific and systematic way what he witnessed, and he really was doing that. That was very courageous, very courageous.

Q WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR GRANDMOTHER?

A My grandmother -- they were on the southern shore of the Crimea in Simeez, and the fact is that my mother was with my two sisters. They were living in that central Asian city of Turtkul.

And that happened like this; because my mother and my father met each other when my mother was only 15 years old, and she was a Russian, and traditional Russian, and from a very good Russian family. Her mother was also a TB doctor and that was my grandmother, Margarita, in whose memory I was called, Margarita, when I was born. My name is Margarita. Russians abbreviated it to Rita.

My grandmother, Margarita -- who died earlier, younger than I am today -- she was a TB doctor in Bella, Russia, and she developed the TB herself, having worked with all the patients. And Bella, Russia, had a bad climate, lots of swamps and everything; so she found a job for her as a doctor, as a professional, on the southern shore of the Crimea. That was the best arrangement because she was continuing to work, and she also treated patients in her professional field, and she was in a sanitorium.

That is a place for recovering, but she was doomed, unfortunately. So my mother had to stay with a family of Russian Orthodox priests in Simferopol in that city.

And my Jewish father -- the one who became a pilot later on -- he was very friendly with the son of that Russian Orthodox Christian priest. They were pals, and he came on his bicycle to see his friend, and there was "that girl," as my father says. He saw the girl, and the girl appeared on the porch, and she was 15, and my father was younger than 19, but about 19. And she asked if they had anyone there or if the hosts' son had a piece of drawing paper just to make some draft, and the son said, "No," (the hosts's son). And my father said that he had at his home, and he would bring it tomorrow or the day after that.

And my mother said something that is very Russian, that is a proverb. She said, "But an egg is of value on Easter Eve." That is the Russian proverb. In Russian it means that

it was good to have it at the moment when you need it. And my father said, he said, "I was lost forever for that girl, just forever."

So to be able to marry him, my mother skipped through her last class at school and just a couple of other things like this. And they got married when she was hardly 17, and they lived together until the day my father died, for almost 54 years. They had four children together. My eldest sister was born very soon after they got married; in fact, eight months after. That's why my mother is quite sure we are premature because she had no doubts in the first case, at least.

And my eldest sister died. She was exactly Gorbachev's age, and she died in 1985. That was my eldest sister. She was very gifted, and she died of cerebral hemorrhage. She was a scientist. She was a chemist, like my grandfather's sister who perished, and she worked in Akademkaradoc. That was Academia town in Siberia. That is the second most significant scientific center in the Soviet Union, and she was a chemist.

And it happened at her job, and the Soviet medicine is always, always -- just all of them. My father died because the medicine was so poor, and my mother died of appendicitis just a year later than my father did, and then my sister. It was just -- the collapsing society -- it happens because from here, one can see only the general tendencies, but in fact thousands and thousands, millions of lives are involved, and it is individuals that made it for individuals because I am

not interested in general processes, but I see that the people whom I love to just die. And that's what matters.

So my sister, my eldest sister, the one who died, Marina, she was about ten years old, and my second sister was only eleven months old, and she was on mother's arm, in fact, living in that central Asian city of Turtkul. They happened to be there because they got married.

They met in the Crimea and then, because my father was in the flying school and my mother was getting her education in a teacher training institute at the literature department in Moscow, they moved to Moscow. And my mother began writing for the national newspaper with a big circulation, and my father was a pilot, and that was also something. There were only a few Jewish pilots then, so they loved it there, and they worked there.

But that was terrible time, and in the thirties, the entire country had to face one arrest after another. My father, being Jewish and a pilot, he was called for interrogations every night, every night, because Stalin had insomnia, so his staff worked at night for him.

So in that pyramidal structure, if the top works at night, all the subordinate links had to also work at night. So the entire country had to work at night because one guy in the Kremlin had insomnia.

So, my father was called for interrogations every night with insistent questions, "Why do you think that accident or



that crash with the airplane happened?" and, "Why do you think that?" And my father always gave a very detailed, technical explanation why that or this accident took place.

And he said like this. They would skate for an hour in the evening, then my mother would see him to the corner of the street where that Encavada office was, and my father would leave to be interrogated, and my mother would stand at the corner, wave her hand, and never knowing whether he comes back or not.

And he said, giving that technical explanation of the disastrous situations with planes -- one night my father suddenly realized that the next person to be arrested would be him because he always gave technical explanations. He didn't say, this person is a spy, and that is the adverse activities of some people who have conspiracy, because that was what they wanted from him.

So, being let out of that interrogation, being let home, he understood what he was to do. And the next morning, he went to his boss and he volunteered to arrange flying routes to the central Asian areas that had no such routes. So, he volunteered, and he was missioned there to arrange such flying routes, and that was the city of Turtkul. That was a desert.

My father said that when they landed there, they had no brakes. The brakes were not enough because the winds were so terrible in the desert. So, they would find two or four big turtles in the desert, turn them over, and use them instead of

brakes for the plane not to be carried by wind.

And he had to fly as a medical pilot into lepers' place. There were lepersoria in the desert and many other things.

It was for him, it was something that was chosen as continuation of his professionalism. He was a pilot under those circumstances; but on the other hand, to be described honestly, it was a voluntary exile. He chose to be there, and to be with the woman he loved and children he had and continue his professional activities; but, in fact, it was an exile, but because he could anticipate -- like my grandfather in some ways -- he survived because if they stayed in Moscow, of course, he would be arrested.

So I was born later, much later on, but that is also another story.

Q HOW DID YOUR GRANDFATHER KNOW THAT HE WAS THE ONLY SURVIVOR OF THE VILLAGE?

A Let's see. Just the dates. He got out of the apartment on April 13th, 1944, and from April 13th to August 16th, when that interview was taken, there were no other Jews in the city of Simferopol. So, for several months -- it was such a miracle that he survived -- everybody spoke about that, everybody. And people cried not only -- so there were no other Jews there. I am speaking about the city of Simferopol. And he was very well-known in the city as a researcher and scientist, so no way.

Q DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE JEWS FROM

SIMFEROPOL ONCE THEY WERE TAKEN AWAY ON THE RAILROAD?

A I'll tell you. They were all shot by firing squadron as it is described by my grandfather. He knew that they were all killed. There is a bitter continuation of that story. Let me think about the dates.

I think that about five years ago, maybe six, or five years ago, there was a trial in the city of Simferopol because strong young men began undigging graves in search for gold -- and they really did that. They were Soviet young men who had very small salaries and who thought that these Jews were dead, so they began doing that.

And I know that one of the questions was -- I don't remember whether it was the judge who asked, "What did you feel when you took the gold fillings and the gold teeth of a skull of a grownup person, of a child, or one you had to dig?"

And one of them said, "What would you feel?" And one of them was a doctor, by the way -- maybe even a dentist -- so the graves now are more or less identified.

You know, it was in August of '94. I'm absolutely sure that later on with years, my grandfather knew where they were; but only several months after he was with his freedom again, he had to arrange his life.

Food still was not very -- so it still wasn't the time for him to find where that was, so I'm absolutely sure, but the places were known later on with the years to come. But there was that terrible situation when people began

scavenging. And that is also one of the Soviet realities.

Q YOUR GRANDFATHER WASN'T WORKING IN 1941 HE SAID?

A During the war, during the occupation -- because he had been working in that People's Economy Commission, and he had that position. He had been working, and he had the position of the manager of the department, but that was the war, so all the Soviet institutions were not functioning. That is normal. So he said, "I went to the Jewish Committee myself just for the news, for the information, and because what else to do. I haven't been working." He had been working, and after the war too.

Q AND YOU SAID THAT WHEN YOUR GRANDFATHER SAID THAT HIS SISTER WROTE HIM A NOTE --

A Right.

Q -- AFTER HE HAD GONE INTO HIDING?

A He was in the hiding. His lady friend, who spoke German and who was a Russian woman, just obviously Russian -- she went asking for his sister hoping to find her. She couldn't find anything. But when that other Jewish woman who was married to a Russian was allowed to go from the registration place because she was married to a Russian, and they wrote in her passport "no annihilation," or "not subject to annihilation," she probably had been together with his sister, and she brought that note for him asking how he was because his sister was not able to keep their appointment. They were to see each other, and she was taken by Russian

auxiliary police earlier than she was able to make it to his house. So she wrote that note to him.

Q AND DO YOU KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THE NOTE SAID?

A No. I think that it is among the papers there in among the other manuscripts that are there in Russia, because I know that among my grandfather's papers, there is the first letter from my mother in Central Asia when they learned that he was alive. There is that emotional letter. What a miracle it is that you are alive, and both granddaughters love their grandfather and send their greetings to him. And there was also a note from my grandmother saying, "Hello, it's a miracle that you are okay." So he kept this.

The fact is that I never thought that I would have to part with the manuscripts. I always somehow believed that I will be with them. You know, my immigration was not very well-planned or thought about, or whatever; so somehow I always believed that I would have time just to do that.

But we were the products of the Soviet system that doesn't allow you any free time for intellectual work. Just to survive, you have to do foolish things that the system imposes on you. It takes all your life energy and time from you. So just to be able to live, you had -- just imagine what it was, how time-consuming just food was -- you were to stand in line. So I've always hoped that there will be a day when my life gives me a chance to go through everything and do that; and, of course, I never realized that I will do that in

a foreign language.

Q SO, THE ONLY THING I WANTED TO CONFIRM THEN WAS THAT THE NOTE FROM YOUR GRANDFATHER'S SISTER --

A It is still there. I'm absolutely sure.

Q AND IT MADE ITS WAY TO HIM WITHOUT THE VILLAGE PEOPLE REALIZING THAT HE WAS IN HIDING?

A No. I'll tell you in what way. Because the apartment was ascribed to that lady friend, and she was visiting the apartment. Probably when she came, the neighbors took her and said, "Oh, you know that Jewish woman came, and she has a note for you." So somehow that's how it happened, and that's how it was taken by this lady friend of his. No, nobody ever -- no, it would not be possible.

And the lady friend's own sister, I assume -- I met her too after, in the suburbs of Moscow -- She came to visit us. She had a sister. They were all Russian aristocracy. And her own sister was in Stalin's concentration camps, and her sister's husband perished in the concentration camps; and Natalia, the sister, was for long years -- I don't remember for how long -- but she was also in concentration camps.

So, that was another reason for my grandfather not to somehow show that is my savior. You were to be very, very tactful, and very, very cautious about that. So this woman, she knew a lot of things about the unfairness of the Soviet society, so she knew about caution too. So that's how -- it also just shows why it all was possible.

Q     THANK YOU.

A     Pleasure.

Q     YOUR GRANDFATHER TALKS ABOUT THE CRIMCHUCK  
POPULATION.

A     That is another 1,500 of the population, and the  
first group that somehow realized that they were to be  
exterminated there. You want to speak about the ethnicity?

Q     YES.

A     But that's what he did in brief. In fact, we did  
have Jewish encyclopedia. We were one of only a few Soviet  
families that had Jewish encyclopedia, very good edition, pre-  
revolutionary, based on the British edition of just similar  
Jewish encyclopedias in English as it is known to the culture.  
We had that.

And Crimchucks, as he described, that is the group, yes.  
There were two other groups, and there was another one,  
Kariems, that he also describes. They are the ethnicity there  
in the Crimea, yes, but they are a Judaic people.

Q     I THINK THAT'S REALLY ALL I HAVE FOR NOW. THANK  
YOU.