

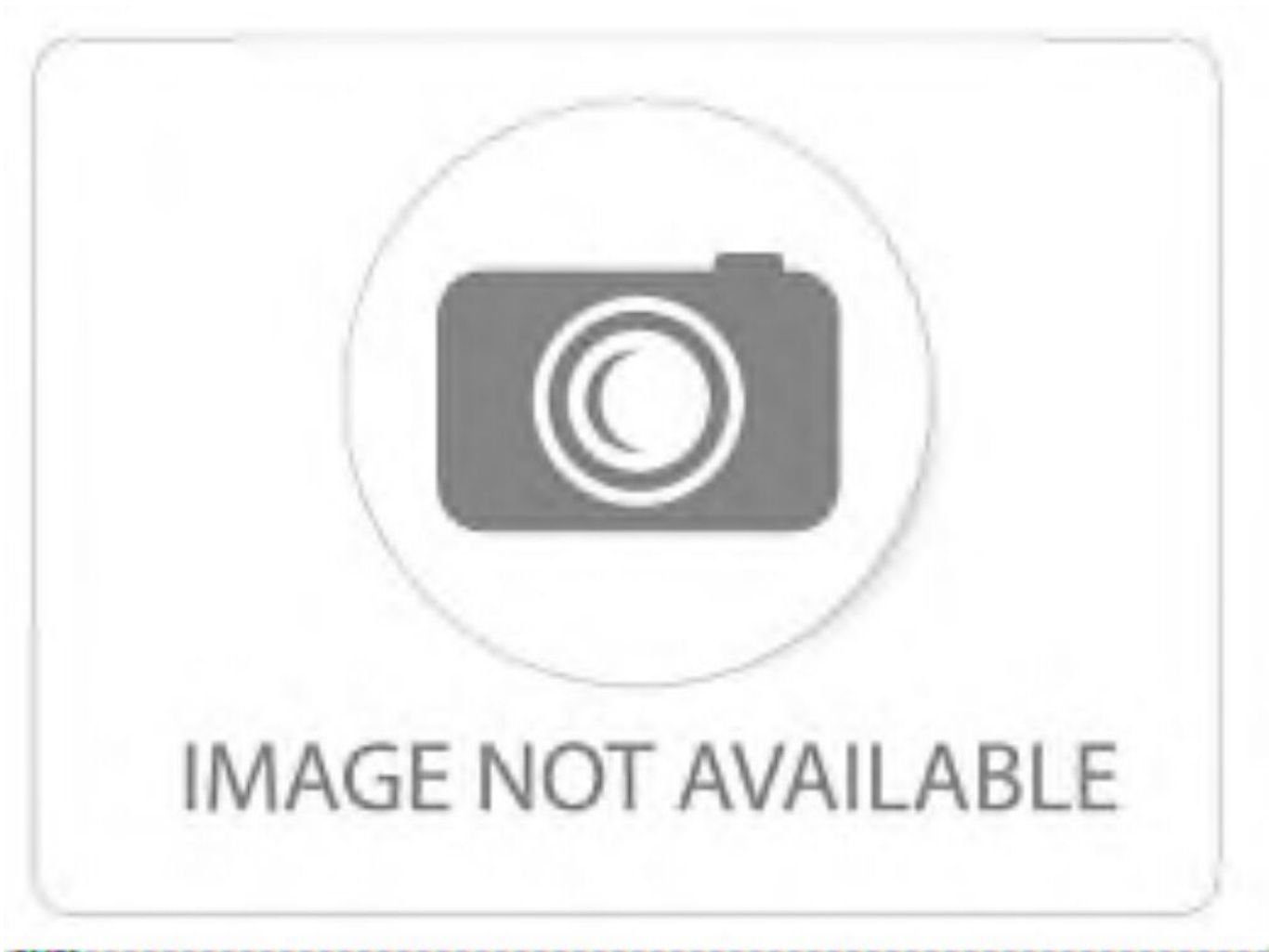
Sonya Fridman. Full, unedited interview, 2012

ID [NY085.interview](#) PERMALINK <http://n2t.net/ark:/86084/b4q23r248>

ITEM TYPE	VIDEO	ORIGINAL LANGUAGE	RUSSIAN
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TRANSCRIPT ENGLISH TRANSLATION

—Today is February 13, 2012. We are in the Jewish Center of Bensonhurst in Brooklyn, meeting with a veteran of the Great Patriotic War. Please introduce yourself: your first name and last name. When and where were you born? What do you remember from your prewar life? What was your family like? What school did you go to? How did you end up in a partisan detachment? What happened to you during the war?

My name is Sonya Karlitskaya. I married Iosif Lvovich Fridman. When I met him in the partisan detachment, his last name was Vinnichuk, Ivan Nikolaevich. It's a long story, which, I think, he will tell you himself. I was born in the village of Illintsi in Vinnytsya Oblast, in the family of a civil servant. My mom didn't work. She was helping my father since he was the manager of the store, then he was the manager of a bakery, then the manager of the dairy plant, and then the manager of our only restaurant. My mom always helped him in everything. My older brother took care of me. He was four years older. Our family was well provided for. We had one of the best houses because my father bought it from a man who was a wine merchant. He brought in wine. Under the entire house there was a huge wine storage. Besides that, it was a public inn with an area for horses. The inn had huge gates, which were closed at night time so that nobody would steal the horses. There was enough space for people to stay overnight since there were lots of rooms. That's where I grew up. I grew up carefree, well-provided for, and happy. They called me little goat because I was always jumping on one foot.

And all of a sudden, as though thunderstruck, I heard the word "war." From the faces of my parents and other adults I realized that the war came to our house. I could tell that something terrible was coming, though I had no idea what it would like. I hadn't yet read any serious books, just fairy tales. Before the war I had only completed four grades of a Ukrainian school. We had a Jewish school in Illintsi but only for a very short period because it got closed down. I went to a Ukrainian school. I was a good student: I graduated with three certificates of merit. This is what I remember from my childhood. I always hosted my friends, liked meeting with them and giving them lectures on whatever I knew better, like mathematics. From the very childhood I always shared my knowledge. When the war began, my father was mobilized at the place where he worked. He was running a restaurant at that time. He was responsible for assistance to the military. He fed the passing troops. My mom, of course, wanted to take us and leave, but my brother and I said, "We won't leave without our father, don't even think about it." Right at that time my grandmother came up to the house where her older daughter lived. The door was locked. There were domestic animals in the yard—hens, pigs. She heard loud squealing because they were probably hungry. Her daughter had left two days before that. She grabbed that lock and suddenly fell down dead. And this is why, of course, we couldn't even think about evacuation. We had to think about our grandmother's funeral.

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Very soon the Germans came to our village. It was within a month. When they came, the first thing that the local Ukrainians started doing was the pogroms. They came to our house and started taking everything that they could carry. They broke whatever they could not carry, like, ficus plants we had that were ceiling high. They cut the pillows open, hoping to find something valuable in them. The feathers were everywhere. We got kicked out. My mom started crying and an old man said, "Child, don't cry over what you lost . . . Your wool will grow again. And those people are like pigs: only bristle grows on them. Run . . ." We realized that we had to do all we could to stay alive.

—What did he say in Ukrainian?

He said that a Jewish person is like a sheep, with wool growing on them, and they will grow it back. And a Ukrainian person is like a pig that can only grow bristle. Bristle won't cover you. He was saying we shouldn't worry, everything would be okay in the long run. We just needed to survive. Unfortunately, even my friends with whom I shared my sweets and sunflower seeds, and with whom I went to the movies . . . they too took my stuff. They kept saying, "We also will be pretty like you." After the pogrom ended, people from other houses were put in ours. There were one to three families in each room. Our house was stuffed like a barrel with herring. There was no electricity and we were not allowed to use oil lamps. Somebody could only use a candle to read a book to us quietly. I remember this book . . . It was called "Stone on the Road." There was woman who was telling her story to the stone. Her story was so painful that the rock couldn't handle it: it burst. And our life after the German invasion was so painful that no rock could handle it. It would be hard for a person who never went through what we did to understand how our human hearts could endure it and how we managed to survive.

After a short period of time, one day we had to put indicators on our houses that a "Yid and Jude" lived there. We had to wear a Star of David on our sleeves. We had no right to go outside of the territory of our ghetto, even though it was not surrounded by the barbed wire. Our ghetto was located along the river, to the right and the left of our house. In the middle of the ghetto there was a big synagogue. That was where all the Jews who were brought from everywhere else were staying. Right after the pogroms it was announced that if we didn't gather a certain amount of soap, sugar, and boots as a tribute to the Germans, then forty of those people, the strongest and the youngest that they captured, would be shot. Of course everyone did their best, brought out whatever was hidden and saved in their houses, and gave everything away. In the morning those forty people were shot. There were fathers and sons, terrible screams and tears. We realized that it wasn't the war that came, it was plague. We hardly had any hope of surviving. However, hope dies last. We were forced to bring out all the paper from the printing house, put it next to the bank on the square, and make a bonfire. They made us dance around that bonfire and sing songs: "For the Motherland, for Stalin." The circle got more narrow, and the bonfire became wider. But at that time there was a Hungarian communications unit there and there were also Czechs. Everybody was taking pictures with their cameras, there was a lot of laughter. But they made a request to Germans to stop this

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hell and give people the opportunity to run off. They saved us that day. We lived on the corner and those communications soldiers were quartered across the street. They saw that children running out. One Hungarian came up to us and found out that our neighbors . . . We had a shared house: the bigger part was ours since there was the inn, and on the other side of the house there was also a big apartment with lots of rooms. He was talking to the boy, who told him that he also had a little brother and two sisters. He told the man how old they were. The man said, "Oh my god, back home I have children exactly the same age." And he really became fond of those children . . . Every time he came, he used to bring candy or chocolate, or a piece of bread. And we were herded outside to work.

—In what language did he speak to the children?

He didn't speak. He just understood their age. Maybe he was Jewish himself. How would we know. There were Jewish Hungarians in the army. They served in the army, too. He could have been Jewish, maybe not, I don't know. Maybe he spoke Ukrainian. We all spoke Ukrainian. In any case, he understood the age of those children. Sometimes he'd stroke their heads, give them a kiss . . . And that helped us survive later on.

I'll speak specifically about myself. We were all taken outside to work. There was a sugar plant and we had to work remove beet pulp . . . The stench was so terrible. We, children, had to load beet pulp on wagons and adults helped us put it outside. They had to remove all that to clean out the plant. Of course there was probably some German who decided to appropriate the plant to manage it in the future, an entrepreneur. We were herded outside to clean the streets. But here's something that happened with me personally. I was taken away because I was dressed decently and looked nice. They brought me to an interpreter and she said, "You will feed my baby and will look after her while I'm away. If something goes wrong,"—she showed me a lash—"you'll get what's coming to you."

—Was she a Ukrainian woman?

Yes, she was Ukrainian. The Germans hired her as an interpreter. She was kind of like Volksdeutsche. She considered herself a chosen one. Maybe they taught her or maybe she already knew how but she was able to ride a horse right away. She rode around whipping with that lash. She was very aggressive. She gave me her baby to feed. The baby started crying. She started threatening me: "I want her to finish the porridge. If she doesn't, I will stick this spoon down your throat." I was doing my best, I was very careful with the baby. Fortunately for me, in three days the unit where she worked left the village, so she left. Then I was taken to clean, but I was not the only one. Here's what Germans did: They took regular wardrobes, cut them in a certain way to make seats, and dug the base in the ground. They made these holes. Those were their toilets. None of us had that in our homes; everything was outside. But our outhouses were such that Germans stayed away from them. We, children, were herded outside to clean

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after them. Sometimes they had no qualms about defecating in our presence. We weren't given tools to clean. When we could gather some sticks that were around . . . that's how we cleaned after them with our bare hands. Then one of the polizeis caught me and said, "Go wash your face this instant!" He took me inside: I had to clean up myself and I had some clean clothes to change into. He brought me to a German into his room. I was only thirteen years old, I didn't understand what was happening. But I squeezed myself into that door and started sobbing very loudly. I was rubbing my tears off my face with my fists and couldn't stop shaking. And he probably felt pity or disgust and yelled, "Schnell! Get out! Get out!" I jumped out the door. I don't know if that polizei was punished for having brought such a young girl. But later on I realized when I grew up that girls were brought to him to be raped. I escaped this fate.

There were many run-ins like this when we were brought to . . . We approached the kitchens ourselves because we were so hungry since nobody gave us any food and we weren't paid. I don't even know how my parents made do. Sometimes the peasants, who knew us, came and secretly brought us some food and fed us. The cook glanced at our starving faces. He looked like a person of a peaceful . . . He gave us a full bucket of tasty hot porridge. Of course we had neither spoons nor pots, nothing. And we, like piglets, started eating that porridge from the bucket. The top of the bucket was all sooty. It looked like it probably stood in some fire. We decided we should clean the bucket. We tried our best and came back to him. He was laughing so hard he cried at how dirty and funny we were. At least he didn't scold us and everything was all right. But we didn't go to that kitchen anymore. That's how we lived.

And all of a sudden, when a woman was crossing the street to get some water, she was shot. The same happened to a boy. Even before the ghetto was set up, some people came out to the balcony to see what the noise was about. They were shot. Then the SS came. And that Hungarian soldier in the communications unit . . . basically, we got lucky: he quietly knocked on our door and told us to hide and not to even think of coming out. (My father spoke German.) We used wood for heating. We had a wall of firewood. We opened the cellar that used to store wine and everyone who was in our house and in its other part and from a couple of houses nearby, we all went down into that cellar. There were more than eighty people. My dad and his friend lay the firewood on top. They took off the stakes and that entire wall of firewood scattered over the cellar. My dad walled off the last room and made a hole to get in from the side of an attic. And since my dad was renting out that inn for people who wove ropes, we had a lot of tow fiber in our attic. When my dad and his friend came down and closed that hatch, the dust covered everything and there were no traces left. This is how they hid. The Germans felt that there was supposed to be something in the cellar. They even broke the floors in the apartment of our neighbor. They weren't able to get us. They probably also just didn't have enough time. Long story short, my father, his friend, and all of us stayed alive. Otherwise, as you imagine, we would have been buried alive in our hiding spot. We heard shouts. One of the women was holding her baby and the baby started crying. She was holding him so tight against her chest that he stopped crying forever. We didn't have any water. It didn't occur to anybody to

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bring food there and stuff to sleep on ahead of time . . . We managed to stay there for two days. On the third day, when it became quiet, at night they worked hard to move away the firewood and opened the passage, and he asked that everyone leave in different directions.

My dad took us and we left to a village where we knew we would be helped. We found these peasants, these wonderful peasants: Ivan Todosko and his son Vasya. Vasya provisioned the Germans with eggs. There I was a free girl. I wore Ukrainian clothes and didn't have to hide. My father went to the head of the village who had been repressed under dekulakization and returned right before the war. Who should be put in charge of the village? Of course, a person who had been hurt by the Soviet government. But he turned out to be a very decent and good man. His last name was Sherevera. He did everything to help us. He took my mom and my dad . . . They hid my mom at their place and presented my father and my brother as shoemakers. My dad knew how to make shoes because he used to do that since he was thirteen until the Soviet regime came. Then he finished a three-year parish school, he spoke German, a little bit of English . . . It's a different, long story. And he started stitching boots and helping the peasants, because it was impossible to buy anything. That's why they kept him and helped him survive. But the time came when I couldn't take it anymore and I ran to see them. You know how children are. Somebody saw me and told everyone that "there's a Yid girl hiding at the Lomaks'." She isn't a Ukrainian or a niece, she is a Yid. Somebody told us about that. I didn't go back there and a different family hid me. That woman's name was Tatyana. I don't remember all the names as I've been to too many places. Tatyana had a baby and her little girl and I were sitting on their stove. The whole oven was covered with sunflower seeds and sackcloth of some kind. They came to her house because she was the wife of a Red Army commander, and a guy started harassing her and she fought back as much as she could. The girl stuck her head out and the sunflower seeds started falling down . . . He raped her and she didn't give me away. But I had to leave and my dad brought me to a woman who had nothing. She had a child, she went around and people fed her; she was a beggar. She was a poor woman with bad eyesight. My dad, as much as he could, dug out a small ditch with a shovel in the corner of her inner porch so that I could fit in there sitting. He put a piece of a rag and covered me up with trash. She didn't even have hay, she had nothing. I sat there. She even had her doors open at all times and there were no curtains on the windows. Nevertheless, someone found out that I was there. This rumor spread in the village. A guy who always said to me, "Come herd the cows with me, let's go out . . ." came there. And, of course, I didn't want to go anywhere with him. When he found out that I lived in Todoska's place and that I was Jewish, he said, "I will destroy her." He climbed up to the attic, it was empty. He jumped off, but thank God, not on my head. He left and I stayed alive. And you know what? A few days later, my dad brought in my brother as well. It's hard to tell how he squeezed us both in. For two days . . . Imagine when I needed to go . . . He told me, "If you have to pee, pee on me. We don't have other options." I don't know how he bore this.

Two days later, my dad came back, happy because he found a house that could shelter all four of us. So

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we went there. There was a very good attic with lots of fragrant hay. They gave us blankets and hot food. On the second night, that guy came with two killers. He wanted to kill me and they forced us out of the house. My mom was walking first and my dad said in Yiddish, "Run." She ran. The night was terribly dark. It was overcast and there was no moon . . . completely dark. The village wasn't lit. She came out, fell by the tree, and fainted. My brother went second. My dad told him the same, "Run." He ran. And the killers were waiting for the guy to catch me. My brother ran off. My dad told me the same. And I ran after my brother. The night was dark. I stumbled on something and fell in the mud. My brother thought I was running behind him. He stopped and got caught. And, of course, they didn't let my dad out. They were beating him with a poker and broke his fingers. "Yid, give us your gold." Can you imagine? What gold? We had no clothes or shoes. My mom regained her consciousness and saw all that. When I got up, I ran to the village. I didn't know where I was running, but I was running. I found myself in a field, crawled into a haystack, and spent the night there. They took my father and my brother away and my mom ran to the head of the village. I knew nothing about my parents or my brother. The next night I went to the first village house that was on my way. It was at the edge of the village. There were people who knew my family. My brother hid at their place many times, and so did my mom. He told me, "You can't stay here because I've been under suspicion for a long time." I was in Borisovka and had to go to Krasnenka through the field and a wooded area. Here I was, a girl of thirteen-and-a-half years old, walking through fields and forests . . . It seemed to me that I was being chased. My heart was beating louder than hooves hitting the ground. There were dogs barking and it seemed to me that all the dogs were running after me. But I managed to cross the field, the forest, and one more field. I was smart enough to knock on the door of a small old house. A woman came out, crossed herself, and said, "Dear God, why are they torturing our children so much." She took me for a Russian girl that Germans wanted to drive to Germany. I told her the name of the place where I needed to go. I mean, it wasn't the name of the place that I told her. It was name of the neighbor who lived next to that woman. I knew the village well because before the war I would go to that village to stay with our very nice peasants. It's a whole another story, but I won't linger on that.

I was able to survive and come back to that village. When I came back to that village, my mother found me and suggested we go drown ourselves because there was no reason to live anymore since my dad and my brother were imprisoned. Those people were trying to reason with her, "What are you doing, maybe you'll be saved." She refused, saying we should go drown ourselves. I was barefoot, my shoes' had no soles. "I will give you my galoshes and go drown myself." Little by little, we convinced her. We stayed alive. And the head of the village helped us. It's a whole different story again. He helped my father and brother get out. One of the polizeis who knew my father also helped. He knew my father as someone who back in the days had helped a student . . . This is also a different story. When my dad showed up, he found Tatyana Ivanovna Brizhak. This person had such a generous soul. She was risking so much! She divided her cellar into two parts, with access to one half from her house. In the cellar she made a small square that she covered with just a sifter and two pieces of firewood. It was impossible to find us. The other half of the cellar was filled up with potatoes. My mom and I spent six months in that pit. There was no air to breathe.

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In the evening we opened that hole, crawled out, spent the night out until the dawn, and dove back in. When my dad found out that somebody came to her looking for us, that she was raped, and that her boy was thrown out on the street . . . The boy was screaming wanting to help his mother, and they threw him out. Serezha, may his soul rest in peace. He came back from the army disabled and soon got sick with tuberculosis. This is yet another story. Even though she had been raped, she didn't give us away. My dad decided that we couldn't endanger these kind people anymore. The head of the village gave us bread and some blankets. At dawn my dad and my brother came to get up my mom and me, and we went to the forest to look for partisans. I couldn't walk, my legs just weren't working. I hardly made it to the forest. And all of a sudden a cart drove out of the forest. There were Germans on it and a Gebietskommissar on the footboard in the back. There were more Germans coming behind . . . My brother screamed, "Run!" As he was running away, I fell and my legs gave out. Since then I don't hear well. My dad was screaming, "Don't run! These are partisans in disguise." My brother heard this. They picked me up and somehow we made it to the partisans. They didn't want to take us. Why would they need such a burden: a young girl and a woman . . . But the commander of the partisan group and the young woman that was with him, Lyubochka . . . Korolev said, "No, we will take them. The girl will go on reconnaissance and the woman will cook us hot food. It's time that we get settled, and those who are in the cellars, everyone will come to our partisan group."

Thus, they formed a partisan detachment that eventually merged with the 2nd Stalin Brigade when the troops landed on our territory. There were seventy-five machine guns, there was the operator Marusya, and there was also, as we called him, Vanka the Redhead. Everyone had an underground nickname. We also had the Hero of the Soviet Union Boyko, who died in the partisan detachment. The commander of our partisan brigade was . . . later on it was Kondratyuk . . . before him there was another one that was shot by the partisans because he took twenty best partisans and went with them to some Ukrainian feast in the village. They were all shot there. Only he and his so-called wife stayed alive. And everyone realized that she had planned it. He was executed in front of the entire partisan detachment. The head of our movement's headquarters, Mikhail Yablochkin, executed him. We had the Kirov Regiment, the regiment "For the Motherland," the Lenin Regiment, and also the Kaganovich Regiment, which was run by Mudrik, the Soviet Army officer who was responsible for the Jewish detachment where there were children and seniors. I was in the Kirov Regiment. Here's what I did there. Day and night, I was attending to the injured. Unfortunately, there were so many injured people, including seriously injured. I won't talk much about it. But when the forest was surrounded and everyone proceeded to take their positions, it was the first time when Germans went into the forests. We lived with no cover. There was an entire street of dugouts. In every one, there was a gasoline barrel and we used firewood for heat. Smoke was coming out of every house. In one dugout, which was quite big, almost like this room, there was an elevation on both sides. Injured people were on both sides. There was a stove we stoked, there was a medic, there was me, there was Anka Schneiderman, who was older than me: she was seventeen. There were two other women: Lyubochka, Korolev's wife, and there was Ivan Ivanovich's Pasha. He was another commander. As you'd

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expect, these women weren't on night duty. But Anka and I were there 24/7. We had to run to the kitchen three times a day and bring a bowl of hot food for everyone. There was a lot of food because a huge herd that was meant to be driven to Germany got driven to the forest instead. So we had lots of meat and milk. There was enough sugar because there was a sugar plant. That sugar was supposed to be exported as well, but it was brought to us instead. There was a lot of fruit, out of which we made compote. There was a lot of grain. We made soups with grain, with potatoes, and with meat. We used milk containers to cook food. There was enough food for everyone. There was a chef, an army chef. My mom helped him. They got up at five in the morning and went to bed late. There were also a couple of girls. There were very few women in the detachment.

When they surrounded the forest, we all ran to get the injured. My shoulder was shot through. I mean, not shot through, but a mine fragment hit my shoulder. I didn't even feel it because there were other things on my mind. I got one injured person out and didn't have to go back there because the battle was short and the Germans retreated right away. They didn't expect that: a lot of people came out, while they were a small detachment. They retreated right away, left their mines, dropped their weapons, and ran off. We picked up the wounded, brought them back: they filled up the whole space. It wasn't just our detachment. There were two people whom I have to mention. There was Viktor. He was absolutely perforated. I have no idea how he was still alive. A lot of bullets hit his legs, as far as I could understand. He was screaming endlessly, "Tie it up!" He was lying there and I had to tie up his legs with a rope and pull. To endure the pain he was feeling . . . Then he would curse, "Let it go!" This went on for half an hour, and then he couldn't take it anymore. He died from the pain. The second guy was Titov. The bottom of his stomach was perforated with bullets. He couldn't get up. That night Pasha stayed with us. She was holding a lamp. Anya was so exhausted that she was allowed to get some sleep. Pasha was holding a lamp in one hand and a wick in another while I was pouring kerosene into the lamp. And she accidentally moved her hand. The kerosene spilled right on her and started to burn. Titov got up with all his blankets, lay right on her, and covered up the fire. What unfathomable courage. Afterwards, we barely managed to put him back on his bed. His face got so burnt that only his mouth was visible. It looked so little, like a newborn's mouth. His face turned black. But our medic was still there. Later on he ran off and we never saw him again. But while he was there, he performed an operation—he chopped his hand off. We had German gauze, which was like spider web— it could only be used once. And they were very narrow. We didn't have anything else. We had nothing except manganese solution. We disinfected the wounds with it and used the gauze to absorb the blood. He stitched up the wrist with a regular shoe needle. And all of that was happening right before my eyes. I knew that I would never have anything to do with that for the rest of my life.

Everybody left because the front tanks broke through and all partisans had to leave the forest. My mom ran to Kondratyuk . . . not Kondratyuk . . . She ran to the commander of our Kirov Regiment and said, "I need to take my child with me." He said, "We don't have children here, we have fighters. You should go

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with everybody else and she should stay with the wounded." What could you do? Our medic disappeared, he was a local. There was only me, Anka Schneiderman, and Pasha, who couldn't help anyone because of her burns. We disinfected her face with the manganese solution. Her face became black and the skin started peeling off. That was all we could do for her. Titov said, "Sonya, go find such-and-such post. We need more people." I found the post, nobody was there. "Then go to the village." I was such a great partisan—I had a pistol, I had a submachine gun, I had everything, even a grenade. I had everything. I didn't know how to use any of that, but that's a different story. So I went to the village. When I reached a ditch, I had to figure out how to cross it and find the village. Every forest usually has a ditch like this at the edge. Suddenly there was a skidding German car. I jumped right into that ditch. The winters were terribly cold and the snow was higher than the village houses. The snow was up to my neck. And all of a sudden the head of our administrative company came out. I shouted, "Uncle Kolya!" His last name was Pernavsky. He looked around but didn't see anyone . . . He pulled me out and I told him what had happened. He said, "Go to the dugouts and gather everything you can. Prepare the wounded for evacuation." I came there, told Anka and started preparing everything. Korolev had more blankets than others so I was putting everything together. Right after I left, a bomb hit the dugout. It was my fate to survive. On the other side of the road there were many people from the Jewish detachment and when they were crossing to get to the side where I was, many Jewish people died, including . . .

—Was this a bomb or a mine?

It was a bomb, a direct hit. We were being bombed. My cousin who was in the Jewish detachment died there. We put everything together and he sent us carriers. There were over 20 sleighs because there were so many wounded. We put two-three injured people on each sleigh and covered them with what we could. Anka and I, we were running after the sleighs because if we sat we would freeze right away. When we reached the first village, we saw a reconnaissance scout who started cursing at us . . . "Where do you think you're going? Who are you?" I said, "We are partisans." "Who's in charge?" I said it was me. He said, "Do you have any idea where you're going?" The front line was on one side, the partisans and Germans were on the other side, and I was right in the middle. I saw the road, so I took it. He showed us the right direction and we met the first women anti-aircraft-gunners in quilted jackets with epaulets, which was a strange sight for us. This was the first meeting point and we started . . . We dropped off people with the most serious injuries and left. It was only near Kiev [Kyiv] that we managed to drop off the last of the wounded.

When I was with my parents I met Iosif. He enlisted voluntarily. He came to see me off.

[He will speak about this.]

—What year did [your detachment] merge with the army?

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We joined the Red Army in 1944.

—What was the name of area where your partisan detachment had their operations?

This was the Shebelyansky forest, the Gaisin [Haysyn] forest, the Oratov forest, the Illintsi forest . . . This was a huge area of forests.

—After the war, did you meet the people who were helping you hide?

First of all, I have to tell you that I wasn't allowed to join the army. I considered myself a fighter, I wanted to be in the army. But they didn't take me; they made me go school instead. Regarding meeting with the people who had saved me, here's what I would like to say. Not only did we meet with them, we also always helped them. We started studying, got college degrees, our own houses and apartments. We started a new life, were better off. But those people stayed as poor as they had been before. They were uneducated before, and they stayed that way. They came to see us in Kiev. We had to move to Kiev because our house had been destroyed: it was looted, including the planking and the glass; they took everything they could carry. We went to a partisan reunion twenty years later. There was destroyed German Tiger tank at the spot where our house used to be. We met with others, too. They now have grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and even today not only we keep in touch with them, we also send them gifts. We sent Korolev \$30 monthly all these years. He passed away recently. We had him recognized as one of the Righteous Among the Nations. People from the Jewish Association of Kiev used to bring him food three times a week.

—So you met those who saved you. Did you encounter those who came to rob you or betrayed you?

I have something to say about that, too. They ran off from the village right away. I had the opportunity to shoot the bandit in charge. He had seven children. And I saw all his kids. My heart throbbed and I couldn't pull the trigger. I couldn't shoot that man. Then they tracked him down and he was tried. But the worst thing was that the head of the village was imprisoned and we couldn't do anything about it. He died in the Soviet prison. That was really the most terrible, unfair situation.

—Thank you very much.

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