

Anna Gliena

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Lvov

Ukraine

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Anna Gliena lives in an old and beautiful house in one the most picturesque streets in Lvov. I ring the doorbell and an old stout woman opens the door. She inquires me about the purpose of my visit. She happens to be Anna Timofeeva, a Russian woman that attends to Anna Gliena. The mistress of the house has been bed-ridden for a long time. She has a number of old-age ailments that could be cured given the right care, but one can tell that she lacks such care. There is old furniture in the room that becomes of vale nowadays while back in 1950s those cupboards, sideboards and stools were easily thrown away as old junk. She has portraits of her mother and brother on the walls. Anna's bed sheets have not been changed for long. She has a dirty and creased kerchief on her head. She doesn't seem to care. When I ask her if I could take a photo of her next time when she had her hair done she refuses flatly. However, Anna is glad to have this opportunity to tell her story. Her attendant lends her ears to our conversation and Anna cannot talk openly in her presence, particularly when it comes to discussion of specific Jewish subjects. Anna Timofeevna is reluctant to follow my request to wait somewhere else until we finish our discussion. Even when she leaves I know that she is eavesdropping from behind the door. She makes her living by attending to Anna Gliena and she suspects a competitor in every visitor. Anna Gliena has promised to leave her apartment to this woman's son and now she has fallen to be dependent on this woman.

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My family background

My maternal grandfather Iosif Meyerovich was born in a town within the Pale of Settlement [1](#) in the Russian Empire in the 1860s. When he grew of age he was recruited to the tsarist army and served in it 25 years. He was a tailor and inherited this profession. He must have been very good at it since he made uniforms to his commanders. At the beginning of his service Iosif Meyerovich lived in a barrack with other soldiers. His regiment was in a small Lithuanian town of Ponedele town my mother told me. I've never again heard this word. My brother and I were trying to find the town, but failed.

My mother told me it was a very small town and the majority of its population was Jewish. There was a synagogue in the center: a plank rectangular building with an upper tier for women. It was a poor synagogue with no decorations inside or outside the building. There was a one-storied brick building across the street from the synagogue: a Jewish bank. Most of the buildings in the town were made of wood. Jews were craftsmen in their majority: tailors, shoemakers, bakers or merchants.

On Jewish holidays, Pesach in particular, Jewish soldiers were allowed to dress up in their uniforms for special occasions to go to the synagogue and then they could visit some hospitable Jewish family to celebrate seder. My grandfather went to a tailor's family, of course. He met his daughter Leya. She was 16 years old and Iosif was 25. This was in 1885. A Russian colonel – my grandfather made uniforms for him, gave his permission to their marriage. According to the family legend he even attended their wedding. They had a traditional Jewish wedding party with a chuppah, a rabbi from the synagogue and a number of guests. My grandfather Iosif Meyerovich and my grandmother's family were religious and observed all Jewish traditions and celebrated holidays. My mother recalled that her father got up early in the morning and prayed. He fasted and went to the synagogue every Saturday. He had finished cheder and could read Jewish religious books in Hebrew. Shortly after the wedding my grandfather obtained permission to live with his family. He rented a small wooden house where he arranged a small shop in the basement. He didn't have a sewing machine and did all work manually. After serving in the army 25 years my grandfather didn't live long. He died in 1902. Iosif Meyerovich had asthma and my mother heard him dying of an asthmatic fit in the next-door room.

My mother told me little about her mother. She said she was a humble Jewish woman. She wore a wig and was a good housewife. My grandmother gave birth to another baby almost every year. They were weak and sickly and my mother was the only survivor. Grandmother Leya died in 1904. I don't know what caused her death. My grandmother and grandfather were buried at the Jewish cemetery in accordance with all Jewish traditions.

My mother Rosa, was born in 1887. In their Jewish neighborhood in her town Yiddish was the language they spoke in families and sang songs in Yiddish, so of course, it was my mother's mother tongue. My grandfather's clients spoke Russian to grandfather when they came to make orders so my mother picked up this language when she was a child. Many residents in Lithuania spoke German and my mother picked up this language as well. In this way my mother that had no education and never studied, could only write her signature and read a little, could also speak a few languages. My mother rarely recalled her childhood in this small town. She liked talking about fairs on Christian holidays and colorful performances. There was no religious or national segregation and people enjoyed these gatherings and had lots of fun. This was probably the only entertainment in this small town.

After her parents died my mother had a small amount of money that she decided to spend on traveling. In early 20th century it was common for young people to travel to European countries. They formed groups (most often these were professional groups: of teachers, doctors or post office employees) of young people that had common interests, etc. There were Jewish groups of young people that were fond of traveling. These tours were not so costly. My mother recalled their tour to Germany. They stayed in inexpensive hotels in Bremen, Munich, Dresden and toured these towns.

They also went to Great Britain. My mother told me that when they got to London they were unaware of the rules and customs in this city. One of them was that if a young girl went out with her head uncovered it meant that she was a girl of easy virtue and they might take her to a brothel. When my mother heard about it she bought a little hat. My mother even thought of staying in London and getting a job of a housemaid, shop assistant or seamstress. She didn't feel like going back to her small town. She liked many things about this huge city, but she couldn't find a job and besides, she became sickly due to the climate: frequent fogs and dampness. She had splitting headaches and gained migraine that she suffered from for the rest of her life. Rosa Meyerovich had to leave London. She was going back via Warsaw [before 1918 Warsaw was a part of the Russian Empire]. My mother was a tall, stately and pretty girl with big hazel eyes. She liked to dress according to the fashion. She had beautiful black hair that she liked to arrange in a popped manner. She also had a beautiful voice and she liked singing. She sang Jewish songs in Yiddish and popular songs in other languages. One couldn't help being attracted by such girl. My mother met a young shoemaker in Warsaw that happened to be Samuel Gliena, a Jew. He came from a small town near Warsaw. I don't remember its name.

I have never heard of a Jewish family from a small town near Warsaw with such strange family name. It doesn't sound Jewish or Polish. My father's family was very poor. There were poor Jews living in this small town. My father's father Froim Gliena was born in 1860s. He was a shoemaker, but he could hardly earn enough to support his family. There were more shoemakers than residents that could afford to buy an extra pair of shoes. My grandfather was very religious. His life consisted of prayers and work. He believed that his being a righteous man would one day bring wealth into his family, but there was only poverty awaiting for them. My grandmother Khana was born in 1865. She was a plain religious woman with no education. She had to go to work for a Polish landlord for additional earnings to make ends meet. She often got payment in food products rather than money.

They spoke Yiddish in the family. My grandfather studied in cheder and could write in Yiddish, but I don't think he could read anything, but his book of prayers. My grandmother had no education whatsoever, and the letters that we received from her in 1930s were written by somebody else. Grandmother was very old. My father left his home when he was young. My grandfather and grandmother died tragically. In 1939, when Germans came to Poland, they set my grandparents' home on fire and my grandparents perished. We got to know about this after World War II. I don't know what happened to my father's sisters and brothers: there were at least 12 of them. My father told me their names, but I don't remember.

My father Samuel Gliena was born in this small town near Warsaw in 1885. He left for Warsaw on foot when he turned 14. He became an apprentice of a shoemaker for 'food and accommodation'. He worked and slept in the shop in the basement of his master's house. There was not a single tree in the yard. This was a Jewish neighborhood in the town and life was no different there from the life of Jewish families in a small and poor Jewish town. My father did not only have to do work in his master's shop, but also look after his children and do other housekeeping chores. My father didn't like to recall his youth. He didn't have any bad feelings toward his master and his family, though. Those people had a hard life. My father learned to make shoes and boots within 2-3 years. He got his own clients and began to dress up to fashion and pay attention to girls. In 1904 Samuel Gliena met a bright young girl traveling from London. It was love at first sight. My mother stayed in

Warsaw and moved in with my father in his basement. They got married shortly afterward. They had a wedding in Warsaw. They had a traditional Jewish wedding with a chuppah and a rabbi from the nearest synagogue. Everybody admired the beauty of the bride and my father always worshipped my mother ever after.

1905 was an uneasy year with continuous clashes between Poles and Ukrainians, Ukrainians and Jews and there were revolutionary ideas in the air. Somebody advised my father to move to Kharkov. They said it was quieter and easier to find a job there. The newly weds moved to Kharkov and rented an apartment in Goncharovka Street. My father got a job in a shoe shop. The owner of the shop was a Jew. He closed his shop on Saturday and Jewish holidays. My mother was a housewife. They observed Jewish traditions and celebrated holidays. My mother followed kashrut when cooking, but I wouldn't call my family deeply religious. My father didn't wear a kippah and shave his beard, but he had a moustache. My mother only covered her hair when going to the synagogue on Pesach and Yom Kippur. However, mother lit candles every Friday before Sabbath. She put on a kerchief and prayed over candles. Each time she mentioned that this was how her mother used to do it and that beautiful silver candlesticks were the only thing she got from her parents. These candlesticks disappeared during the Great Patriotic War [2](#).

In 1909 my older brother Osher was born. Later he began to be called with a Russian name of Roman [3](#). A year later in 1910 Bella was born and in 1914 Israel was born.

My mother told me that Bella was a very sweet girl. She was a very clean girl and when my mother had a headache she closed shutters on the windows saying 'Mother, you go lie down and I shall wash dishes and clean up'. Bella died of scarlet fever at the age of 5. My brother Israel also died at that time. He had a bloody flux. My mother was in hospital with Bella and the little boy was in his nanny's care. He must have grabbed something from the floor and eaten it that caused the bloody flux. Bella and Israel died in 1915 and were buried at the Jewish cemetery in accordance with the Jewish traditions. My parents often went to the cemetery and my father used to take me there, too. I remember that their graves were by a wall and there were boards with their names in Yiddish on the graves.

Growing up

I was born in 1917. My mother was very weak and sickly and had migraines. She hired a nanny to look after me. My nanny's name was Anna Grigorenko. She was a Ukrainian woman. She spoke beautiful Ukrainian and sang Ukrainian songs. My mother and father spoke Yiddish. I picked up Yiddish and Ukrainian. Since Russian is spoken much in Kharkov I picked up Russian, too. My older brother Osher became the dearest person in my life. He was the nicest and most handsome man and had a beautiful voice. My brother studied at a grammar school in Kharkov. However, after the revolution of 1917 [4](#) this grammar school was dismissed and my brother followed into my father's steps. My brother was a hardworking person and everything he took up worked out very well. Osher became fond of theater and attended a drama club in a cultural center. He was very talented and got to play the leading roles in Ukrainian plays and performances about the Civil War [5](#). Performances were in Russian or Ukrainian. There was a theater near our house. My mother and brother were both theatergoers. My mother told me that there were actors living in the neighborhood and they often invited my mother to their performances. She used to take my brother to the theater with her. Some playwrights and screenwriters noted my brother's gifts and

sent him to study at the studio in the Russian Drama Theater in Kharkov. He started work in touring groups, or drama clubs in kolkhozes until he got a job at the theater for young spectators in Kharkov before the Great Patriotic War. When working in the theater my brother changed his name to Roman. It doesn't mean that he was ashamed of his Jewish name, but it was better for his career to have a Russian name working in a Russian theater. At home my brother switched to Yiddish. Our father taught my brother to read in Yiddish. We had Talmud books at home and my father and brother read them. I remember that at Pesach they recited prayers. I was small and fell asleep early. They woke me up at midnight when it was time for seder. I don't remember celebration of other religious holidays at home. My parents went to synagogue 2-3 times a year, but they didn't take me with them. We had Russian classics at home: Pushkin [6](#), Lermontov [7](#) and many others and I read a lot when I went to school and learned to read.

I have dim memories about the period of Revolution or Civil War – I was too young. I know that life was very hard and at times we had no food at home. I remember sitting on the porch waiting for my mother and father coming back from the market. I was very happy when they brought something for me. Once they brought me a little dress and I was so happy.

In 1918 the shop where my father worked was converted into a factory. My father worked a lot and when he came home in the evening he continued working: he was fixing shoes for all neighbors. My father was a kind man and couldn't refuse anybody. Due to his kindness we lost one room. We had two rooms and a kitchen. It goes without saying that we didn't have a bathroom or toilet. There was a tap and a sink in the kitchen, but we fetched water from a well. There was a bucket in the kitchen that served as a toilet and there was a toilet facility in the yard. There was a wood stoked stove that heated the rooms. However, this was a common apartment for the time. In 1923 my father bumped into an acquaintance that he knew when living in Poland. That man said that he had divorced his wife and had no place to live. My father offered him to stay at our place overnight. He came and stayed and a week later his wife joined him. They began to live in this room. I remember that her name was Sophia, but I don't remember his name. They were Jews. Some time later they moved out, but then another woman came to live in this room.

I remember the day when Lenin [8](#) died in January 1924. I remember people crying and grieving a lot. There was a shop in our house and a big portrait of Lenin in its window. I came to kiss the glass where the portrait was behind it and my lips froze to the glass. When I tore them off the glass they were bleeding. What a fool I was. We all believed in the Soviet power and Lenin was a holy man for us.

I went to school in 1924. On the first day I went there by myself. I was a brave girl. At that time it was common for Russian children to study in Russian schools, Ukrainian children went to Ukrainian schools and Jewish children went to Jewish schools. Thus, I went to a Jewish school. There were four Jewish schools in Kharkov. We studied Yiddish, Russian, mathematics, physics and drawing. We studied in Yiddish and had Jewish teachers. I don't remember their names, but I remember that they were nice and cheerful. I was elected a head girl in my class. I became a young Octobrist [9](#) in the first or second grade. We had badges with a portrait of young Lenin and were called 'Lenin's grandchildren'. Later we became pioneers. My parents were proud that their daughter was taking such active part in public activities. I organized gathering of metal scrap at school. We picked waste casseroles and samovars and felt proud that we could make our contribution in manufacture of new tractors and locomotives for our country.

My childhood dream was to become an actress. I went to a ballet class at the age of 10. My brother was working in the opera comedy theater and he arranged for me to take classes with their prima ballerina Klavochka. There were two other girls in her class. We began to come out onto the stage when required. Then one day my brother came home and said 'That's it for you. I am to be the only actor in our family'. It turned out that he noted one ballerina of indecent conduct and forbade me to continue my studies. I didn't mind. I was fond of skating. Skating stretches one's muscles while in ballet they need to be strained.

I had many friends at school. Many of our boys perished at the front during the Great Patriotic War. My closest friend was Nadia Kartud. We were sitting at the same desk in class. We were like sisters and even dressed alike. Nadia's mother made clothes for us. Nadia finished a college and became a librarian. She married a Soviet German man [10](#) from Saratov before the Great Patriotic War. When the Great Patriotic War began he was arrested. Many Germans were arrested then. Soviet authorities didn't trust them and feared their cooperation with fascists. Nadia followed him to Siberia. Their son was born there. I also had other friends: Inna Kisler, Cheva Boguslavskaya. When I visited Kharkov in 1978 we got together at Nadia's home and we recalled our school years. Nadia's husband had died and about ten years ago Nadia's son moved to Israel. Nadia went with him. She died few years ago.

My mother went to work when I was at school. She took work to do at home. She made leather bags of straps of leather. Later she made them in a shop. She used to sing when working. This shop sent my mother to a [likbez 11](#) school. My mother learned to read well, but she couldn't write whatsoever. At times she had splitting headaches and put her head under cold water to reduce the pain. She was awarded a trip to a resort in Odessa in 1934 for her remarkable performance at work. Then her management made arrangements for her to retire and get a pension of an invalid. It was a miserable pension. We could hardly make ends meet, but my mother could not really go to work.

I remember in 1933 at the time of forced famine [12](#) my mother and I had to stand in lines for bread. Later there were bread coupons issued: there were different rates for workers, clerks and dependents. My father was a worker and had a worker's bread coupon. I remember stared people in the streets, but I saw no dead bodies, Perhaps, I was just lucky to have not seen them.

I went to work at the age of 16 to help to support the family. I became a tutor in a kindergarten. I just bumped into this job announcement in a street: "A kindergarten tutor required". I went to the kindergarten to ask and they hired me without delay. I liked children and did well at work, even though I had no professional education. There were children of various nationalities in the kindergarten. Their piano teacher suggested that we staged short puppet performances for the children. Again, it worked out well. We began to show these fairy tales in other kindergartens and clubs. I was thinking of going to work in a puppet theater, but somehow it never came to it. My parents were not very happy with my job. I earned little and they thought it wasn't a serious profession.

There was a museum of Skovoroda [Hryhori Skovoroda (1722 -1794) Ukrainian philosopher, mystic, poet, author of the collection of poems Garden of Divine Songs.]. There was inventory in their library and I just happened to drop by. I got amused to see so many books and I began to work in libraries. The first library where I worked was the central scientific library at Kharkov University. I released books by the lists that students submitted to a librarian. There was a five-

storied book storeroom and I ran up and down the stairs to find all books needed, but later I learned the stocks and didn't have to run that much. There were books in Russian and Ukrainian. I don't remember Jewish books. Later I finished a course for librarians. I liked books and this work. I worked in the library until the war began in 1941.

We believed what newspapers wrote to be true. When I got lists of authors to extract their books from stocks I didn't give it much thought. I never considered why those authors were honored before and then became 'enemies of the people' ['Enemy of the people': an official way mass media called political prisoners in the USSR] all of a sudden. Later they began to say: '1937, 1937' - a horrific deadly year [Great Terror] [13](#), but then it was just life and we enjoyed being young and sang Soviet songs - 'Hey how good life is in the Soviet country...' When our acquaintances got arrested we believed they were guilty and did something wrong to the Soviet power. We were common people and there weren't too many among us that suffered arrests. My father continued his work at the shoe factory. When he was not at work he fixed shoes of our neighbors and friends. My mother was a housewife and went to synagogue on Jewish holidays. The biggest pleasure for my mother was going to the theater. Later my mother got fond of the sound cinema. She watched Soviet comedies many times and sang songs from them. My friends and I went dancing or to concerts on weekends and holidays. We also went to the cinema or out of town whenever weather permitted.

My brother Osher became one of the leading actors in the theater for young spectators and played leading roles. They staged plays about heroes of the Civil War, denunciation of enemies of the Soviet power. Their performances developed patriotic feelings and hatred toward enemies in children. We often went to the theater. The art director of the theater valued my brother high. He received a small room in a communal apartment [14](#) near the theater. My brother married an actress. Her name was Claudia and she was Russian. My father and mother were not very happy about his marriage, but not because she was not a Jew - this was a matter of no importance at the time - , but because they thought Claudia was a frivolous and flippant person. Osher was very independent. He respected our parents, but he relied on his own opinions. Well, he should have listened to his parents. He divorced his wife few years later. They didn't have children. He had lovers afterward, but he never remarried.

My personal life didn't develop, even though I had many friends and was a sociable girl. In 1939 I met Boris Suchodolski, a young worker of Kharkov tractor plant. He was tall, blond, joyful and nice. We met at the library and he invited me to go dancing in the cultural center. In 1940 we were married at a registry office. We only had a civil ceremony. We didn't have a wedding party. I didn't have a wedding gown. I took few hours off work and Boris worked 2nd shift on this day. I came home after work and told my mother that I got married. My mother was upset and cried, but not because he was Russian, but because she believed that girls had to get married in a different manner and according to the rules. I lived with Boris in his room that he received from the plant, but I often went to see my parents. Boris came from the family of workers and his parents treated me nicely, but we never came to knowing more about each other. In July 1941 Boris Suchodolski was recruited to the army and perished shortly afterward. I even didn't have his photograph as if he had never existed.

During the war

We didn't think about the war. Newspapers wrote that Germans were our biggest friends and we believed it. Shortly before the war I borrowed "The Oppermanns" by Lion Feuchtwanger [15](#). This work was written in 1933. [It was an instant response to the political situation in Germany, prompted by interest in British government circles in making an anti-Nazi film.]

When the war began my husband went to the army and I returned to my parents' home. The theater where my brother was working was to evacuate. Many actors were taken to the army and many volunteered to the front. My brother had no replacement and when he received a warrant to come to the military registry office secretary of the Party unit of the theater went to see chief of the registry office, explained the situation to him and obtained a temporary permit for my brother to stay at the theater.

The theater provided train boarding tickets to members of families of its employees and my brother obtained such for my mother and was having one filled up for me. My mother was living at the theater with my brother. She worked at the costumes office and I was staying at home with my father, a cat and a dog. Later the cat ran away. We couldn't obtain a train ticket at the railway station for a long time and when we finally got one we still didn't have a boarding permit for my father, since he wasn't a theater employee and it was hard to get them for relatives.

My father went to the railway station with us and even got into a railcar and I was hoping that he was going with us when an actress came and said 'it is too overcrowded here. Those that do not have official grounds to be here, leave the car'. This was the first time in my life when I heard the phrase 'Jews know their ways'. My father got up and went out. He was very proud. My brother that time was getting a boarding ticket for our father. My father said before he stepped off the stairs: 'Kind meyne [Yiddish for my child], we shall not see each other again. Take care'. And he left. We were trying to look for him, but he was not there. Then our train stopped in the outskirts of Kharkov and I wanted to run back to look for our father, but he had left. That was it. When Kharkov was liberated I wrote letters to our Russian neighbors that I thought stayed during the occupation, but they didn't reply. I don't know anything. All I know is that he is not to be found anywhere in the world. Nobody knows what happened to Papa. Of course, he perished during the occupation, but how and where? I will never know. Our theater was on tour in Kharkov in 1947. I went to our house, came as far as our porch and fainted. There were different tenants in the house. Nobody knew me.

We were told that we were moving to Ulan-Ude, farther than the Lake Baikal, 4500 km from home. Our trip lasted two or three months. There were air raids and people scattered around to hide, but mother said 'I am not going out, I am staying here'. I stayed with her. We didn't have money or food, nothing, but the watch that my father gave me. We had to sell it to get some food. There were free meals given at some stations, but how was one supposed to survive in between?

We covered 3000 km and got off at Poltoratskoye village in about 250 km from the Lake Balkhash in Southern Kazakhstan. There were steppes and desert around. There were Kazakhs selling tomatoes and potatoes, but we didn't have any money or clothes to exchange for food. We were accommodated in the cultural center. There was a little stove in this building. We received food packages at the kolkhoz where I worked in the field picking cotton. The plants had rough stems with thorns that injured hands. After work we took a bunch of stems to stoke the stove.

There were no Russian-speaking residents in this village. They were Kazakh and Uzbek people that didn't seem to care about the theater or culture in the general sense. We were transferred to Pavlodar, the capital of Northern Kazakhstan. We covered over 700 km on a truck across the steppe. We had rehearsals and performances in Pavlodar and received food packages. It's hard to tell how exhausted and starved people were. We received flour with water and people asked three or more treatments so starved they were.

Our theater gave performances in Ukrainian in Kharkov and we had to translate them into Russian. I worked at the audience department at the theater. I was to go to factories and plants, schools and hospitals to distribute tickets. My mother continued working in the costumes office. There were many Jewish employees at the theater. They got together on Jewish holidays, lit candles and made matzah from the flour that we received. I don't think there was a synagogue in Pavlodar since there were no local Jews in Pavlodar. Our theater toured to kolkhozes and smaller towns. We had performances on the subjects of the time: about the front, victory, partisans and women working heroically in the rear and waiting for their husbands.

I faced open anti-Semitism for the first time in Pavlodar. It generated from those that evacuated from Western Ukraine and Belarus. They contracted hatred toward Jews from fascists. [Editor's note: the anti-Semitic sentiments of the Belarussian and Ukrainian evacuees were most probably not the result of any Nazi impact. As early as the 17th Century Chmielnicki in the Ukraine perpetrated large-scale massacres. In the late 19th and early 20th Century pogroms were widespread in the Ukraine and in Belarus. Between 1903 and 1906, among others, Gomel, Odessa, Kiev, Kaments Podolsk were scenes of mass killings of Jews] There were Jews in evacuation in the town. Life was very hard and if they noticed that a Jew was doing better than the others they hissed wickedly 'Ouh, zhydy!' [kikes].

We stayed in Pavlodar until autumn 1942, until we received an order from Moscow about moving to Novokuznetsk [called Stalinsk at the time]. We stayed there about two years. Novokuznetsk is a big industrial town in the south of Siberia, on the Tom River in 4500 km from Kiev. It was built during the Soviet regime. Many people evacuated to this town. They worked at military enterprises 'forging the victory', as they said. There was order and discipline in the town. We were accommodated in the hostel of the town theater. Director of the theater offered me a position of chief administrator of the theater. He arranged a meeting with all employees of the theater and introduced me to them. This was a great promotion. We continued going on tours and I was responsible for making accommodations for actors. We stayed in various apartments. There was another actor living with us and my mother, my brother and I shared one room. The owner of this apartment lodged in the kitchen. The temperatures dropped down to minus 60° and the owner took her cow into the kitchen since it was freezing in the cowshed. The cow, of course, felt free with her needs in the kitchen.

All employees at the theater supported each other. Our theater shared the building with a theater from Zaporozhye, but our theater was more popular since we had wonderful performances. My brother played the leading roles in them.

Of course, we watched the situation at the front. The day of liberation of Kharkov in autumn 1943 was our happiest day. We were eager to go home, but to do this we needed a special order or permit.

When Ukraine was liberated we were notified that our theater was moving to Lvov. We were well aware that there was nothing good waiting for us in Kharkov while there were facilities and apartments in Lvov available in 1944-1945 since it had been annexed to the USSR in 1939 [Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact] [16](#). A part of its population left the town with the Germans, almost all Poles moved to Poland and another part of its population was deported to Siberia. There were many abandoned houses and apartments.

I was authorized to make arrangements for our departure. There was a crew of carpenters working for us. People in Siberia are very nice and friendly. These carpenters made me a stool and a table, a chest of drawers and boxes where we packed all our belongings. They understood that we were going back into poverty and uncertainty, into ruined towns where no enterprises worked and there were no provisions. They felt sorry for us and wanted to help. They also gave me glass pieces for windows 'You shall come and see that the glass is broken in the windows'. When we arrived we installed this glass in our balcony windows in Lvov. We went to Lvov by train where we had a railcar at our disposal.

We arrived in Lvov in autumn 1944, October or November. We were accommodated in a house in Galitskaya Street, a house for actors. We had a big room and a kitchen. We had a kitchen of our own while other actors had a common kitchen. We were privileged since my brother was a leading actor and I was one of key personnel at the theater. We got this apartment in 1945. It was on the fifth floor and there was no elevator in the house.

After the war

The theater was accommodated in the former cinema theater with no stage or curtains. We began to look for a more accommodating building and found one that housed a Jewish theater before the war. The Jewish theater moved to Poland and we obtained permission to move into their building. It took us sometime to get things in order there, but it was a nice cozy and warm building.

In Lvov we performed for young spectators teaching them to be Soviet patriots. We performed in Ukrainian. My mother, brother and I were living together. It was hard for my mother to walk upstairs to the fifth floor and my brother started looking for an apartment on the first or second floor. He found one on the third floor: there were 3 nice rooms, a big kitchen and a balcony facing the yard. We moved in there. It was an abandoned apartment and there were no special permissions needed for such houses or apartments. My brother loved our mother dearly. They spoke Yiddish to one another and with his colleagues my brother spoke perfect Ukrainian.

My mother went to a synagogue in Lvov. She went there early in the morning at Yom Kippur and came back home late at night. I felt sorry for her when she spent there a whole day without eating a thing and I went to pick her home from there. She was aging and she still suffered from headaches, but she never lost her love of songs. She often sang in Yiddish and Russian to us. We had an old record player back in Kharkov. After the war we bought a new one and collected records.

I never kept the fact that I am a Jew a secret. In 1949, when I had to obtain a new passport I went to the passport office and a passport clerk looked up at me when it came to item 5 [17](#) and asked 'What do I put in here? And I replied 'what you see in my old passport'. She looked at me closely, probably thinking 'What a fool you are'. I said again: 'write what it says there. This is what I was

born and I shall die what I am'. Many Jew changed their nationality then.

In 1949 struggle against cosmopolitans [18](#) began. One Jewish producer was fired from our theater. They told him that he was staging the wrong plays and at the meeting they called him a 'cosmopolite with no roots'. Everybody knew that there was a censoring department that selected the repertoire, but nobody said a word. My brother didn't have any problems being the leading actor. As for me, I did have some. Director of the theater said to me: 'You know, Anna, you need to wear fancier clothes and get a lorgnette and you should meet the audience you're your lorgnette'. I didn't know what a lorgnette was. I thought it was some kind of glasses and why did I ever need glasses having no sight problems? [stereotypical outfit of artists at the time] There were other picks intended to prepare the grounds for removing me from my position. I was upset, of course. I was with the theater at the most trying time during the war in Siberia and I was a reliable employee and all of a sudden they didn't need me. In 1950 I went to work at the puppet theater. My theater management tried to convince me to resume my work at the theater, but I refused. In 1954 they addressed me again and I returned to work at the theater for young spectators. I thought I was familiar with the situation there and I gave so much effort to this theater. I worked in the administration, but it wasn't a key position.

Neither my brother nor I were members of the party, but we were its devoted friends, or, I would say, we loved truth and at that time the words 'party' and 'truth' were synonyms for us....

Then newspapers began to publish strange articles condemning Jews. People began to talk openly that there could be no trust in Jewish doctors. It was a beginning of the 'doctors' plot' [19](#). I remember when a drunken janitor was lamenting in our yard that she would rather die than visit a Jewish doctor. Why die then?

When Stalin died in 1953 I cried, and so did many people. Everybody grieved for him. It was terrible. Although he was a hard man he tried to do best for people. He reduced prices for food and we won the victory with him.

I failed to have a family of my own. I had acquaintances, of course, but I was always busy. My mother was often sick and so was my brother, and then my mother had to go to hospital and I had to visit her in hospital and do work at home and go to work at the theater. My brother had heart problems. When he got ill he used to come by the window and say: 'When I died bury me at the Jewish cemetery and may there be music'. He died of heart attack in 1973, at the age of 64. I did as my brother asked me, but I couldn't go on living in this apartment. I had hallucinations there. I exchanged that 3-room apartment for this 2-room one. I kept my brother's furniture. He had a taste for beautiful things that we could buy inexpensive at that time in Lvov.

The two of us lived in this apartment for four years. In 1977 my mother died and I was alone. Shortly before she died my mother said bitterly: Feigel, feigele, (little bird) how will you live all by yourself?' My mother was so concerned about my loneliness; she had foreseen my lonely life at the old age. Our mother was a holy person for us. She was a very nice person, she liked theater, cinema, she liked arts. She was smart and my brother and I listened to opinion. She believed in God and celebrated all Jewish holidays. I buried my mother near my brother's grave. I had a beautiful gravestone installed on their graves.

I have been alone for 25 years. There were friends and acquaintances when I was stronger. I tried to help and support people and didn't feel my loneliness so acutely. I was chairman of the housing committee of our house and the neighboring one for 17 years. I was responsible for all maintenance issues. I didn't do it for money. I did many good things, but who cares? I never traveled on vacations. My mother was often ill and I couldn't leave her, and then when she died I didn't want to go alone.

Before 1983 I worked at the theater distributing tickets at schools. Then I grew older and retired.

My mother, brother or I never considered moving to Israel. My mother said 'it is not my Motherland and I shall not go there'. My brother despised those that were moving there, even when they were his friends. We were interested in what was happening there, but we did not consider moving to this country.

When perestroika [20](#) began I was terrified at how they could ruin such great country. I recalled how we were welcomed in Siberia during the war and now they were in a different country. We were a Ukrainian theater and nobody closed it. To crown it all, I had my saving for my old age, but they were lost and I am a sick miserable old woman. My acquaintances asked me why I didn't ask Hesed for help, but I didn't want to, I was ashamed to ask them. I don't remember the details, but somehow they got me on their lists. I used to buy matzah to celebrate Pesach. Well, anyway, this was the only holiday that I celebrated. Maybe I didn't follow all rules, but I always had matzah. I receive food packages from Hesed and they help me to do my laundry, but I am helpless now. My neighbor introduced me to Anna Fyodorova. She lives with me. She cooks for me and helps me and I promised her to leave this apartment to her son. We may argue every now and then, but then we make it up with her. I depend on her much. I cannot even go to the cemetery. My mother and brother have graves nearby and I've prepared a place for myself there, but now I don't know whether they will bury me there or throw into a different place. You understand, I would like to be with my dear ones so much.

I stay in bed, read a little or watch TV and sometimes short verses come to my thoughts and I put them down:

'Winter, winter, winter again,
Cold, it's cold, it's freezing cold,
It snows, there's snowstorm, blizzard.
That's winter'.

Or:

'How unexpectedly the old age has come
How fast the years passed
Like a dream, like a day, like the Moon
Lives A.G. in this world - old, ill and forgotten by all, abandoned'

GLOSSARY:

1 Jewish Pale of Settlement

Certain provinces in the Russian Empire were designated for permanent Jewish residence and the

Jewish population was only allowed to live in these areas. The Pale was first established by a decree by Catherine II in 1791. The regulation was in force until the Russian Revolution of 1917, although the limits of the Pale were modified several times. The Pale stretched from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, and 94% of the total Jewish population of Russia, almost 5 million people, lived there. The overwhelming majority of the Jews lived in the towns and shtetls of the Pale. Certain privileged groups of Jews, such as certain merchants, university graduates and craftsmen working in certain branches, were granted to live outside the borders of the Pale of Settlement permanently.

2 Great Patriotic War

On 22nd June 1941 at 5 o'clock in the morning Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union without declaring war. This was the beginning of the so-called Great Patriotic War. The German blitzkrieg, known as Operation Barbarossa, nearly succeeded in breaking the Soviet Union in the months that followed. Caught unprepared, the Soviet forces lost whole armies and vast quantities of equipment to the German onslaught in the first weeks of the war. By November 1941 the German army had seized the Ukrainian Republic, besieged Leningrad, the Soviet Union's second largest city, and threatened Moscow itself. The war ended for the Soviet Union on 9th May 1945.

3 Common name

Russified or Russian first names used by Jews in everyday life and adopted in official documents. The Russification of first names was one of the manifestations of the assimilation of Russian Jews at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. In some cases only the spelling and pronunciation of Jewish names was russified (e.g. Isaac instead of Yitskhak; Boris instead of Borukh), while in other cases traditional Jewish names were replaced by similarly sounding Russian names (e.g. Eugenia instead of Ghita; Yury instead of Yuda). When state anti-Semitism intensified in the USSR at the end of the 1940s, most Jewish parents stopped giving their children traditional Jewish names to avoid discrimination.

4 Russian Revolution of 1917

Revolution in which the tsarist regime was overthrown in the Russian Empire and, under Lenin, was replaced by the Bolshevik rule. The two phases of the Revolution were: February Revolution, which came about due to food and fuel shortages during WWI, and during which the tsar abdicated and a provisional government took over. The second phase took place in the form of a coup led by Lenin in October/November (October Revolution) and saw the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks.

5 Civil War (1918-1920)

The Civil War between the Reds (the Bolsheviks) and the Whites (the anti-Bolsheviks), which broke out in early 1918, ravaged Russia until 1920. The Whites represented all shades of anti-communist groups – Russian army units from World War I, led by anti-Bolshevik officers, by anti-Bolshevik volunteers and some Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. Several of their leaders favored setting up a military dictatorship, but few were outspoken tsarists. Atrocities were committed throughout the Civil War by both sides. The Civil War ended with Bolshevik military victory, thanks to the lack of cooperation among the various White commanders and to the reorganization of the

Red forces after Trotsky became commissar for war. It was won, however, only at the price of immense sacrifice; by 1920 Russia was ruined and devastated. In 1920 industrial production was reduced to 14% and agriculture to 50% as compared to 1913.

6 Alexandr PUSHKIN [26 May 1799 - 29 January 1837], Greatest Russian poet, founder of classical Russian poetry

Born June 6, 1799, in Moscow, into a noble family. Took particular pride in his great-grandfather Hannibal, a black general who served Peter the Great. Educated at the Imperial Lyceum at Tsarskoye Selo. Most important works include a verse novel 'Evgeny Onegin' ('Eugene Onegin'), which is considered the first of the great Russian novels (although in verse), as well as verse dramas 'Boris Godunov', 'Poltava', 'Mednyi vsadnik' ('The Bronze Horseman'), 'Mozart i Salieri' ('Mozart and Salieri'), 'Kamennyi gost' ('The Stone Guest'), 'Pir vo vremya chumy' ('Feast in the Time of the Plague'), poems 'Ruslan and Ludmila', 'Kavkazskii plennik' ('The Prisoner of the Caucasus'), 'Bakhchisaraiskii Fontan' ('The Fountain of Bakhchisarai'), 'Tsygane' ('The Gypsies'), novel 'Kapitanskaya dochka' ('The Captain's Daughter'). Killed at the duel, 10 to 50 thousand people came to his funeral.

7 Lermontov, Mikhail, (1814-1841)

Russian poet and novelist. His poetic reputation, second in Russia only to Pushkin's, rests upon the lyric and narrative works of his last five years. Lermontov, who had sought a position in fashionable society, became enormously critical of it. His novel, A Hero of Our Time (1840), is partly autobiographical. It consists of five tales about Pechorin, a disenchanting and bored nobleman. The novel is considered a classic of Russian psychological realism.

8 Lenin, Nikolay (1870-1924)

Pseudonym of Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, the Russian Communist leader. A profound student of Marxism, and a revolutionary in the 1890s. He became the leader of the Bolshevik faction of the Social Democratic Party, whom he led to power in the coup d'état of 25th October 1917. Lenin became head of the Soviet state and retained this post until his death.

9 Young Octobrist

In Russian Oktyabrenok, or 'pre-pioneer', designates Soviet children of seven years or over preparing for entry into the pioneer organization.

10 German colonists

Ancestors of German peasants, who were invited by Empress Catherine II in the 18th century to settle in Russia.

11 Likbez - Soviet educational institutions for adults that had no education

Those people had classes in the evening few times a week for a year. 'Likbez' derived from Russian 'liquidation of ignorance'

12 Famine in Ukraine

In 1920 a deliberate famine was introduced in the Ukraine causing the death of millions of people. It was arranged in order to suppress those protesting peasants who did not want to join the collective farms. There was another dreadful deliberate famine in 1930-1934 in the Ukraine. The authorities took away the last food products from the peasants. People were dying in the streets, whole villages became deserted. The authorities arranged this specifically to suppress the rebellious peasants who did not want to accept Soviet power and join collective farms.

13 Great Terror (1934-1938)

During the Great Terror, or Great Purges, which included the notorious show trials of Stalin's former Bolshevik opponents in 1936-1938 and reached its peak in 1937 and 1938, millions of innocent Soviet citizens were sent off to labor camps or killed in prison. The major targets of the Great Terror were communists. Over half of the people who were arrested were members of the party at the time of their arrest. The armed forces, the Communist Party, and the government in general were purged of all allegedly dissident persons; the victims were generally sentenced to death or to long terms of hard labor. Much of the purge was carried out in secret, and only a few cases were tried in public 'show trials'. By the time the terror subsided in 1939, Stalin had managed to bring both the party and the public to a state of complete submission to his rule. Soviet society was so atomized and the people so fearful of reprisals that mass arrests were no longer necessary. Stalin ruled as absolute dictator of the Soviet Union until his death in March 1953.

14 Communal apartment

The Soviet power wanted to improve housing conditions by requisitioning 'excess' living space of wealthy families after the Revolution of 1917. Apartments were shared by several families with each family occupying one room and sharing the kitchen, toilet and bathroom with other tenants. Because of the chronic shortage of dwelling space in towns shared apartments continued to exist for decades. Despite state programs for the construction of more houses and the liquidation of shared apartments, which began in the 1960s, shared apartments still exist today.

15 Feuchtwanger, Lion 1884-1958, German novelist

A pacifist, socialist, and friend of both Thomas Mann and Bertolt Brecht, he fled Germany for France in 1933; he was later arrested but dramatically escaped to the United States in 1940. Often concerned with Jewish history, his works are also noted for their lucid analyses of contemporary problems.

16 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact

Non-aggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, which became known under the name of Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Engaged in a border war with Japan in the Far East and fearing the German advance in the west, the Soviet government began secret negotiations for a non-aggression pact with Germany in 1939. In August 1939 it suddenly announced the conclusion of a Soviet-German agreement of friendship and non-aggression. The Pact contained a secret clause

providing for the partition of Poland and for Soviet and German spheres of influence in Eastern Europe.

In accordance with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which divided Eastern Europe into German and Soviet troops November 1 1939 the USSR Supreme Soviet passed the law on Western Ukraine's membership in the USSR and inclusion in the Ukrainian SSR.

17 Item 5

This was the nationality factor, which was included on all job application forms, Jews, who were considered a separate nationality in the Soviet Union, were not favored in this respect from the end of World War II until the late 1980s.

18 Campaign against 'cosmopolitans'

The campaign against 'cosmopolitans', i.e. Jews, was initiated in articles in the central organs of the Communist Party in 1949. The campaign was directed primarily at the Jewish intelligentsia and it was the first public attack on Soviet Jews as Jews. 'Cosmopolitans' writers were accused of hating the Russian people, of supporting Zionism, etc. Many Yiddish writers as well as the leaders of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee were arrested in November 1948 on charges that they maintained ties with Zionism and with American 'imperialism'. They were executed secretly in 1952. The anti-Semitic Doctors' Plot was launched in January 1953. A wave of anti-Semitism spread through the USSR. Jews were removed from their positions, and rumors of an imminent mass deportation of Jews to the eastern part of the USSR began to spread. Stalin's death in March 1953 put an end to the campaign against 'cosmopolitans'.

19 Doctors' Plot

The Doctors' Plot was an alleged conspiracy of a group of Moscow doctors to murder leading government and party officials. In January 1953, the Soviet press reported that nine doctors, six of whom were Jewish, had been arrested and confessed their guilt. As Stalin died in March 1953, the trial never took place. The official paper of the party, the Pravda, later announced that the charges against the doctors were false and their confessions obtained by torture. This case was one of the worst anti-Semitic incidents during Stalin's reign. In his secret speech at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 Khrushchev stated that Stalin wanted to use the Plot to purge the top Soviet leadership.

20 Perestroika

Soviet economic and social policy of the late 1980s. Perestroika [restructuring] was the term attached to the attempts (1985-91) by Mikhail Gorbachev to transform the stagnant, inefficient command economy of the Soviet Union into a decentralized market-oriented economy. Industrial managers and local government and party officials were granted greater autonomy, and open elections were introduced in an attempt to democratize the Communist party organization. By 1991, perestroika was on the wane, and after the failed August Coup of 1991 was eclipsed by the dramatic changes in the constitution of the union.