

Interview with Margulia German
March 5, 1986
Interviewer: Jeanette Tved

JT: Mrs. German, what **CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY**

MG: Lantunan. **Ethnic Women in Cleveland
Oral History Project**

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JT: And what is your nationality?

MG: My nationality is Jewish.

JT: I understood that you were from the Soviet Union.

MG: Yes, I am from the Soviet Union. I lived in Russia until 1940. In

Interview with

Margulia German

JT: That's a very interesting part of the world. A lot of history there. I wish we had time to talk about that. Where were your parents born?

MG: My parents were born in Russia, and then they lived in Russia during that part because Russia was from 1917 to 1940. My mother died in Russia before we came to America. In 1975, my father is still here. He is 83 years old.

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**Women's Comprehensive Program
History Department**

JT: Good. What is your father's name?
MG: My father was, in Russian, [unclear] the fur business. And

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JT: And your mother, did she work outside the home?

MG: Before the Soviet Union she didn't work, she was a housewife. When the Soviets came she worked for the [unclear] and part time as a seamstress.

JT: In the Soviet Union do they call seamstresses seamstresses?

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JT: Mrs. German, what was your maiden name?

MG: Lantsman.

JT: Where were you born?

MG: I was born in Romania.

JT: And what is your nationality?

MG: My nationality is Jewish.

JT: I understood that you were from the Soviet Union.

MG: Yes, I am from the Soviet Union. I lived in Romania until 1940. In August 1940 the Soviet Union liberated the part of Bessarabia which was under Romania and from that day until 1979, until I left Russia, I was a Russian citizen.

JT: That's a very interesting part of the world. A lot of history there. I wish we had time to talk about that. Where were your parents born?

MG: My parents were born in tsarist Russia, and then they lived in Romania because that part became Romanian from 1922 to 1940. My mother died in Russia before we came to America in 1978. My father is still here. He is 83 years old. He lives in the same building I am living now. He came together with my family to America. He doesn't speak English yet, but he speaks Yiddish and he is very happy in this country.

JT: Good. What is your father's occupation?

MG: My father was, in Romania, he was a business man, the fur business. And under the Soviet regime, he was a salesman.

JT: And your mother, did she work outside the home?

MG: Before the Soviets came she didn't work, she was a housewife. When the Soviets came she worked, part-time saleswoman and part time as a seamstress.

JT: In the Soviet Union do they call saleswomen economists?

MG: No. Saleswomen are saleswomen. Economists are like accountants in our country, in America, I mean.

JT: Can you tell us something about your childhood; how many brothers and sisters you had.

MG: Yes, I was brought up in a family where we were two children, my sister and me. I have a sister who is younger than me, five years. 'Til 1940 I went to a Romanian school, where I learned Romanian and Yiddish and Hebrew. In 1940 when the Soviets came in I was transferred back one grade lower and I started to learn Russian, and from then I spoke Russian and I graduated a Russian high school in Kishinev; I lived in Kishinev with my parents, Kishinev which is very famous for the pogroms in 1905. And there in Kishinev in 1951 I graduated high school, and in 1951 I entered there the university, department of foreign languages, which I graduated in 1955 as a teacher of foreign languages.

JT: Can we go back a little bit to your childhood. Were your parents religious?

MG: My parents and my whole family was very religious, I mean they were observers of all the traditions of Jewish religion, and my father was a very active member of the synagogue, and after war, even by the Soviet Union, where religion was not very free, he tried to construct, or build back, one of the synagogues which was destroyed by the Nazis. He was the president of this synagogue for several years, until I graduated school and I had to enter the University and I knew I would have a hard time because my father was observant of Jewish religion. That's why he had to leave this position and help the synagogue underground. But he still was attending synagogue on all the holidays and on Shabbat and now in America he is so observant that he goes to synagogue every morning and every evening and the synagogue counts him like the of the synagogue. They love him very much. They come to pick him up, they bring him back and they are very proud of him.

JT: Great. What languages were spoken in your home?

MG: In our home the main language we spoke was Yiddish, and I am very thankful to my parents they taught me Yiddish because now it helps me in getting a position of a teacher of Yiddish at the Workmen's Circle. I will speak about my profession a little bit later, but it's a great help. The second language we have spoken before the Russians came was Romanian, and after the Russians came it was Russian.

JT: And you observed all the holidays in your home?

MG: Yes. We observed all the holidays.

JT: Did you live in a Jewish community?

MG: There is no special Jewish communities in this place, or in Russia in any places. All the people are mixed together, but Jews everywhere find each other. We had a lot of friends, and family there, and all the holidays my mother used to make at her house, in her home. My father used to be at the Seder, and the Seder was like usual before the Russians came in, but everything was observed indoors, not out of doors because we were afraid of losing our positions. I was a teacher, my husband was a teacher, and that was very dangerous for our positions.

JT: Was this the part of the Soviet Union that is called Moldavia?

MG: Yes.

JT: It went through a great deal of adjustment after the war.

MG: Yes, yes. It was called Bessarabia by Romania, and it became Moldavia in the Soviet Union. The Moldavian Republic. And I was teaching Moldavian, too, at Moldavian schools, because Moldavian and Romanian are very similar, so it was no problem for me to speak Moldavian. And I am still speaking Moldavian and Romanian. The only difference between Moldavian and Romanian is because of the alphabet. Romanian alphabet is Latin alphabet and Moldavian alphabet is the Russian alphabet.

JT: Cyrillic?

MG: Yes.

JT: When did you leave Moldavia?

MG: We left Moldavia on June 5th, 1979.

JT: Who is "we"?

MG: My father, my family, my husband and me, and my daughter's family, which consisted of her husband, herself, and her little daughter, Inga, who was four years old then.

JT: Why did you leave?

MG: This is a special story to talk about. We were supposed to leave Russia in 1946, at the beginning of 1946, because after the war there was a border where a lot of Jews had left Russia, to Romania and Czechoslovakia and come to Israel or to America. My father was intending to do the same with his family. And it happened so that three days before we had to leave Russia, when everything was almost ready, my mother got very sick, she burned her foot, and she was in the hospital for six months. And by that time the border was closed and we didn't leave Russia. My dream as a girl of twelve years old became to some day leave Russia and to live in another country because I was very upset by what happened with my parents when the Russians came to Bessarabia. The Russians nationalized everything from my parents. My father was a businessman, they were very wealthy people. Everything was taken away and my mother became very sick because of that and we became so poor that it was unbelievable. And that was in my heart forever. That memory I couldn't forget about that because everything that happened to the family I was at an age when I could understand what was going on. And even living in Russia for many years, because I had to live there, I didn't like it. I didn't like the government, I didn't like the policy of the government. I loved my country, I loved the people, I loved my friends. I had a lot of friends there, Jews and non-Jews, whom I love still now. But the reason was that I wanted to live in a free country where nobody will follow me, my family, and my grandchildren, who will grow up and live in a free country.

JT: Did everyone in your family have the same reason for wanting to leave?

MG: I would say no. My father and me had the same reason. My husband didn't have the same reason. My husband was born in the deep of Russia, in Odessa, and he never knew about the capitalist system, so he was afraid to go out to live in a capitalist system. And he didn't know what it was going to be with him, so he just counted on me because I told him that I really would like to change this system. What it concerns my daughter and her family. Her husband, they were both engineers. They graduated the Polytechnical Institute in Russia. For a Jew to graduate from the Polytechnical Institute was very important at that time. It was hard, it was not an easy thing to do, but they made it. And they had positions of engineers, both of them. They knew that nothing good is expected there for their future and when I told them that I would like the family to leave my daughter was ready the same day because she knew everything about the history of our family. I told her a lot about that. My son-in-law was concerned because his family was not ready to leave, and he didn't know his family would agree with that. But they gave him the permission to leave, because they knew that he would lead a better life here than there.

JT: How did you travel?

MG: We travelled to Italy and through Austria. From Russia we were transferred by trains to Czechoslovakia, from Czechoslovakia to Vienna, where we have been met by some representatives from HIAS, a Jewish organization from New York which was taking Jews who didn't want to go to Israel but to other countries to the country where they wanted to become citizens. As far as we were concerned, we wanted to go America, we had some relatives here, on my husband's side, and we wanted to join them. So from Vienna--in Vienna we lived for two weeks--until we got the permission to be transferred to the HIAS from the other organization which took three days.

JT: Was it difficult to get a visa to leave the Soviet Union?

MG: To get a visa at the time we got a visa was not so difficult, because at that time they didn't look for blood relatives. They accepted any visa. It could be a visa from your friend, it could be a visa from a cousin or an aunt or whoever. We had a part of our family in Israel already, all our cousins from my father's and mother's side were already in Israel.

JT: They went from Romania?

MG: No, they went from Russia, too, but they went before we made a decision. They went in 1973. One of my cousins sent us a visa, and, at that time, 1979, it was a good relation between Carter and Brezhnev, and they had to meet in Vienna and they made the date the same date we came to Vienna. So we rushed ourselves, we knew this would not be for a long time lasting, and as soon as we got our visas we gave them to the high-level organizations and we waited for visa around four months. In April we got our permission to leave Russia. It was not easy. We had a lot of problems to solve, but, with God's help we made it.

JT: How did you happen to come to Cleveland?

MG: I mentioned already that we had some relatives here, whom we had seen in 1961. They came as tourists to Russia and they visited us for three days in Kishinev. They stayed with us, they enjoyed being with us, and we knew a lot about their talks about their life in Cleveland, about their relatives, about their . So we decided as far as we don't know anybody anywhere it would be better to join them, and to have at least some people here who can say hello to you. So, that's why we made this decision.

JT: How did you find a place to live?

MG: We are very thankful to the Jewish Family organization which supported us in this case. The minute we came to Cleveland we were met by a case worker at the airport, which took us to my sister's house, my sister was already here. She came three months before we arrived here. So she brought us to my sister's family, gave us some financial support, and started to look for

us for a place to live in. A week later she found an apartment for us and for my daughter's family and we got our apartments and we got all the supplies we needed for the beginning, starting from a pillow and a sheet and dishes and spoons and forks, everything people need for the first time they arrive in a place where they didn't bring anything, because our luggage was behind us and it arrived only three months later, no, five month's later. Then we got some money for food and it lasted for two months. They paid for our apartment for two months. We paid back everything, that's understandable, but it was a very nice loan and a very good support for the beginning.

JT: Did you know English when you came?

MG: Sure, I knew English because it's my profession. I was teaching English at high-school level at the University of Kishinev for foreign students during twenty five years before I arrived in Cleveland. But, anyway, I had a hard time because the English I was speaking and the English they speak here in Cleveland in America was a little bit different. I learned British English, this is another kind of English, but it was easier than for other people who came without any language.

JT: I think you speak midwest English very well.

MG: Thank you.

JT: The rest of your family, how did they learn English?

MG: My daughter knew English very well because I taught her all her lifestarting from her childhood. I wanted her to know a second language, foreign language. And she learned at school, at high school, everywhere she learned that English was a good help to her. And as soon as she came she was capable to communicate. My husband didn't know a word of English. His English is not as good now as it has to be either, but it is better than it was and he can communicate, not so good, but he does it. My son-in-law learned English here, he knew German. My granddaughter, Inga, she learned

English very fast because children pick up the languages fast and now you can't say whether she is a Russian or no. The other child in my daughter's family was born here in America, she's an American citizen, and we teach her to speak Russian, she doesn't speak English, even she was born in America she speaks perfectly Russian, being a baby of 19 months only. But we know that her English will be as well as everybody American because she will be able to learn that at an older age.

JT: I hope she continues the Russian.

MG: I hope so.

JT: How about Romanian? Will you teach her Romanian too?

MG: I don't know. . . there are so many languages to teach them that I don't know what to start with. My older granddaughter is learning Hebrew right now, and I hope I'll teach her Yiddish as well. And if there will be a chance that she will want to learn Romanian she's entirely welcome to learn it, but I don't know how it will work out. And the little one, I can't say anything yet.

JT: You were a teacher in the Soviet Union before you came here. Did you find work of equal quality here?

MG: No . At the time when I arrived in Cleveland I was taken to the Jewish Vocational Service to look for a job and they told me that English speaking is not a profession because I don't have an American diploma and an American license. They told me that everyone here speaks English so that it doesn't mean that I have to be a teacher. I have to look for any job to make a living. So I got a job they offered me at the office , personnel worker at Hexter's company. I worked there for about three or four months. Then I made my mind up that it's not a job for me, I want to do something else, what I did for my whole life, and I started to look for another job. Then I was offered a job as a teller at a bank. I became a teller at metropolitan branch on Coventry, where they needed somebody who speaks Yiddish, Russian and English as well. I worked there for three months,

I quit it, because I am not good with numbers. I am better with students. And I asked them to help me get a job of at least a teacher at a day care center for the beginning. So I got that job at the day care center where I worked for four years. And by the same time I was taking courses from The College of Jewish Studies. I decided to become a teacher of Judaic studies, not any more of English language because I wanted to learn myself more about Judaism and to teach my students about that. Now it is the fourth year that I am a student at this College. I'm graduating this summer, with God's help, in getting my master's degree in Judaic studies. I am teaching right now in different places, all kinds of history, Jewish history, Jewish prophets, Jewish ethics, Yiddish. I enjoy it very much, I am very happy. I am teaching at Park Synagogue, which is my first home, where I started to teach on Sunday and I am a member of this synagogue. I was very welcomed by this synagogue. I was teaching there the older Russian people, Judaism, because they didn't know anything in English and I taught them in Russian. That was my first experience in teaching Judaic studies. And I am teaching Saturdays at the Temple on the Heights, and the weekdays, four times a week, I am teaching at Workmen's Circle. History and English.

JT: That's a marvelous story. How about your husband?

MG: My husband has a shorter story. When he arrived to Cleveland, he was really very disappointed because his language he understood was not good to get a job. But he's a very good professional, he's a very great handyman. He was a mechanic of sewing machines and different other equipment all his life, an electrician. So the first job he got here was an electrician. Not an electrician, but an assembler of electrical lamps. He worked there for several months. Then he got a better opportunity as a mechanic of sewing machines, where he worked for five years. In spite of not knowing the language very well he was kept at this job for five years because he was a very good professional. In 1984 he quit it because he got a better

opportunity at a better place, Fisher Body, where he worked 'til 1986.

Now he is laid off. He's a little bit disappointed, but we hope everything will work out and he will get back to his job.

JT: I hope so. And your daughter?

MG: My daughter was engineer in canned food industry. So she was a technologist, engineer. But when she came to Cleveland she realized that that profession is not so available to get position here, and she decided to change her profession. She got trained as a lab technician at medical offices. Now she is at a medical building, lab technician. She works with a very nice company of doctors, Dr. Stuart Markowitz, Brenner, they are very nice people, who like her very much, and she is with them for five years already. And she is very happy.

JT: And your son-in-law?

MG: My son-in-law got the same position he had in Russia. He is a mechanical engineer, and he started his job as mechanical engineer in Mentor. And now he is working on the west side. I don't remember the name of the company. His language is now good and he doesn't have any problems.

JT: You have just the one daughter, then?

MG: Yes, I have one daughter and two granddaughters. My older granddaughter, Inga, is very dear to me. We had a very hard time with that child when she was born, and we didn't know if she will survive. She was premature. And we were very lucky that she survived. She's a very, very nice girl. I'll show you her picture and the picture of the little one. She is in the 5th grade now at Roland public school. They live in South Euclid. She is an excellent student. She is a student at Batora; Batora is a Hebrew school which she attends in the afternoons, and on Sundays at Park Synagogue. She learns music; she plays piano. She is going in for different kinds of sports, in gymnastics, in roller skating, in dancing and she is very, very busy all her time. She's a very nice girl, we love her very much. She is

very intelligent and very educated.

JT: What languages do you speak in your home?

MG: In my home, with my father I speak Yiddish, like I used to speak all my life. With my husband, we speak most of the time Russian sometimes English because I have to teach him to learn better his English language, but it's not so easy.

JT: And your daughter's family, what do they speak?

MG: My daughter's family speaks Russian. and my grandchildren speak Russian. But out of the house my older granddaughter speaks English and my daughter and her husband speak English at their jobs, with their friends.

JT: Would you say Inga is fluent in Russian?

MG: Inga is fluent in Russian. She can not only speak Russian, she can also read it. She writes letters to her other grandfather and grandmother in Russia in Russian and they enjoy the letters very much.

JT: I should think they would. Do you attend religious services regularly here? First of all, let me ask, did you attend religious services in the Soviet Union?

MG: I didn't attend religious services in the Soviet Union regularly because it was impossible. If somebody would find out I would not be able to be a teacher. But in this country I attend services on all the holidays, on Shabbat I don't have any opportunity because I am teaching on Shabbat, so I am in the services anyway with all my students. But if I did not teach on Shabbat I would attend Shabbat services as well as I attend the religious holidays.

JT: How about your daughter's family?

MG: My daughter's family attends the religious holidays services, not every time Shabbat services because they don't have the possibility, the child was born, they have other problems. They come late from work. But I wish they could and I hope they will. My granddaughter attends every

Shabbat junior congregation service.

JT: Do you belong to any ethnic women's organizations? Jewish organizations?

MG: No, I don't belong. I was invited to join the Hadassah, the women's association, but as I told you, I am so busy with my studies and my job that I really don't have the possibility to join them. I don't know. Maybe when I graduate I will have more time. I would like to, but it is so hard.

JT: How about your daughter?

MG: My daughter doesn't either.

JT: Do you think she ever will? You say you may sometime.

MG: Yeah, I think she will. I think she will when her children grow up and she will be not so busy. She works eight hours a day and has the two little children, and a family. It is not so easy for her to make out. She likes very much to be involved in different organizations. She used to be involved in Russia in different organizations, you know, junior organizations, in dancing, playing and everything, but now she is really very busy.

JT: How about your husband?

MG: My husband doesn't attend organizations. Not because he doesn't want to but because of the language. He feels uncomfortable because he is shy and he thinks that people don't understand him very well, and that is a problem for him. He even stays away sometimes when I attend the services because he feels uncomfortable.

JT: How about other organizations, other women's organizations?

MG: Not yet. I don't belong to any. Maybe sometimes I will.

JT: Do you still follow the cooking traditions of your native country?

MG: Yes. I follow the cooking traditions. My family likes my cooking and they enjoy whether they come to my house to eat the Russian Jewish food... I am not a great American cook, but my granddaughter told me, "Grandma," she says, "You are not an excellent driver yet, but you are an excellent

cook." That was a very nice compliment.

JT: Yes. What do you especially like to make?

JT: I like to make Russian borscht. I like to make all different kinds of baking, torts and different other stuff. Jewish cooking, gefilte fish, baked fish, baked chicken, chicken soup, different other stuff. I invite you sometime to come to my house and to try my food.

JT: Thank you! And does your daughter do this too?

MG: Yes, my daughter is a nice cook, too, but she tries to change her style more in American food cooking, because her friends are more modernized. They are young people and they like, I think, as well as the Russian food, American food. So she tries to learn more to cook in American style.

JT: But ethnic food is very popular here. My children love Mexican food.

MG: I know, I know. She is cooking Russian food for her home always as well as I do, all that stuff I taught her to cook and she learned from me. But when she has company she makes American food but Russian as well.

JT: Any other traditions that you have retained either from your Jewish background or from your Russian or Romanian tradition? Interest in any particular kind of music?

MG: Yes. I am a great lover and my husband as well of Jewish music. We like very much all the Yiddish songs. Anytime Russian actors from New York come to Cleveland or some Jewish actors come we visit all the concerts and we like and enjoy them very much. We buy their tapes and listen to them at home, but we like to attend ballet and other movies which are in English and we enjoy them as well as our traditional music.

JT: How about literature?

MG: I like to read very much. Now I am busy reading all the books I have to prepare for my papers in my studies and I really don't have a lot of time to read literature, but if I have a minute of reading I would like to read once more everything I have read before in Russian. Now I try to find the books in English and to read them and to understand what maybe I didn't

realize as well when I was much younger. But it's really now so tied up with the times that I can't say I'm such a great reader now. but I was.

JT: If you were to read Chekhov, would you read Chekhov in Russian or in English?

MG: I think I would read in English. Not in Russian, because I don't have to improve my Russian language. My Russian language is good without that.

I think I have to improve my English, maybe vocabulary increase, you know, there is a lot to learn because it's never too late to learn.

JT: How about modern Russian writers, Soviet writers?

MG: Yes, I like them, the modern Russian writers. The only thing I don't like in their writing is they have to follow the policies of the government. That's why sometimes their novels and their poems sound more patriotic than the content has to be. You know it's not reality, it's more...

JT: Isn't it socialist realism?

MG: Yes, it's socialist realism. Like Gorky and Mayakovsky started that realism. I like very much Mayakovsky's poems, I still read them in Russian. They don't sound in English as well as they sound in Russian, because the meaning of the poems is really in the Russian language. Closer to the people. I like Gorky as well. I like a lot of his books and stories. From the American writers I like very much Dickens (I mean English writers), I like Dreiser, I like Mark Twain, and many others. It's a shame to say the contemporary American writers I don't know very well yet.

JT: Do you know the contemporary Soviet writers?

MG: The last five, six years not very well because I didn't make a goal to learn more about them, but before I left Russia, sure, I had to know because I was teaching in high school and I had to know everything what was arriving on the scene, you know.

JT: Next fall in a course in Russian history I have promised the students

that I would bring some contemporary short stories. Soviet short stories.

MG: What author would you recommend?

MG: It is hard to say just from that point of view, but the contemporary

If you think I can be of help to you I could write to my friends and they could send me maybe some books of contemporary Russian writers which America doesn't have yet.

JT: That would be interesting!

MG: I hope books can be transferred because it's nothing, you know. . .

JT: Nothing political.

MG: Yes, nothing political, that's what I mean. I like Voznesenski very much.

JT: Do you? Yevtushenko? Did you read his novel "Wild Berries"?

MG: The "Wild Berries" I started to read but I didn't finish it. But I like him, I like his poems, it's very interesting.

JT: I like his poems, but I didn't think "Wild Berries" was as good as his poems.

MG: No, I would say the same.

JT: It's a series of episodes.

MG: Yes, it's just episodes, episodes, episodes.

JT: And you say you take your children to the ballet?

MG: Yes, we were at the different ballets last year. We didn't attend the ballet this year because we didn't have the opportunity, but the ballet that is now on, we saw that in Russia with the Russian dancers, but I would like to see it with the London. . . . the Sadler Wells group.

JT: Saturday evening I am going to Romeo and Juliet. I want to hear the Prokofiev score.

MG: I watched it in the movies in Russia, but here I didn't see. . . . Last year I was at a couple of ballets performed by New York actors. It was like parts from different ballets and it was very nice.

JT: Is your daughter and her family interested in Russian music or Jewish

JT music and literature?

MG: Yes, they are interested very much in Russian music and Yiddish music.

They like American music, contemporary American music. Disco music, that's my daughter and my son-in-law. They are not attending disco bars very often but they enjoy it, and my son-in-law by personality is a very active person, too. He played a couple of shows in Russian here. The Jewish fashion community made a very nice two shows last year, for the New Year and another one. Ten Year from the Beginning of Emigration, and it was wonderful. We have the tapes. It was in Russian and it was wonderful. He's very artistic. So he likes this kind of job. He participated in the JCC in one of the English performances and he played a very main part in this performance. It was two years ago. My little granddaughter was participating in the JCC in one of the ballet performances as well. It was a ballet about the creation of the world. How it was created in seven days and everything and she was one of the ballet dancers, and she enjoyed it very much. And she is very active in jazz music, they like jazz music. They attend all the movies and watch all the programs. They are very modernized, I would say.

JT: Did you participate in the JCC seminar on emigration?

MG: Yes, I did.

JT: So did I.

MG: How come, I didn't see you.

JT: I was the academic person on the Helsinki Treaty.

MG: I participated at the beginning. The first year I was invited there, I was a participant, and then as soon as I started attending the college I couldn't attend all these meetings in the evening, so I really was sorry, but I couldn't help it. It takes a lot of my time, the College of Jewish Studies, but it works because I had to graduate and get my degree in teaching here.

JT: Do you correspond with anyone in your homeland?

MG: Yes, I do. I correspond by letters, I correspond calling. We call on all the birthdays to my husband's family, because they all are there, my husband's two sisters and their families. And each birthday they have we call them and say happy birthday. We write letters, we get letters, we get telegrams for our birthdays, and cards for the holidays, and our communication is on a high level.

JT: And there are no difficulties?

MG: There are no difficulties because we don't write things we know we are not supposed to write.

JT: Have you ever been interested in politics? At home or here?

MG: At home I was interested in politics but I never had a chance to participate because I was afraid of different results which would follow. Here, I really don't know. I didn't make my mind up yet.

JT: How about the men in your family? Do any of them correspond with people in the homeland? Your son-in-law?

MG: Yes. My son-in-law does. My husband does. He writes letters every week to his sisters and gets letters from them. And to friends. And my son-in-law corresponds with his parents and we just this Sunday we talked to his mother because it was her 70th birthday and wished her a happy birthday and there was no problem. The whole family was talking.

JT: Do they live in Odessa?

MG: No, they live in Kishinev.

JT: Were the men in your family interested in politics, either in the homeland or here?

MG: My father was interested in politics when he was younger, in the Romanian country. He told me a lot of stories where he participated. I really don't remember now, but when he was a young man he did it. As soon as the Russians came he was away from all this kind of stuff. Now it is too

late to talk about that because of the language, because of the age.

My husband was not interested, not in Russia, not here. He is more a person to create with his hands than to create by his mind and heart.

His hands are very creative.

JT: Do you think women are more liberated in the Soviet Union than they are here?

MG: I would say no. They are not more liberated. Here they are more liberated, and I think from this point of view that this liberation is a little bit too much.

JT: How do you mean that?

MG: I mean that they don't feel their responsibilities, I don't think. I'm not saying all of them, but the young people don't feel their responsibilities for their families as it was in Russia.

JT: Are you implying it's the young women. . . ?

MG: Yes, the young women, the young American women in the twenties, that age. Because sometimes I am watching the young women of the age of my daughter and I compare their attitude to their families. And I see that my daughter is more responsible for her family. She is more tied up with the family than the American women are. They are more free. They think about their freedom more than they think about the family. That is my opinion, maybe I am wrong, I don't know, but that is my observation.

JT: I would say you are right. We hear so much about the different career opportunities women in the Soviet Union have, you mention that your daughter was trained as an engineer in the Soviet Union. There's very little of that here. Do you think women are in a greater variety of careers in the Soviet Union than they are here?

MG: I would say no, because here I see there are a lot of young women and they prepare for the careers of doctors and lawyers. Engineers there are not so many because engineering in this country is not at a high level as much as

it was in Russia. And I think from the point of view of American women they think that engineering is more a man's job than a woman's job. In Russia there are about the same quantity, men and women, who got engineering diplomas. But I would say that here the ladies don't need so much to get their professions because sometimes the husbands have such good occupations that they really don't need it. They are more involved in volunteering jobs than they are in making a living. In Russia the profession is because the lady needs to make a living as well as her husband. Here I don't think so many are involved in jobs because they need it for their family.

JT: Many people say that in the Soviet Union women don't go to the top in their profession. Most of the doctors are women but they all stay in the lower ranks and the hospitals are directed by men and the great surgeons are men. Do you think that is more the case in the Soviet Union than it is here, or is it about the same?

MG: I would say there are enough professors and surgeons in Russia women as well as there are here. The problem is that in Russia anyone who wants to get to a higher position has to be personally involved with the Communist Party. Maybe that's why women are less in this position because they don't get so much involved with the Communist Party. In this country you don't have to be involved with any parties to get these positions. So as long as you are smart enough and educated you can get the positions.

JT: Do you have any other comments about differences you see between women here and in the Soviet Union? Or Romania?

MG: To talk about Romania for me is a little bit hard because I was a child when I became a Russian citizen, I was 8 years old, I was born in 1932. To compare Russia and America, I can say that there are two things which I would stress that makes the problems a little bit harder here than in Russia. The first thing is medical insurance here. You don't need medical insurance in Russia. As long as you live in that country you get covered

for all your life. You don't have to pay for medical insurance. You pay to the doctor if you want special attention, that's a special thing, and you pay under the table as you say; black market. But you can get treatment even if you don't have any money in your pocket. In this country, if you don't have medical insurance --from my point of view you are in danger, in bad condition. It's terrible. I'll tell you, I know from my own experience. The thing that concerns me right now that my husband is laid off is in July he is finished with his coverage and I don't know what is going to be. We have to pay to buy some medical insurance and that is a lot of money. And if a person is not working that is really hard. From this point of view I think in Russia it is better. You have government coverage and everyone is covered.

The other thing is that the rent for the apartments here is very high. In Russia you don't make much money but you don't pay very much because the apartments belong to the government, so you pay something from your salary. Here if you want a nice apartment you have to pay a lot of money, and that's almost a salary for one person who makes 5, 6 hundred dollars a month.

JT: I agree with you, especially about the medical care. It's a great worry to people who aren't employed.

MG: I'm really concerned very much about it.

JT: Is there anything you would like to add to this interview?

MG: I would like to say that I am very thankful to all the organizations which helped us to achieve what we achieved right now. All the organizations who helped us to get to America and to get our positions, our jobs, whatever we needed, and I hope that more Jews from Russia will be able to leave in the next few years because the relations will be better between the two countries. If it will be a necessity to help the newcomers I will do all my best to meet them and welcome them as well as I was welcomed.

JT: Do you approve in general of the US policy toward the Soviet Union?

JT: Do you think we are doing the things we should do? Should we protest more about Afghanistan?

MG: I don't think that protesting helps very much. I think that actions would help more.

JT: Do you think we should act?

MG: Yes.

JT: In Afghanistan?

MG: Not in Afghanistan. I mean in different other actions, like meetings and talking between the high level people. The Russians need more pressure. If you talk to them nicely and they know they will get something from you you will get something from them as well. But if the talks will be on the level that they were between Reagan and Gorbachev at Geneva But the relations would have been better maybe long ago. They were both very stubborn this time, I think. Because for many years they didn't get together. It was in 1979 the last time, when Carter met Brezhnev. Until now there were no meetings. So I don't think it is the fault of the American government, but I think it is the fault of those as well.

JT: If they really wanted to solve their problems they would.

MG: It is hard to solve problems when there are two different systems because capitalism and socialism will never be friends, that's understandable. But to be on a nice level it can be achieved.

JT: Did you follow the Communist Party Congress in Moscow last week?

MG: Yes, I did. And I learned a lot. I was very interested to know what is going on in that Congress and the speeches. They were not very much transfer to us as much as the Russians know about them. But I think the main points I got from these speeches, and they didn't change very much.

JT: Well, they are not going to change the system, but they may be ready to

reform it a little bit.

MG: The international relationship may be change a little bit, but I don't know if very much will be changed inside the country.

JT: No, it's not going to change. Not as long as the Communist Party rules and it is very firmly entrenched. But I think all sides within the Party can see that something is wrong, that industry is not going like it should be. They can get together on that, I think.

MG: They can, if they want, they can. It's only a question of wanting to do something. People always can communicate if they want to communicate, that's what I think.

JT: I have no more questions. Do you have any comments you would like to make?

MG: No.

JT: Thank you very much for your interview.

MG: Thank you very much.