

# Vera Leontievna Doroshenko

Vera Doroshenko

Kiev

Ukraine

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*I, Vera Doroshenko (nee Shtein), was born on 21 December 1921 in the town of Zvenigorodka Kiev region.*

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## My family background

Sergei Mikhailovich Dubov, my grandfather (my mother's father), was born in 1847. His Jewish name was Srul Moishkovich. My grandmother Anna Yakovlevna Dubova was born in 1895. They lived in the village of Stetsovka Zvenigorod province. My grandfather's father died when my grandfather was still a child and his mother married a Russian man. He served 25 years in the tsarist army. He treated my grandfather well. My grandfather learned farming from his stepfather. Before the revolution my grandfather was manager of baron Vrangel's estate (baron Vrangel was an aristocrat, a general in the tsarist army and a very influential man in Russia), and later - of Prince Kuragin's estate (Prince Kuragin also came from an ancient aristocratic family). These families had estates all over Russia and they used to sell them, exchange or put at stake along with all servants. When a landlord was visiting his estate he demanded that all people living around served him. They, for example, had to hunt for pigeons, cook them and serve them as his meal. He would have brought his girls with him, and they were feasting, gambling, etc. My grandfather's landlord would have asked my grandfather to lend him some money to buy his lover a present. My grandfather was a great specialist in sugar beet growing. However, he was paid a miserable salary.

My mother's mother Anna Yakovlevna was a very wise Jewish woman. She was a member of an arbitrary court in her village (this was a public court, dealing with all kinds of everyday life problems). There were three of them in this court (two men and Anna). Hers was a decisive opinion. She was much respected and her opinion was highly valued. [this was a kind of arbitrary court. It was established in bigger villages. The wisest and most experienced people in the village were elected to this arbitration sitting. They were mostly men at that time, of course. A woman



must have had an outstanding personality to be elected into this kind of arbitration. This arbitration was there to resolve all kinds of problems and disputes that people dealt with. For example: somebody refusing to pay his debt to another villager, or any interface and interrelation issues, arguments and disputes.]

They had a huge house with ten rooms. They had an orchard, a pigsty, chicken and a cow. My grandmother had servants. She had a small dairy store in the town of Zvenigorodka. She sent her milk products (milk, sour cream, cottage cheese) there every day. This business of my grandmother was much support for her family.

At home my grandmother and grandfather spoke Ukrainian and Yiddish. They were fluent in both languages. They were religious people. They observed traditions and celebrated holidays and they honored Sabbath. There were no other Jews in Stetsovka where they lived and there was no synagogue. They went to the synagogue in Zvenigirodka for big holidays like Pesah, Purim or Rosh-Hashanah. My grandma not wore wig. I think that they did not keep kosher, anyway I never heard of that that in the house was kosher meal.

My grandparents' family was big. They had 9 children. The oldest girl Maria was born in 1885, her brother Samuel - in 1890, Rosa - in 1893, Efim - in 1894. My mother Raissa was born in 1895, and her brother Vladimir was born in 1896. These are my mother's brothers and sisters that I knew about. There must have been other children, but I've never been told about any of them. The oldest daughter Maria finished school and got married. She died in 1920 from typhus. My grandparents' sons studied in a commercial college in Zvenigorodka after school. They studied at the accountant department. My grandfather had to obtain a special permit for his Jewish children to study in the chief town of the province. My grandparents' children were not raised as Jews. They were growing up among Ukrainian people and they had no idea of the traditions or religion of their own people. I just think that my grandmother didn't have time to tell them about such things.

When WWI began in 1914 Samuel and Efim were recruited to the guards regiment, as they were tall men. They were privates in the tzarist army until 1918.

My father Leonid Efimovich Shtein was born in 1890 in the village of Gruzkoje, Pervomaysk district, Odessa region. I know very little about his parents. I know that his father Efim Shtein was a brewer. My father's mother Rosa Shtein left her husband for some reason after my father was born and was raising her son alone. I believe, they were religious people but my father wasn't raised as a Jew and didn't understand a single word in Yiddish. My grandmother died when my father was 7 or 8 years old. He lived with my grandfather for some time, but then he left home when he was 14 and found a job at the Nikolaev factory. This was a part of the Nikolaev shipbuilding plant. They manufactured equipment for the water mills and windmills.

In 1911 my mother finished school (8 years). Her school certificate gave her the right to teach at school. Her older brother came to Zvenigorodka to take her home by train. At that time young ladies were not supposed to travel alone. My father happened to travel on the same train. He had worked at that factory for several years by then and was a specialist in flour grinding enterprises. He was traveling a lot. He was going on one of his business trips and met my mother on that train. They liked each other and exchanged addresses. They wrote letters to one another for three years and my father often visited my mother. Then he finally proposed to my mother. My grandfather

and my mother's brothers liked him and they had no objections to their marriage. In the summer of 1913 my grandmother Anna died from illness and hard work.

My parents got married at the New Year night of 31 December 1913. My father was actually late for his own wedding. He was coming to Stetsovka on a horse-driven wagon and one of the wheels broke. That's why he arrived late at night. My mother burst into tears on seeing him. She said to him "Why are you so late? It's New Year soon, and everything is ready for the ritual, and you got stuck somewhere. I really feel ashamed in front of all these people". And my father said to her "It is no hurry. I'm getting married once in a lifetime. It is no hurry. I managed to arrive before the New Year. I am not late for my own wedding". Mummy wasn't quite happy about my father being in no hurry. They had a wedding following all Jewish traditions. They had a huppah and Jewish musicians. They also invited the rabbi from Zvenigorodka.

After their wedding my father took my mother to the village where he was building a mill. I don't remember what village that was. In 1916 they moved to Zvenigorodka and my father bought a big wooden house with 7 rooms. There also was a an outhouse and a garden. They settled down there for many years. And so they started their cattle and poultry yard and an orchard and a vegetable garden. My mother's father moved to join them in 1916. He wasn't working for landlords any more. He started making wagons and carts for farmers. There was a spot in the yard oft heir house where my grandfather was doing his work. In 1914 my older brother Yakov Shtein was born. In 1915 my parents got another son and the boy was given a name, but he only lived a few weeks. What happened was that at that time my father's father Efim Shtein was visiting my parents. And he happened to drink the breast milk that was meant for the baby. To conceal this fact he gave the baby some cow milk. The baby got sick with diarrhea and died. My parents terminated any relationships with my grandfather. We don't know what happened to him. In 1920 my older sister Rosanna Shtein was born. I was born in Zenigorodka on 21 December 1921

In 1916 my father was recruited to the tzarist army. In 1917 after the revolution he joined the Red army. What happened was that my father's army was in Petersburg at the time when Lenin was saying his speech on the armored vehicle for 25 hours in a row. My father was listening to him, and this speech turned him into a convinced revolutionary. Father always sympathized to revolutionaries, and this speech else more bolted its in the faith in ideals revolution. After he returned home in 1918 he became the first Chairman of the Millers' Union in Zenigorodka. His portrait and an article about him were published in the "'Trud" ("Labor") newspaper in Moscow. In 1920 my father was the leader of the partisan unit in Zenigorodka. This partisan unit was fighting against various counterrevolutionary gangs. There was a gang of Ataman Gryzlo. This Gryzlo was hiding somewhere near the town. My father found out that some farmers were bringing him food, clothing and even wood. My father went alone to that ravine where he was hiding. When he descended the steep slope of the ravine he saw Gryzlo sitting beside the fireplace. Gryzlo was taken by surprise and my father took away his weapons, tied him and escorted him out of that ravine. After the civil war my father became a miller.

## **Growing up**

I have bright memories about my childhood. I remember our house and Zvenigorodka. I loved my grandfather Serei Dubov, my mother's father. He was living with us and my family called me my grandfather's "little tail". My grandfather often went to the synagogue and sometimes he took me

with him. I was interested in everything and my grandfather used to tell me stories about the Jewish people and religion. There was a rabbi in Zvenigorodka. I even remember the Jewish wedding of my father's friend Brodianskiy. I was so excited when the ride and bridegroom went beneath the huppah. In 1926 the synagogue was closed. [Then new (Soviet) power fought with the religion. In these s were locked nearly all religious temples on the whole Soviet Union.] Our parents were not religious. Neither my sisters nor my brothers or I were raised Jews. I only remember what my grandfather told me when I was a child.

Life was joyful in our house in Zvenigorodka. In 1920s my mother's sister Rosa with her husband and her brother Efim with his family moved to our house. And there was enough space for all of us. However, Efim soon moved to another town to work as executive director of a sweet beet collective farm.

There lived many Jewish people in Zenigorodka. My parents had many friends that were visiting them. I remember the Rosental family - Manya and Israel. There was also the Kirzner family. They had 3 children. Kirzner was a specialist in manufacture of cereals and flour. There was lawyer Matt, a very highly respected man. These families were not religious, but they celebrated all Jewish holidays. It was a tradition with us. We visited one another, and had tea parties, made strudels with jam and nuts and cookies. There was no synagogue, but the people celebrated holidays together. The Jews communicated in Ukrainian, using Yiddish words every now and then. They danced waltz, tango, Cracovienne [Public polish dance], polka and freilehs [Public Jewish dance]. My brother Yakov was playing the piano and my mother dancing with her shoes off. I remember other people used to borrow our piano for a Jewish wedding or other holidays.

At some time the authorities decided to build a power plant in Zvenigorodka. My father was appointed director of the construction site and later - director of the power plant. I remember the festive start up of the plant in 1927. This was a great event for Zvenigorodka and the whole town got together to celebrate it. The town gained much from this power plant - power supply to the houses, light posts for lighting streets, cinema theatre.

I went to school in Zvenigorodka, then continued my studies in Uman and Vinnitsa, and finished the 10th form in Kiev. These were ordinary Ukrainian or Russian schools that I went to. There were children of various nationalities in those schools, we didn't care about the nationality then, and we were all equal and friends. I was an active pioneer and later became a Komsomol member. I enjoyed doing social work, like helping other pupils with their studies if they were having problems, participate in collection of scrap and waste paper and study the works of Marxism-Leninism classics.

My father studied at the extramural department of Kiev Polytechnic Institute. His tutor and teacher was German Iosifovich Reizner. He was German. He was the one who was teaching him the profession of a mechanic at Nikolaev plant in 1904, and they remained friends for many years. Reizner moved to Kiev and became a lecturer and he convinced my father to study at the Institute. My father received an engineer's diploma in 1927. In 1933 we moved to Kiev at Reizner's insistence. Reizner's life was tragic. He had a wife and Russian wife and 3 sons. When the Great Patriotic War (So in USSR name WWII) began his sons went to the front and never returned. Reizner and his wife stayed in Kiev. He believed that the Germans wouldn't touch them. But the Germans

executed them for the reason that he was working for the Soviet power being a German. Neighbors told my father this story, when he returned to Kiev after the war.

In 1931 our family moved to Uman and then to Vinnitsa. This had to do with his job. This was the period of famine. My father was working for the flour department then and he had to travel to various towns. He was working very hard. Finally our family moved to Kiev in 1933 at the insistence of Reizner. My father held official positions in the flour grinding industry and we received a two-room apartment in Kiev.

In 1938 when I was 17 and my sister Rosannochka was 18 years old our sister Allochka was born. My mother was 43 and my father was 48 years old. They were very concerned. They thought they were too old for having a baby. But we got a precious gift - a lovely sister.

In 1939 I entered the extramural department of Moscow Planning and Economy Institute. I had a job of a worker at the metalware factory.

And even then I started thinking about the reality that was contradictory to what was said at the Komsomol meetings and what was written in the books. In the late 1930s arrests of the Party and Government leaders and repression against them began. Common people were arrested, too.

In 1937 my mother's brother Efim was arrested. This happened as follows. All directors of sweet beet collective farms were summoned to go to Kiev to a meeting. My uncle put on a good suit and a black coat made from good quality English fabric (this was November and it was cold) and went to Kiev. They were arrested at the meeting, and his imprisonment lasted over a year. He never took of his clothes, whether it was winter or summer. He never told us where he was, as he had signed the non-disclosure statement. My mother started visiting this sadly known office in 15, Korolenko street in Kiev (NKVD office). She took her baby and kept going to that office trying to find out where her brother was. They didn't allow her to leave parcels for him but they didn't tell her where he was either. At that time Vyshynskiy was the all-Union Prosecutor. My mother wrote so many letters that one of them reached the Chief Office in Moscow. At the beginning of 1939 a representative of this Office came on a visit to our home. My mother told him about her brother Efim. She told him how during the period of famine (1932-33) the local farmers were growing potatoes, vegetables and pigs on the plot of land that belonged to her brother. All those working for him had their bread and a plate of soup. The reason why my uncle was arrested was as follows. The People's Commissar of Farming at that time was Chernov. In 1937 he was under trial as an enemy of the people. But this Chernov had visited my uncle's collective farm and gave him a bonus in the amount of 2 months' salary for my uncle's good performance. Therefore, the authorities thought that my uncle was with Chernov and was an enemy of the people. Other Chairmen of collective farms were also arrested for the same reason. They were all released and my uncle returned home. It was almost a miracle. At that time people under arrest disappeared and nobody ever saw them again. It was also impossible to find out anything about them, these people were ever missing. My uncle was crying for a month. The moment he was going asleep he started crying. Our grandfather Sergei Dubov lived in Zvenigorodka. He was 91. He said "I will die when my son is back, when I see my son". Efim returned home, and my grandfather lived for another month and a half and died. He was 92 years old. This happened in 1939. My uncle Efim died in 1939, too. He was totally exhausted and had heart problems. He was taken to the hospital of Medical University in Kiev but doctors couldn't save his life.

## During the War

On 22 June 1941 the Great Patriotic War began. My father was of under recruit age. He was appointed director of the food factory in Shintal, Kuibyshev region. I was member of a Komsomol group at my plant, and this group was sent to the Donetsk steppes, this south-east part of Ukraine. We were assisting with harvesting and storing up the grain. All this was sent to the rear immediately, as the Germans were approaching rapidly. We were working very hard from sunrise till the dark. Sometimes we slept at where we were working to save time. Later we were evacuated further on. In 1942 we, young girls (there were 50 of us) were sent to a military plant in Kuibyshev region. This was the aircraft engine plant. Life was very hard there: we were starving. Our ration was 200 grams of bread per day. It was so very cold, especially during night shifts. I worked at the plant from May 1942 till September 1944. I had pneumonia 4 times. It resulted in emphysema of lungs, and I was given invalidity status of group 2. I was 21 years old. I came to my parents in Shantala October 1944. I stayed with them for a short time. I didn't feel quite comfortable with them. My father was working and he seemed to be reproaching me for not working. Perhaps, it only seemed so to me. My father used to say that one had to be a fighter and reach everything in life by oneself. Although he was holding management positions I worked at the most difficult jobs before and during the war. He never suggested that he would help me to find an easier job. I believe he could have helped me if he had wanted to. Mummy was very concerned about Yakov and Rosanna - she had no news from them. And I went to my friend in the town of Ostrogorsk. She worked at the recruitment office there and promised to find me some easier job. But then my parents returned to Kiev and sent me the necessary documents to come back to Kiev. They also sent me an invitation from my previous job with Glavmetiz department. But I didn't go to work there. My clothes were so poor that I was ashamed.

My older sister Rosanna had finished a medical high school before the war and got a job at the Sanitation and Chemistry Scientific Research Institute. When the war began she was recruited to the army. On 5 July 41 she came home to say her good-byes. She was wearing a uniform, had the rank of first lieutenant and worked in the regional hospital. She came by car, picked up some of her clothes and left. She had long hair, long plaits. Mummy recalled that she didn't give her a proper comb or our family pictures. Shortly after 4 o'clock on the next morning (6 July) I went to the hospital. I walked from Podol to Kreschatic - there was a traffic jam on the bridge and I had to climb over them. I finally reached the hospital. It was closed. There was only a sentry inside. I shouted to him that I wanted to see my sister and asked him to call Rosanna's name. I hoped that she would hear and come to the gate. But then all of a sudden her closest friend Lisa Galperina came out. She told me that Rosanna wasn't there any more and that her unit had left an hour before. Rosanna was working under the leadership of professor Alekseyev. They were working for defense, looking for the methods to strengthen the immunity system to resist poisonous materials and they were following the front. So, I didn't see Rosanna. I gave Lisa the comb and our photographs. We received one letter from Rosanna. It was sent from Lubny via uncle Volodia. My mother's brother Volodia lived in Kharkov. My mother wrote him a letter with our address in the evacuation for Rosanna and Yakov. Yakov was in the army since 1936. After the war professor Alexeyev visited us in 1947. He was Rosanna's Director. He told us that they were encircled in the vicinity of Lubny and captured by the Germans. In 1942, in February, the Germans brought them to their German hospital in Darnitsa (an area in Kiev - left bank). Alexeyev managed to get an identity card for

Rosanna that said that she was Georgian. She did look like a Georgian. That was all information he had about her. He himself gained confidence of the Germans and managed to leave that German hospital. He crossed the front line and joined our army. The professor's wife was a Jew. He forced her to leave Kiev taking their little boy with her when the Germans were almost in the city. He found his wife in the Middle Asia and they returned to Kiev after the war. My mother wrote 376 letters to various authorities, trying to find Rosanna and the only answer she ever got was "Her name is not on the lists of the lost, missing or those that died from the wounds". Rosanna perished.

Rosanna's friend Lisa Galperina also died in the partisan unit. After the war I met Yura Zhigulevich, her co-student at the law department in the University. He told me that he was in the same partisan unit as Lisa and they got into a cordon. Lisa shot herself, but he was captured by the Germans. Later he spent years in the Stalin's camps for being a captive of the Germans. Yura was blamed for betraying Lisa for a long time. He told me that his only fault was that he hadn't been strong enough to shoot himself like Lisa did.

My brother Yakov Shtein joined the army in 1936. He happened to join the Navy. He participated in ship convoys to Spain. They were taking the children out of Spain and bringing food, bread and weapons there. Their ship sank and they were picked up by another vessel. At 22 Yasha had all gray hair. Then he was on service in a submarine in Baku. When our army advanced to Poland in 1939 their ships also headed to Poland in a detour way. When the war with Poland was over he was transferred to the Baltic Navy. In 1940 the war with Finland began. This was his 3rd war. The Finnish war was short but the frosts were very severe. The ships were to fire on the Finns. The Finns were firing back and it lasted four years. After the war was over we rejoiced hoping to see Yasha home at last. But they added a fifth year of service in the army. And there was another war on 22 June 1941. Yasha was in Leningrad, in the Navy and on the war again. He survived the blockade of Leningrad. He was on one of the boats that transported the marines from the center of the city to the open sea. He received the ration of 250 grams of bread and a mash of beet and cabbage leaves per day. It wasn't exactly bread - it consisted of tree rind and a little bit of corns, it was some kind of bread-like stuff. This 250 grams was a military ration, the rest were receiving 125 grams. They spent 6 hours in the smoke screen in the open sea, transporting the military, involved in landing operations, and going back to the port. If they spent additional 6 hours in the sea they received a small piece of fish and a matchbox of goose fat. Goose fat was to be used against chilblains, but they also ate it. He met an engineer there. This man was so exhausted that he was on the edge of death. Yasha shared his piece of bread and thus, saved his life. When the "Road of Life" (The only road that served to deliver food to Leningrad across the frozen Ladoga lake at the night time sneaking under the ground firing) was opened Yasha arranged to have this man taken out of the city. They were mainly taking out women and children. Yasha carried the man to the vehicle on which he left the city and survived. When in 1945 the war was over Yasha was sent to the Northern Fleet on the White Sea. His service ended in 1946. Yasha returned to Kiev and worked in the Town Recruitment Office for two years. He had many awards: The order of the Great patriotic war Grade 2, medal "For Defense of Leningrad", Memorable badge "To Defender of the Kronshtadt fortress and others.

Later Yakov worked as a mechanic at the "Lenin Kuznia" plant. He lived in Kiev and died in 1998. He has two daughters - Rosanna, named after our sister and Irina.

My mother's relatives had a tragic life, too.

My mother's brother Volodia Dubov lived in Kharkov. He had a Ukrainian wife. They had a son, Pavlik, and a grandson. Pavlik and his wife finished an Institute in 1941. I don't know why Volodia's family did not evacuate. When the Germans were in Kharkov they exterminated the Jewish population in the Drobitskiy Yar. But uncle Volodia was hiding and escaped. Somebody reported on him, and the fascists captured his family to take them to Germany. Their train was passing Kiev. Two cousins of his wife lived in Kiev. They were Ukrainians and worked as teachers. Uncle Volodia's wife begged the fascists to let her go say good-bye to her relatives. She came to them and only managed to say that the Germans were taking them somewhere and ran away quickly. This was the last time they were seen.

Aunt Rosa, my mother's older sister, stayed with her husband Semyon Mikhailovich Krivosheyev in Zvenigorodka. Like many others, they thought that they were very old and the Germans wouldn't do them any harm. Semyon was taken along with the other Jewish men. The Germans put out his eyes. Then they put them all in a shed and burned. Aunt Rosa had a friend Sekleta (they were friends from the time when they lived in Stetsovka). She took Rosa to her house and Rosa lived there from 1941 till 1943. She only went outside at night. Only one other woman in this village knew that Sekleta gave shelter to a Jewish woman. Olga helped Sekleta to barter clothing for food. There were no Germans in the village, only the Headman of the village. In 1943 Kiev was liberated and there were rumors spreading in the village that all Germans had gone away. Aunt Rosa cheered up and decided to go home. Sekleta couldn't hold her back. My aunt, thin and exhausted, went along the path across the woods. Then a wagon caught up with her. Sitting on it was her schoolmate Petro. He asked her where she was heading and offered to give her a ride. She asked him whether there were Germans in Zvenigorodka. He assured her that there was none and ... took her right to the police office. It was late autumn, cold and snow on the ground, and the Germans were taking her and a group of other captives across Zvenigorodka barefooted and made them dig up their own grave. They shot them and threw their bodies into the ditch. After the war my mother went to Zvenigorodka for the opening of the monument to the victims of fascism. My mother took off her shoes to walk the same path that her poor sister had walked to her death. Petro was under trial after the war, but his sentence wasn't severe, he was released pretty soon and lived his life as if nothing had happened at all.

My mother's brother Samual was in the evacuation. After the war he lived in the vicinity of Moscow and died in early 1970s.

### **After the War**

After returning to Kiev I got a job of economist at the "Melmarshstroy" plant where my father was working. Chief engineer and the Party unit secretary at the plant were Jewish, and they accepted me into their team, because they respected my father very much. I worked there for about a year, then I caught cold that developed into pneumonia. This resulted in heart problems, and the doctors again gave me invalidity grade 2. I couldn't work any more and worked at home sewing whatever people ordered.

When we returned from the evacuation our apartment was occupied. Our former neighbor Nyura and her sister were living in it. They worked at the knitwear factory. The apartment was full of the

stolen knitting machines and yarn. They were making stockings and selling them at the market. When my parents came to their apartment they only found a piano of all the furniture that we had and there was a night pot on it. Nyura didn't want to leave our apartment and we had to turn to the court. The court made a decision in our favor.

My father retired in 1960. He died in Kiev in 1976. My mother had died 3 years before, in 1973.

I got married in 1958 when I was 36 years old. My husband Alexandr Grigorievich Doroshenko was Ukrainian but he respected Jewish people. His mother was an Evangelist and she instilled in him love to the "God's people". My husband was a worker. He was kind and nice. During the war he was in the evacuation, involved in the military ship repairs. His mother stayed in Kiev. She told me about the horrors that happened in Kiev during the war. She saw how the Jewish people were going to the Babiy Yar. She always remembered it and repented that she hadn't rescued anyone then. My husband worked at the 37th military plant. He died in 1986.

I didn't face any anti-Semitism during the post-war years in our country, especially the "doctors' case" before Stalin's death, etc. I didn't even read newspapers - this all went past me. Later I worked as a cashier in a movie theater, but due to the hard war years any work was too much an effort for me. I haven't worked since my son was born.

My son Vladimir Doroshenko was born 1960. When he was receiving his passport he chose his nationality as Ukrainian. This was the time when all roads were closed for Jewish people. But he still believes that he belongs to the Jewish nation. He is interested in their history and reads a lot. My son is married and has a son. His son Yevgeniy was born in 1983. They are both businessmen. Their business is car repairs.

My younger sister Alla married a Jewish man. His name is Milia Maizner. Milia worked as designer. He was involved in design activities of quite a few bridges in Kiev. He wasn't promoted due to his Jewish nationality and they moved to Latvia in 1977. From there Allochka and her husband went to America. That's where they are living now.

In our family we've never discussed emigration. My husband and I have always been interested in the life in Israel, but we have never been there. We've never thought about emigration. Ukraine is our Motherland and we always wanted to live and die here. Besides, our relatives' graves are here.

After the wedding I lived in the workers' neighborhood on the so-called Fisherman's (Rybalskiy) island. There were no Jewish people living there and no anti-Semitism accordingly. Of course, I never mentioned that I was a Jew to avoid any problems. In the recent years I've become closer to the Jewish community via Hesed. Regretfully, I don't go out, but I read all Jewish newspapers and watch Jewish programs on TV. I always have matsa at Pesah. I try to celebrate Jewish holidays: Pesah, Khanukkah and Iom-Kipur. Basically, I'm trying to lead a Jewish way of life. I am 80 years old, but I feel optimistic. Life goes on.

## **Glossary**

1 "Doctors' Case" - was a set of accusations deliberately forged by Stalin's government and KGB against Jewish doctors of the Kremlin hospital charging them with murdering outstanding Bolsheviks. The "Case" was started in 1952, but was never finished in March 1953 after Stalin's death.