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Narratives of Resilience in Aging Soviet Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust

by

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ABSTRACT

Soviet child survivors of the Holocaust represent a distinct group of seniors who live with the memory of trauma. Unlike those survivors who left Europe shortly after liberation, Soviet Jews faced the life-long secondary trauma of oppression and forced silence. Although historical knowledge in the Former Soviet Union began to be recovered, the psychological dimensions of trauma in Holocaust survivors remain under-analyzed. Prior scholarship has offered general theoretical frameworks for understanding the experiences of aging trauma survivors. However, little research addressed the applicability of general trauma discourse to contextually specific experiences. Lacking in the literature is an interdisciplinary perspective on trauma, resilience, and aging.

This cross-cultural study explored trauma sequelae and resilience of aging Soviet survivors within several disciplines: gerontology, aging studies, social work, and psychiatry. A bilingual researcher interviewed nine Russian-speaking survivors – émigrés in Canada and residents of Russia – and employed a combination of the classical grounded theory method and narrative analysis.

The idiographic analysis of the participants' narratives revealed unique, recognizable personal patterns of power, agency, and choice, which were named *anchor scripts* of resilience – personal scripts that defined the identity of the storyteller through meaningful realities other than trauma. Nomothetic analysis of the general patterns revealed the overarching connection between individual anchor scripts and collective narratives of Soviet Jewry. In the ambience of ideologically imposed silence, the survivors' narratives of trauma and resilience were hidden below the surface of the mainstream Soviet discourse. These hidden but tenaciously maintained stories, defined as *undercurrent narratives,* had a salutary value for individual and group resilience, because they represented an essential source of validation for the survivors' posttraumatic pain and personal anchor scripts. Through participation in Jewish collective narratives throughout their life span, child survivors had access to the communal pool of salutary meanings, through which their anchor scripts could be initiated and richly developed. This study conceptualized the relationships between individual and communal strategies of resilience in the face of cumulative collective trauma. The theory might be considered in community practices with diverse groups, and used in future research as a source of sensitizing concepts.

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DEDICATION

To the memory of my grandparents: Sara, Gersh, Sheina, and Iosif, who instilled in me the roots of my Jewish identity.

To the memory of my relatives: those who were murdered by the Nazis in the Soviet Union and Poland, and those who survived against all odds.

To those who break the silence.

I went to Russia drawn by the silence of its Jews. I brought back their cry.
Elie Wiesel, *The Jews of Silence*

My work reveals a reality observed through the eyes of a child who had suddenly aged. Some might call it elaboration of Trauma; I hope that my art is more than that.
Samuel Bak, *Speaking about the Unspeakable: Lecture Delivered in Strasbourg*

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List of Abbreviations

FSU – Former Soviet Union

GT – Grounded Theory

Gulag – Main Camps Administration (Russian), the system of Soviet slave labour camps

JAC – Jewish Antifascist Committee

JFSC – Jewish Family Service Calgary

NA – Narrative Analysis

PTSD – Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Holocaust survivors who were children at the time of World War II have now reached their senior years. Most of these children encountered extreme life threatening events, severe hardships, and deprivation – factors that had potential to cause significant psychic trauma and life-long posttraumatic consequences. Some of them were the first young individuals to be labeled with such diagnoses as survivor syndrome or concentration camp syndrome (van der Kolk, Weisaeth, & van der Hart, 1996). However, their adult lives have been described as having a “high level of spiritual involvement, social commitment and staunch desire to maintain a stable family life” (Greene, 2002, p. 5). Most built successful careers, had loving families and children, and developed a strong ability to resist and overcome the damaging effects of negative life events – the capacity which is commonly defined as resilience (Moskovitz, 1983; Sigal & Weinfeld, 1989).

A large number of Soviet Jewish children who survived the Holocaust stayed in the Soviet Union at the end of the war, and remained isolated from Western public discourse and academic research. We know little about the Soviet child survivors’ post-Holocaust coping and life-long adjustment. In the Soviet Union, the history of the Nazi persecution of the Jews was intentionally silenced for over four decades (Altman, 2005). Although after perestroika and the fall of the Soviet Union the historical knowledge began to be recovered both in public and academic discourses, the psychological and sociological dimensions of individual trauma and resilience of Soviet survivors still remain under-analyzed (Gitelman, 2001b). Virtually no studies of posttraumatic sequelae in Holocaust survivors have been initiated in the Former

Soviet Union (FSU). Likewise, in the West, the group of Soviet survivors – recent immigrants – did not receive much attention from the public or academia.

This study is based on the analysis of life stories of nine Soviet Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, with the purpose of exploring their history of trauma, sources of resilience, and the implications of trauma and resilience in later life. Their stories were collected in a series of unstructured interviews, in the Russian language. The analysis employed a combination of two qualitative research approaches: narrative analysis and the classical grounded theory method.

Area of the Inquiry: Background

In 2003, the number of surviving Jewish victims of Nazi persecution was estimated as 1,092,000 persons, 174,000 of them residing in the United States and 511,000 in Israel (DellaPergola). There are two distinct groups within this population residing in the Western countries. One group is comprised of the first-wave immigrants from Europe who left their home countries shortly after their liberation, and spent their adult lives in the Western countries. Although the processes of adjustment and inclusion were not smooth in the early decades of immigration (Fogelman, 2001), these survivors found support and recognition in their communities. They were able to access Holocaust-related restitution funds if they chose to do so, and had an opportunity to tell their stories. In many cases they could also access professional treatment, and provided examples to numerous studies of trauma and resilience (Danieli, 1999; David, 2000, 2002; Greene, 2002; Malach, 2001).

Another distinct group is represented by recent immigrants with a Soviet background. This group remains “hidden,” because it has attracted little attention or research. Those survivors who remained in the Soviet Union after World War II were denied the opportunity of cultural and communal protection, Holocaust-related monetary restitution, or societal recognition of their early life trauma. In their home country, virtually no research addressed these people's life experiences, and psychotherapeutic treatment was not available to them. They spent their adult lives under a totalitarian regime, and have encountered significant additional stresses. Many of them experienced severe losses and fears associated with political abuse and totalitarian tyranny, similar to their non-Jewish Russian compatriots (Nikolsky, 1996).

Most of the recent senior émigrés from the FSU who have experiences of early trauma, are now facing the challenges of aging, along with the difficulties of immigration, such as loss of social status and disruption of support systems. In such a highly stressful situation one could assume the inevitability of crisis with the exacerbation of all posttraumatic pathology. However, most of these seniors do not report any pathological symptoms, and can be described as strong, successful, and confident people. The aging émigrés may have strong sources of resilience and specific protective factors that prevent the relapse of PTSD in most cases.

The two distinct groups of aging Holocaust survivors now residing in North America and other Western countries had similar severe early traumatic experiences, and both developed strong resilience resources that allowed them to withstand the intervening challenges, but in different ways. It can be said that they have each found their own, specific resilience pathways. Stresses and risk factors of their adult lives differ, as so do their ways of coping. The knowledge embedded in the resilience pathways of recent émigrés represents a largely unexplored area. The time to document this knowledge is now, because this population is aging, and soon many may not be able to tell their stories.

The population of senior Russian-speaking Jewish émigrés in Calgary can be estimated at over 200 people. As a former Services to Seniors Coordinator, and later Supervisor at the Jewish Family Service Calgary, I am familiar with many of these people. I had a foundation to conduct research with this group, because of my trust relationships with the potential informants. In my experience, the recent Soviet émigrés tend not to fit the stereotypical image of a Holocaust survivor, and thus present challenging questions to service providers, community workers, neighbors and religious leaders. Their problems and strengths are commonly misunderstood in the medical and mental health system and even in their own community, where they are expected to adjust and assimilate, but often become alienated.

Inception: The Researcher's Purpose

The purpose of this research is largely rooted in my pre-existing personal aspiration towards exploring this area. I became involved in listening to life stories of Soviet survivors soon after my immigration in Canada. A former paediatrician, I became a seniors' social worker at Jewish Family Service Calgary, responsible for the entire area of advocacy associated with a variety of Holocaust era restitution claims through different international programs. With the simple and pragmatic purpose of filling out application forms and writing advocacy letters, I recorded the survivors' accounts. Most of the stories were told in Russian, and I translated them into English. I cried together with the survivors, as they recounted their experiences, and had my share of nightmares and flashbacks from the returning memories of my own family history, which intersected with what I was hearing and recording every day.

Many survivors whom I interviewed were Soviet Jews like me. They belonged to my parents' generation, and most of them were telling about their past to a stranger for the first time. They had never previously been identified as Holocaust survivors. Neither had I thought about myself as belonging to the second generation. The sense of my identity began to resurface in my mind. Although I did not realize it at that time, I had become these survivors’ first outside witness, entrusted with recording their long hidden stories. For me, it was a bittersweet experience, in which the awe of witness and warmth of compassion were mixed with the hardship of my parallel mental work on processing the reemerging memories of my own and my family’s past.

There was another side to my experience as a story recorder, which I began to analyze years later. At that time, I was simultaneously immersed into the two worlds. One was the world of the Soviet Jews whose Holocaust memories had been long silenced and never publicly recognized, and whose identities had remained hidden for many years. The second of the two worlds was new to me – the world of Western Jewry, where preserving and honoring the memories of the Shoah had become part of the culture for many decades, where the personal trauma of being persecuted as a Jew had been recognized and eligible for psychological treatment and academic research, and where Holocaust education was part of ordinary social life.

One of the reasons of my initiating of this research was the silence that still surrounded these Jewish survivors – émigrés from the FSU. I realized that the silence still continued, despite the intensity of the survivors’ individual voices in my Jewish Family Service office. My witness to their unprecedented, first-time recounting seemed to have remained a dead end. The stories, which I was hearing in our claim-related interviews, disappeared in the space between us, and did not reach anyone else. I often sensed that the survivors were speaking not only to me, but also to an imaginary collective witness, as if they expected their recounting to be heard beyond my office and past our succinct, dry application papers. Their recounting had much greater depth and intensity than was needed for their claims' purposes. To me, my listening to the Soviet survivors also meant a virtual promise that I would pass on their stories, beyond the superficial act of requesting the due monetary compensation. This promise prompted my intention to conduct this inquiry.

As I began the research, I realized that my role as a researcher, who was personally immersed in the history, culture, and aspirations of its participants, also implied the question about being too much an "insider." I considered that my close familiarity with the historical and social context of my participants' stories would require an additional level of analysis (as discussed in the Method section). However, I also believe that the relevant immersion in, and intimate knowledge of culture have been essential, because these qualities can engage aging immigrants and increase understanding of their concerns. From this position I hoped to convey the authentic stories and wisdom of the participants to Western society, bridge the gap between the two sets of discourses, and remain sensitive to the seniors' self-representation.

Interdisciplinary Position

Research and practice-oriented literature on trauma and resilience in later life represent perspectives from a wide range of disciplines, including psychiatry, psychology, sociology, nursing, and social work. Merging professional understandings in this area is a reflection of the conceptual complexity and the need for interdisciplinary inquiry. Similar breadth of interdisciplinary inquiry also pertains to the literature about the various aspects of Holocaust survivors' experiences. Because this research was grounded in studying the Holocaust experiences in the Soviet Union, it was also important to refer to historical and sociological knowledge, although it was not meant as a primary focus.

This study does not fit one discipline, but rather requires a multidimensional conceptual perspective. The analysis of the mechanisms of posttraumatic sequelae and adaptation shows the interweaving of biological, intra-psychic, developmental, cultural, social, and spiritual factors (Antonovsky, 1979, 1987; Valent, 1998 a, b). The individual risk factors and protective forces relevant to psychic trauma also occur at biological – personal – social – spiritual levels, e.g. health-related challenges of aging, individual life events and losses, and the pressure and responsibility of “bearing witness” to historical lessons for the younger generations (David, 2002; Danieli, 1999; Graziano, 2003). Thus, an interdisciplinary approach is likely the only approach suitable for analyzing the related processes holistically, in one theoretical exercise, without the necessity of confronting or comparing distinct disciplinary attitudes.

From the practice perspective, an interdisciplinary approach corresponds to the current tendency for developing interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary service in mental health practice, services to seniors, and community rehabilitation. In the transdisciplinary model, helping professionals of different backgrounds provide service as a seamless team of collaborating, interdependent members. Thus, interdisciplinary studies have a potential to inform the contemporary practice models.

In addition to the general considerations related to the field of research, this study’s interdisciplinary focus was largely defined by my professional and scholarly orientation as a researcher. My training background, work experience, and research interests lie in four interrelated areas: medicine, mental health, gerontological social work, and aging studies (in the broad context of disability studies). Considering the contextual and clinical orientation of this study, my transdisciplinary background became instrumental to achieving the proposed research objectives.

My international experience gave me an additional reason to become interested in the interdisciplinary research. I have encountered first-hand practical teamwork traditions of three countries: Russia, Israel, and Canada. I have learnt to be aware of cultural and contextual differences in clinical practice, and to believe in the benefits of non-standard, open multi-perspective knowledge.

This study is positioned within the merging of several disciplinary approaches, with the concentration on the chosen area of study. The focal point in this research project is the study of individual trauma and resilience, in the context of aging and life span development (the subject of psychology and psychiatry). This focus is rooted in the context of an individual within a social group (the central concern in social work and social psychology) and in the context of a distinct cultural, historical, and social setting (the area pertaining to sociology). With respect to the developmental aspects of this study, the central interest lies within personal stress and resiliency resources in later life (the focus consistent with various gerontological disciplines, ranging from the medical knowledge about aging to the psychological and psychosocial knowledge), and within social, cultural, and meaning-making aspects of trauma and aging (as interpreted in the emerging area of aging studies). This study represents an integrated, transdisciplinary perspective.

Purpose of the Study, Method, and Research Question

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a theoretical contribution, based on life stories of Soviet child survivors of the Holocaust, to the knowledge about early and cumulative trauma, posttraumatic sequelae, resilience, and the impact of these factors during the later life transition, with particular attention to social and cultural contexts.

Method

In this study, I employed a combination of two qualitative research approaches: the classical version of grounded theory method, consistent with the principles conceptualized by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser (1978), and narrative analysis, applied according to Leiblich et al. (1998) and Riessman (1993).

The rationale for the choice of method was twofold. First, the grounded theory approach was most appropriate for this study because of its intent to examine the largely unexplored area, with broadly posed research questions (Glaser, 1992; Stebbins, 2001). Second, the storied structure of the study participants' recollections required the narrative approach and narrative analysis strategies. Both components of the method involved no application of conventional theories, and created an opportunity to examine contextual, substantial patterns that are particularly meaningful for the participants.

Both narrative analysis and grounded theory originated from non-clinical disciplines (sociolinguistics and sociology, respectively), and subsequently were adopted by researchers in a variety of helping professions, including psychology, social work, nursing, and psychiatry. Both methods now cut across disciplines and research areas, and are broadly used by interdisciplinary researchers. Combined methods are becoming common in research, and many studies involve theory generation from the analysis of narratives – the combination of grounded theory and narrative analysis (Josselson & Lieblich, 1997, 1999).

Research Question

Grounded theory method calls for careful consideration in the formulation of research questions. Glaser (1992) warned against counterproductive preconceptions that may occur as a result of premature, and forced questions that are too specific for the given research stage. Glaser suggested that both the problem and the concrete research questions would “emerge” while the research process progresses. Considering these recommendations of one of the discoverers of the grounded theory method, and taking into account how his recommendations related to my area of study, I formulated the research question as an open, expansive query. The question that served as the foundation of this study was as follows:

What are the processes involved in the later life transitions for those who lived through the Holocaust as children in the Soviet Union, and remained in their country after liberation? How does a Jewish, Russian and recent immigrant’s identity inform these processes?

This study of senior émigrés from the FSU informs theory in a number of current areas: cultural sensitivity of PTSD theory (as specified by Kirmayer, 1996; Marsella, Friedman, & Spain, 1996; Westermeyer, 1989), late onset and developmental aspects of PTSD (Aarts & Op den Velde, 1996), resilience, culture and inclusion issues of immigrant communities, and aging.

Definitions of Basic Terms

To describe the historical and social context of Soviet child survivors, I used some general terms that are defined for the purposes of this study as follows.

Holocaust survivor. The Claims Conference’s definition refers to *a Holocaust survivor* as any Jewish person,

> who lived in a country that was under the Nazi occupation or direct Nazi influence, during any period between the years 1933 – 1945. Furthermore, the population of Holocaust survivors includes people who were forced to leave their place of residence because of the Nazi regime. (Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, 2008, p. 4)

Historically, the adherence to this definition has been complicated by the erroneous, but often presumed hierarchical distinction between the survivors of various traumatic experiences during the Holocaust era. For example, according to this division, survivors of concentration camps are considered "real" survivors, as opposed to those who survived in hiding or by fleeing. I use the Claims Conference's definition that includes people who had to flee from persecution.

*Shoah (*or *haShoah).* The English term *Holocaust,* which has Greek and biblical etymological origins, has its equivalent in Hebrew: the *Shoah* (literally meaning *catastrophe*). This term is preferred in Israel, often used in the media, and is common in many writings in the area of Holocaust studies.

Child survivor. For the purposes of this study, *child survivors* are defined as any Jewish children who lived in the Nazi occupied zones at the time of the Holocaust, and were potential subjects of the Nazi plan for their total annihilation. A commonly accepted age criterion of a child survivor is 16 or younger at the end of World War II. However, Krell (2006) noted that this criterion should be considered with caution, because the Nazi occupation lasted in some countries longer than in others, and thus, for example, some surviving children who were 17 at liberation may have been only 11 in the beginning of the occupation. In this study, the relevancy pertained to the age of the person at the time of the most severe traumatic impact. I considered Krell's concern and used the broader definition of a child survivor, which included survivors who were 16 or younger at the beginning of the war in the Soviet Union (in 1941). The Russian Federation's Ministry of Labour, in its legislation of 1999, defined the age eligible for compensation even broader: Survivors are considered "former minor prisoners" if they were 18 or younger at the time of their persecution.

Second generation. This term refers to children of trauma survivors, with the understanding that children can be impacted by their parents’ trauma (the concept of intergenerational transmission of trauma).

The war. For the sake of brevity, I refer to World War II as *the war*.

The Great Patriotic War. In the Soviet Union, the war against Germany (June 22, 1941 – May 9, 1945), was called the Great Patriotic War.

Liberation. The word *liberation* is used to signify the freeing of the prisoners from the Nazi concentration camps, extermination camps, and ghettos. By liberation I also mean the freeing of the occupied territories from the Nazi occupation, when the survivors who had fled from the persecution could return home.

Soviet survivors and Western survivors. I refer to Jewish child survivors of the Holocaust who grew up and lived all their adult lives after the liberation in the Soviet Union as *Soviet survivors*. I refer to Holocaust survivors of the first wave of immigration, who arrived in the Western countries shortly after the liberation, as *Western survivors,* or *immigrant survivors.*

Overview of Content

In the next two chapters I present conceptual analysis of the relevant data obtained from literature. Chapter Two presents a broad conceptual overview of the relevant social context and historical events, to set the stage for understanding the context of the individual trauma sequelae and resilience in this distinct group of Holocaust survivors.

Chapter Three provides an overview of background data from diverse interdisciplinary scholarly literature on trauma, resilience, and aging. I focused on two areas that are most relevant to this study: first, childhood trauma, its aftermath, and resilience, and second, the major theories on trauma sequelae in later life.

Chapter Four outlines the methodological aspects of this study: the chosen research method, research purpose, design, and procedures. This study involved several complex factors that required non-trivial decisions for research design, such as an interdisciplinary approach, cross-language and cross-cultural implications, and ethical considerations of working with aging Holocaust survivors. These factors were taken into account in designing and conducting this study.

In Chapter Five, I introduce the narrative analysis of the study participants' life stories. I present the conceptualized summaries of the stories of each of the nine survivors who participated in this study. The survivors' individual strategies of resilience are introduced through the comparative analysis of their life narratives and personal scripts. The survivors have created and richly developed meaningful, salutary, and identity-defining individual scripts that I named *anchor scripts* – the patterns of behaviour and meaning-making that are based on realities other than trauma. In the face of trauma and its aftermath, these rich narratives keep the individual grounded in what is valued, loved, and meaningful.

In Chapter Six I introduce the theory that emerged from this study: the theory of narratives of resilience in Soviet Jewish child survivors. The emergent concept of undercurrent narratives is defined as personal and collective narratives that were silenced by the mainstream Soviet society, but tenaciously maintained within the communities of Soviet Jews. These alternative narratives represented a protective communal environment for child survivors' posttraumatic healing, because the survivors' individual anchor scripts were rooted in the meanings of the collective undercurrent narratives. Individual strategies of resilience involved drawing from the communal pool of collective narratives that provided both validation of silenced pain and a source of salutary anchor scripts of resilience. The theory explains the essential connection between the individual resilience strategies of Soviet Jewish child survivors and the collective narratives of resilience in their Jewish communities.

Finally, in Chapter Seven I suggest practical and theoretical implications of this study’s findings, and offer recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Just like a river,
I was deflected by my stalwart era.
They swapped my life: into a different valley,
Past different landscapes, it went rolling on.
And I don't know my banks or where they are.
(Anna Akhmatova*,* cited in Brodsky, 1986, p. 481)

Soviet child survivors represent a distinct but silent group among other, better known groups of Holocaust survivors. This chapter presents a broad review of social and historical factors relevant to the stories of Soviet survivors of the Holocaust. Conceptualizing this group’s historical paths, as a background for the subsequent discussion of this study’s findings, is important for the understanding of some general features of the survivors’ individual trauma sequelae and resilience.

The Emergence of Contextual Categories

Originally, I concentrated on analyzing my research participants’ personal life stories collected through interview conversations. However, the analysis of life stories prompted my search for the sources of additional, contextual data. The stories about individual life events unfolded within the descriptions of the participants’ micro-social environments and against the background of their larger, macro-social and country-wide contexts. In addition to the direct impact of factual events clearly articulated in the stories, I discovered that the participants’ narratives were mediated and shaped through the impact of their society’s collective memories and meanings, which were echoed in the individual meanings that they attributed to their personal life events. These influences were often subtle, and their presence emerged in my analysis only in later stages of the research, after my observations and reading helped sharpen my sensitivity towards the content and context of the socially constructed interpretations of history, individual traumatic events, and its psychological aftermath.

The emergent significance of social, historical, and cultural contexts for understanding individual trauma sent me to historical and sociological literature that described the participants' life-long social environments. My search for these collateral contextual data continued throughout all stages of my study.

Consistent with the principles of grounded theory, I practiced "phasing reading with research" (Glaser, 1978, p. 31), and began my literature review after I started collecting data in the field. I completed my reading in parallel with data collection and analysis. This timing allowed for more efficient integration of ideas emerging from my analysis with both descriptive and theoretical knowledge located in literature.

Glaser (1978) recommended focusing one's reading on substantial fields that are different from the particular field of the given study, with the purpose of maximizing theoretical sensitivity while avoiding the adoption of any preconceived assumptions from literature directly related to the processes under study. In my research, such reading focus was naturally predetermined by the fact that literature directly related to my narrow field was scarce. Later life transitions of Soviet Holocaust survivors have not been a focus of major scholarly research studies. Data that can be obtained from historical and sociological literature sources do not directly relate to the area of psychological trauma, and the academic literature on trauma and resilience does not provide theoretical assumptions directly related to Soviet child survivors or their historical context. Therefore, my literature sources provided knowledge on major theoretical fields relevant to my participants' situation, but this knowledge only tangentially related to substantial questions emerging from my parallel field research.

This chapter consists of two sections. In the first section, I conceptualize the historical context of Soviet child survivors immediately related to their experiences during the Holocaust. These features define the Soviet child survivors' distinctive position among other groups of Holocaust survivors. In the second section, I review some historical events before and after the Holocaust that were part of the experiences of Soviet child survivors.

Soviet Child Survivors of the Holocaust

> Of all voices from the Holocaust, ours has been the most silent and the least noticed. For good reason. Many of us were raised in silence, enveloped in silence. A child not noticed might survive. We could not draw attention to ourselves, not in that world. (Krell, 1999, p. 3)

For the purposes of this study, I present three major categories in which Soviet child survivors can be seen as different from other groups of Holocaust survivors. First, due to the specific historical events, the experiences of Soviet Jews during the war differed from other European Jewish experiences. Second, immediately after the war, the Soviet survivors' history took a distinct path, and therefore their post-war stories diverged from other survivors. And third, the Soviet historical context of child survivors' group identity and self-representation differed from the Western context.

Soviet Jews during the Holocaust

In the Soviet Union, approximately 3 million Jews were in the German-occupied territories during the war. Of this number, according to different sources, from 2.6 to 2.8 million, including children, were murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators (Altman, 2005; Dodik, 2004a; Gitelman, 2001b). The situation of Soviet Jews under the occupation was different from the situation of many other European survivors.

The Nazi tactics: "Holocaust by bullets" (Desbois, 2008). With the invasion of Soviet territories in June 1941, the German authorities drastically changed their tactics related to the Jews. Before invading the Soviet Union, the Nazis most often began the annihilation of the Jewish populations with deportations and incarceration in concentration camps or permanent ghettos. In the Soviet Union, they did not deport the Jews to remote areas, but murdered them where they lived, in large numbers, mostly by mass shooting. For this purpose the Nazis employed four specifically formed units, Einsatzgruppen (in this context, mobile killing groups). These units were responsible for the operations of total annihilation of the Jews, Gypsies, and communists (Desbois). The Einsatzgruppen also murdered thousands of people in the institutions for mentally or physically disabled.

The typical sequence of events under the Nazi occupation was as follows. After a town or village was captured by the German troops, the Einsatzgruppen entered the place. All the Jews in the community were identified and taken to collection points, often with the help of local informants, police, and civilian support. Most often the Jews were told that they would be relocated, but instead they were marched or transported by trucks to execution sites. In some cases, trenches were already prepared in these sites, but often the victims were forced to dig their own graves. Men, women, and children were undressed, their valuables were collected from them, and they were shot in front of the open trenches. There are hundreds of mass graves in the Soviet territories, many concealed for decades after the war. Babi Yar is one of the better known sites. The number of Soviet Jews who survived under the German occupation was extremely small, and included exceptional cases when children and adults managed to hide or were saved by their non-Jewish neighbours.

Evacuation. For Soviet Jews, fleeing from the occupied zones was the only chance to escape from almost certain death. Only a handful of those who remained where they lived managed to survive. Most Soviet survivors describe quick, unplanned, and desperate flight without any help or support from the Soviet authorities. Moreover, the escaping was often complicated by the difficulty in obtaining official documents that granted permission to leave. Even those people who had the necessary papers often had no means to travel, and had to cover long distances on foot or by freight trains or passing trucks. Hundreds of thousands of people, including children, stayed behind and perished because they could not leave under these conditions.

Most Soviet survivors call their experience of flight *evacuation (evakuatsiia).* This commonly used word can hardly describe their hasty, difficult, and unplanned departure. However, evacuation is the only term people know and use, because it has become the only legitimate word in the Soviet Union. According to Altshuler (1993), the use of this term is primarily associated with the ideological reasons, because it "evokes the notion of planned and organized operation" (p. 78). Flight for their life, habitually called evacuation, was one of the most common experiences of those Soviet Jews who managed to survive.

Transnistria ghettos. Concentration camps were not part of the common experience of Soviet Jewish victims. However, many people are known to have survived in ghettos. These survivors mostly come from ghettos that were located in the areas of Transnistria, which is the area between the Dniester and Bug rivers.

Transnistria was controlled by the Romanian troops that collaborated with the German army (Dodik, 2005). German Einsatzgruppen did not operate in these areas. The Romanian authorities did not fully pursue the German tactics of total extermination of the Jews, but isolated the Jewish populations in ghettos. Hundreds of thousands of people in the ghettos were killed in mass shootings, perished in death marches, or died of unthinkable conditions, epidemics, and exhausting labour. Children were most vulnerable, together with the disabled and the old. However, in Romanian-controlled territories, there existed some chance of survival.

In the German-occupied Soviet territories, ghettos also existed, including those as in Byelorussia, Baltic republics, and Ukraine. However, the situation in these ghettos was different. These ghettos existed only for a few weeks before the Nazi shot the Jewish populations incarcerated in them. The difference between German-controlled and Romanian-controlled ghettos was known even at the time of the war, when some Ukrainian Jews who had escaped from mass killing were trying to cross the Bug river and reach Transnistrian ghettos, in hope for safety (Dodik, 2004a). A relatively large number of Jews (according to Dodik, approximately 110,000 people) survived in ghettos under the Romanian occupation. In most of the German-controlled territories, there were considerably fewer ghetto survivors at the end of the war.

Participants in this research had diverse experiences. The complete description of this study's sample group is presented in the Method section, but for the purpose of illustrating the Soviet survivors' historical situation, a brief outline of the participants' stories is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Study Participants' History during the War

Name	Age, 1941	Personal History during the Holocaust
Liza	14	Transnistria ghetto: Liza's parents were murdered, and she survived in the ghetto alone. Her brother survived separately, and they reunited.

Fira	11	Transnistria ghetto: Fira went through death marches, selections, near-death in mass shooting, and survived together with her parents and sisters. A large part of her extended family was murdered.
Lydia	11	Survived in hiding, under a false identity, together with her mother and little cousin in Odessa, for nearly three years under the Nazi occupation.
Vera	12	Evacuation: Fled from a Ukrainian town, together with her mother and grandmother, and survived in Kyrgyzstan.
Leib	7	Evacuation: Fled from an occupied Ukrainian village, together with his mother and two siblings, and survived in a small village in South Urals.
Maya	10	Evacuation: Fled from a Lithuanian town, together with her mother and sister, and survived in a Siberian town.
Abram	17	The Army: Abram left his town in Crimea to join the Soviet Army as a volunteer. Many members of his family were murdered in Crimea.
Alexander	15	Evacuation: Fled from a Ukrainian town, together with his parents, and survived in a village in the Urals; lost family members who stayed.
Hanna	17	Evacuation: Fled from a Ukrainian town, together with her mother, survived in Kazakhstan, lost her brother and many family members.

Hierarchy of suffering and self-identification: "I am not a Holocaust survivor." Because of the German tactics of mass annihilation, instead of deportations or concentration camps, the survival of any Jewish children might have been even less possible in the Soviet occupied territories than in some other Eastern European areas. Only those who escaped could survive. Therefore, there are more Soviet survivors who have stories of escaping to safer territories, rather than incarceration. Most of those relatively few people, who managed to survive in ghettos, come from Romanian-controlled territories of Transnistria.

The knowledge of this history is important for the understanding of the nature of one of the most controversial criteria of the definition of a Holocaust survivor – the hierarchical gradation of the extent of the experienced trauma. According to this gradation, people who went through concentration camps or Eastern European German-controlled ghettos were traditionally and undoubtedly defined as survivors. However, those who had escaped from the occupied territories or lived in hiding were often excluded from the legitimized survivors' groups.

The distinction between the survivors of various traumatic experiences during the Holocaust era has been labelled *hierarchy of suffering* (Cohen, 2005; Krell, 1999). The hierarchy of suffering is still commonly applied to survivors' experiences, and habitually echoes in the minds of people who have lived through the Shoah. Many Soviet Jews have never thought of themselves as survivors. In conversations with them, we commonly hear, “I am not a survivor,” or, “I am a survivor of the war, but not of the Holocaust.” Such statements, with further questions, are nearly always followed by stories of experiencing death threat, loss of family, and suffering in the exile, where children often experienced severe hunger, separation from their parents, and hard labour. However, the image of a concentration camp survivor has long remained the only legitimate image of a Holocaust survivor in the conventional perception.

In their home country, Soviet Jews never used to identify themselves as survivors because of the dominant ideological prohibitions, silence, and history revisions. After their immigration and exposure to the Western discourses, Soviet child survivors often continue to deny their belonging to the survivors' groups, this time because of being intimidated by the hierarchy of suffering.

Diversion: The Historical Path

The vast majority of the surviving Jewish population in Europe was displaced during the war. At liberation, people had to settle down anew, either in places of their choice, or as their situation dictated. Some surviving children were reunited with their parents who were also severely traumatized, but many were orphaned. Many Eastern European Jewish children moved to Western countries or Israel soon after the liberation, alone or together with their families. However, most Soviet children never left the Soviet Union. At that time, the paths of European immigrant survivors and Soviet Jewish child survivors diverged from one another. The diversion was followed by the children's development in divergent cultures and social contexts and by decades of complete isolation between the Soviet and immigrant groups.

Child survivors who moved away from Europe grew up and built their lives anew in the cultures that gradually became their own. They shared the history and embraced the collective memories of North American or Israeli Jewry. Stories told in North America and Israel about the Shoah and post-liberation Jewish life became part of these people's identity, part of their own life histories.

Conversely, Soviet Jewish children stayed in the country of their origin. They remained immersed in the Soviet culture and Russian language, shared this country's political turmoil, and often became subject to discrimination, repressions, and secondary trauma. They grew up, evolved into adults, and built their lives in the midst of the Soviet cultural environment, in which the Holocaust memory remained intentionally silenced. For more than fifty years since the liberation, Soviet survivors remained rooted in and affected by Russian and Soviet history, ideology, and dominant social discourses. They were isolated from Jewish communities in the West.

The history of immigrant survivors became well known in Western societies. However, little is known in Western communities about the Soviet survivors' experiences during and after the Holocaust. This knowledge is essential for the understanding of their trauma, resilience, and distinct identity.

Child Survivors' Group Identity

The distinct group identity of Jewish child survivors of the Holocaust is a Western concept. In the West, child survivors stand out as a group due to the recognition of their specific experiences during the war, and because of the acknowledgement of the particular impact of childhood trauma. They consider themselves a separate group also because of the peculiar history of their post-war self-identification and social attitudes towards them. In the Soviet Union, none of these contextual factors developed in the same way as in the West, and therefore the self-identification of Soviet child survivors is represented in a different way.

The post-war historical context of Soviet child survivors was different from their Western counterparts, but they encountered similar suffering during the Holocaust. The number of Jewish children murdered by the Nazis in the Soviet Union remains unknown. It is known, however, that throughout Europe, Jewish children were particularly vulnerable, along with other groups of people who could not be put to work or otherwise used by the Nazis, such as the disabled and the old (Krell, 1995). Therefore, children, especially the younger ones, were the first to be killed in most situations. Only one tenth of Jewish children in Europe survived the Nazi attempts to ensure their total annihilation (Dwork, 1991; Valent, 1998a, 1998c). A million and a half children died in the Shoah (Valent, 1993).

Child survivors in the West: "We are special" (Krell, 1999, p. ix).

Historically, Jewish child survivors who immigrated in the West were not recognized as Holocaust survivors for a long time. They were excluded from groups, formal gatherings, and events involving older Holocaust survivors in North America, Australia, England, and Israel (Cohen, 2005; Fogelman, 2002; Krell, 1999; Valent, 1993). Because of their young age at the time of their persecution, there was an assumption that they could not have clear memories about their experiences, and thus, their trauma was not as great as in older survivors. The German reparation system initially did not consider child survivors' legal claims, because they could not present specific factual memories or validated evidence of their persecution. This was especially difficult for orphaned children who did not have adults to advocate on their behalf.

In addition, the alienation of the children from the groups of older survivors was implied by the common hierarchy of suffering. Children who survived in hiding, under false identities, or by fleeing, were long excluded, because their suffering was not considered the "real" suffering in comparison with that of concentration camp prisoners (Krell, 1999). Most children with such histories had experiences that Krell described as being "a survivor but on the margin of survivorhood" (p. 5).

Child survivors, many of whom were saved in hiding during the war, continued to keep silence, as if in hiding, for almost forty years after liberation. In Krell's words (1999),

> We are the experts on silence. It did not matter where – whether in forests, or camps, or hiding but perhaps especially in hiding. We became the silent ones. We are so comfortable with silence. ... No wonder we were not noticed. No wonder we were so late to speak out. (p. 92)

The children's suffering was invalidated for a long time. As they grew up and became adults, their silence did not end. They felt alienated from groups of older survivors. In the late 1970s, with the beginning of a new movement of the second generation (Epstein, 1979), child survivors also felt excluded from these groups of "heirs of the Holocaust" (Fogelman, 2002, p. 34). As the second generation became vocal and gained visibility as a distinct group, child survivors remained unrecognized, disunited, and isolated, which led them to feel their lack of belonging more acutely.

Child survivors' group identity, visibility, and mutual support action were formed through the development of a social movement. They began to speak out in the 1980s, after the American psychologist Sarah Moskovitz published her pioneering work about them in 1983, and in 1987 organized the first reunion of a small number of former children whose experiences she had studied. Moskovitz and other professionals published academic studies about child survivors' experiences (J. Kestenberg & Fogelman, 1994; M. Kestenberg, 1994). New grassroots conferences and formal support groups were organized, first locally, and then internationally. Child survivors began to meet each other, recount their stories, and share mutual validation and support. They gained recognition and a sense of belonging. According to the Australian psychiatrist and child survivor Paul Valent (1998c), "Child survivors came out of hiding, literally, symbolically, and internally. They were no longer isolated, secret abnormal people. They developed pride in their survivorship" (p. 528).

Soviet child survivors: Isolated from the West. In the Soviet Union, neither older Jewish survivors nor the second generation had an opportunity to voice their pain or gain identities as distinct groups. Therefore, child survivors did not feel different or oppressed in any special way; they were unaware of the international movements, and did not compare themselves to other groups. It was only within the last ten or fifteen years that the Soviet Holocaust survivors' voices started to be openly recognized, as their country changed. Child survivors gained acknowledgement, together with the older survivors' groups, after the lifting of the official prohibition attached to the historical memory of the Holocaust, roughly by the mid-1990s. In the Former Soviet Union, they were named "former minor prisoners of concentration camps and ghettos," and finally gained access to the German reparation system, as well as some Russian governmental benefits.

Soviet child survivors missed the formation of the Western social movement towards recognition. They were not aware of these developments in the West. At the time of the prohibition of the Holocaust memory in the Soviet Union, they remained isolated from their Western counterparts and silenced by their domestic regime. Soviet child survivors have only recently formed their own, distinct groups, but this occurred in isolation from the West.

According to the Claims Conference, there remain over 114,000 Jewish survivors of the Holocaust in the Former Soviet Union (Tighe, Saxe, & Chertok, 2008). At least one third of these survivors were children during the war. They now have organized formal support groups in many cities across the country; for example, the Moscow Association of Jewish Child Survivors now formally involves over 250 members (V. G. Geht, personal communication, October 13, 2008).

Because of the historical differences, Soviet child survivors never acquired the international visibility that their Western counterparts have established for themselves. Furthermore, Soviet survivors who have recently immigrated rarely join local support groups or attend international reunions. After decades of isolation and divergent social adjustment, Soviet and Western survivors cannot feel naturally at one.

In the introduction to his book *Child Survivors,* Paul Valent (1993) described a moment when he was "named" as a child survivor by Sarah Moskovitz, in one of the first conferences for this group. Before that moment, he did not think about himself as a "real" Holocaust survivor, but rather had convinced himself that he was just a child "lucky" to have lived. The author continued, "I met another child survivor who had been in Budapest during the war. We talked and talked. We must have been like two Martians meeting our own kind for the first time" (p. 3). The experiences of Soviet child survivors are distinctive, because this "Martian" discovery did not occur for some of them until very recently, and for many others it never happened at all. Unlike Paul Valent, they have never been told, "You are a survivor."

In the West, child survivors "came out of hiding" (Valent, 1993) and became united in formal, visible groups when they were in their 50s or 60s. For those Soviet child survivors who have begun to openly share their stories, their coming out of hiding did not occur until their much later age. The youngest of these people are now in their early 70s. Moreover, for many of them the silence has never been lifted. The arrival of aging Soviet Jewish émigrés in Western countries has not opened for them an opportunity to voice their experiences. Ironically, in the societies where the history of the Holocaust has long been a significant part of public consciousness, Soviet child survivors continue to be a profoundly silent group.

Historical Context Before and After the Holocaust

> My reader ... don't you make a mistake and confuse Soviet camps with Hitler's ones. Don't condone Soviet camps, thinking that Auschwitz, Maidanek, and Treblinka were much worse. Remember that Hitler's death factories are long gone, they disappeared like an evil dream, and there are museums and memorials where they used to be ... [Soviet camps] Kruglitza and Kotlas are still there, and people are dying there today, just as they were dying five or ten years ago. (Margolin, 1952, p. 408)

In this section, I describe the events of a highly traumatic nature that were not part of World War II, but affected the lives of the Jewish child survivors of the Holocaust. Jewish community life in the Soviet Union was altered long before World War II, beginning shortly after the Russian revolution in 1917. The division and isolation between Soviet and Western Jewry began at least three decades before the events of the Holocaust and the consequent wave of immigration.

To orient the reader to the context that informs the further presentation of findings, I describe the events and the development of social context in chronological order, and give a succinct historical timeline. Exhaustive factual description of historical or political events is beyond the scope of this study. Rather, immediate relevancy pertains to the events that defined the distinctive historical context of Soviet child survivors. A historical timeline is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

History across the Hundred-Year Span: From the 1880s to the 1980s

Dates	Events
1881 – 1884	Growing waves of Jewish pogroms in South Russia and Ukraine.
1903 – 1906	A new, larger outbreak of Jewish pogroms in over 660 towns (for example, in October 1905 alone, over 800 Jews were killed in pogroms).
1906 – 1917	Mass Jewish emigration prompted by the pogroms.
1917	The Russian Socialist Revolution.
1918 – 1921	The Russian Civil War. Jewish pogroms that accompanied the Russian Revolution and Civil War took the lives of 70,000 to 250,000 Jews.

1932 – 1934	The great famine in Ukraine and South Russia (with forced collectivization) that killed between six and seven million people.
Early 1920s	Beginning of the “Sovietization” policies promoted by Soviet authorities.
1939	The beginning of World War II.
June 22, 1941	The beginning of the Great Patriotic War: Germany, with Eastern European Axis members, invaded the Soviet Union.
June 1941 – spring 1944	Of the approximately 3 million Jews remaining in the German-occupied Soviet territories, from 2.6 to 2.8 million were murdered.
May 9, 1945	The Victory of the Soviet Union in the Great Patriotic War. The Soviet Union lost over 26.6 million lives to the war.
After 1945	Increasing anti-Semitism. The state-supported discrimination against the Jews began, which never took place before the war.
1948	Liquidation of the Jewish Antifascist Committee. Solomon Michoels, the Committee’s Chair, was covertly murdered in 1948. The most active members were arrested, tortured, and 25 of them were executed in 1952.
1949	Soviet campaign against “rootless cosmopolitans” that marked the growth of repressions against the Jewish intelligentsia and Jews in general.
1953	The Doctors’ Plot (the Doctors’ Trial), the anti-Jewish campaign against “doctors-saboteurs” (see more details in text).
1940s to 1980s	Silencing the memory of the Holocaust: “ideological taboo.” Continuing anti-Semitism. Political repressions.

1980s – early 1990s	With the beginning of perestroika, the revival of Jewish cultural and religious life, along with the revival of the Holocaust memory.

Note. These data are based on the following sources: Altman, 2005; Applebaum, 2003; Electronic Jewish Encyclopedia, n.d.; Gitelman, 2001a, 2001b; Kandel, 2007; Shternshis, 2006; Weinberg, 1993.

Before World War II

The Russian Revolution and Civil War. Many Soviet Jewish children, before becoming the survivors of the Holocaust, were second generation survivors of the historical atrocities at the turn of the 20th century. These events strongly impacted Russia’s Jewish population. These were the events of the Russian Socialist Revolution of 1917 (further referred to as the *revolution*), the Russian Civil War of 1917 – 1921, and the wave of Jewish pogroms in south Russia and Ukraine in the early 1900s and during the Civil War. The pogroms that accompanied the revolution and Civil War took the lives of 70,000 to 250,000 civilian Jews (Weinberg, 1993). The number of Jewish orphans exceeded 300,000. Entire Jewish villages were annihilated. One of the largest pogroms occurred in February 1919 in the town of Proskurov, where 1,650 Jews were murdered within four hours (Electronic Jewish Encyclopedia, n.d.).

The violence prompted entire Jewish communities to emigrate. North America accepted 125,000 Jews in 1906 and 115,000 Jews in 1907; many emigrants also left for Palestine, South America, and European countries (Electronic Jewish Encyclopedia, n.d.). Many families were torn apart when some of their members left Russia and others stayed. Under the newly established Soviet power, any connections between the broken families were irreversibly severed, because for Soviet citizens, any contacts with their relatives abroad became dangerous. People used to conceal these connections or cut them once and for all, under the threat of arrest, persecution, or other devastating consequences.

In 1932 – 1934, the great famine took place in Ukraine and southern Russia and killed between six and seven million residents of these areas, regardless of ethnicity. Many Soviet children born before World War II had early childhood memories of the devastating impact of the famine on their families. The famine is considered one of the greatest national catastrophes associated with the forced collectivization and totalitarian terror in early Soviet history (Applebaum, 2003, p. 47).

Marginalization of Jewish culture: "Sovietization." Shortly after the establishment of the Soviet state following the revolution of 1917, the Jewish religion, tradition, and culture became marginalized and targeted for methodical extermination. This process began when the new Soviet regime initiated the movement for cultural and ideological "Sovietization" and assimilation of Jewish communities, and progressed throughout the pre-war Soviet history. Most religious elements were eliminated from Jewish popular culture, literature, and language, replaced with the pervasive discourse of the dominant Soviet communist ideology (Shternshis, 2006). This included persecution of clergy and religious community leaders, and the closure of Jewish religious and traditional education institutions. Jewish communal self-governing bodies and public organizations gradually disappeared under the attack of the Soviet authorities, so that most elements of organized Jewish community life, including the institutional infrastructure, ceased to exist.

Through these measures, the patterns of intergenerational transmission of the cultural tradition were intentionally broken. Most Jewish children who grew up in the 1920s – 1930s, under the influence of Soviet ideology, had limited opportunities to learn religious practices, traditional lifestyles, or language from their parents. The latter were unable to openly maintain the tradition under the intense pressure towards assimilation, in the threatening environment of the totalitarian regime.

Ethnic equality: New freedoms and intergenerational gap. In the early history of the Soviet Union, universal ethnic equality was pronounced as one of the fundamental principles of Soviet socialism. Therefore, in pre-war Soviet Union, despite the violent attacks on religion and communal self-governance, the country's Jewish citizens did not experience any obvious or legitimized anti-Semitic practices. Jewish experiences of suppression by the authorities were limited to the purposeful elimination of religious tradition and community autonomy. No discrimination impacted social status, civil rights, or the general wellbeing of individual Jewish citizens as it concerned their educational opportunities, career, or social privileges, as long as they complied with Soviet ideology (Gitelman, 2001a, 2001b). In fact, the Jews enjoyed many freedoms that had been unavailable to them before the establishment of Soviet power.

The new freedom, together with the "Sovietization" policies, contributed to the increasing gap between generations of Soviet Jews. Many Jewish children grew distant from their parents and grandparents, adopting new ideologies, culture, and idealistic communist beliefs. This intergenerational gap could be compared with the gap between generations of immigrants, in which children increasingly absorb the new culture, which remains foreign for their parents.

After World War II

Devastation: The war's aftermath. The Soviet Union lost over 26.6 million lives during the war (Gitelman, 2001b). Among these losses, the number of civilian lives reached almost 18 million (Kandel, 2007). Almost every family, regardless of their ethnicity, had suffered losses and hardships. Across the country and among all its citizens, the consequences of the war were massive; every aspect of life was affected by post-war devastation, poverty, and distress. Among the total, country-wide devastation, the extent of the Jewish tragedy was unprecedented. Jewish losses represented 10% of the 26.6 million lost Soviet lives, whereas the Jewish population before the war had been only 2.5% of the Soviet population (Kandel, 2007). Entire communities were destroyed by the Nazi occupation; the remnants of other communities consisted of fragmented, informal groups.

Hostility towards the Jews. The returning Jews often faced open hostility and anger from the non-Jewish population, condoned and supported by local authorities. The Jews had difficulties claiming their housing and other belongings that they had left behind at the time of their fleeing Nazi persecution. Jewish property was usurped by local residents who were reluctant to return it to its owners (Bankier, 2005). The Jews also frequently encountered bureaucratic obstacles reclaiming official living permits in their home cities and looking for jobs (Altshuler, 1997).

Jewish communal life had been practically destroyed by the Soviet authorities prior to the war. Religious practices were only rarely maintained under the pressures of the Soviet regime, mostly secretly and in private. The majority of the surviving Soviet Jews did not have any access to formal Jewish institutions or to formal Jewish communities, because these were too few and scattered. In 1946, throughout the Soviet Union, only 90 officially functioning Jewish communities existed, most of them in peripheral areas of the country (Ro'i, 2005). The majority of these communities were outlawed in the following decade or two (Kandel, 2007).

The shift of social attitudes: From ethnic equality to discrimination. Before the war, Soviet Jewish citizens practically did not experience any discrimination related to their social status or civil rights. This situation abruptly changed towards the end of the war (Shneyer, 2005). There was a shift towards state-induced anti-Semitism and open discrimination against the Jews, regardless of their ideological and social loyalty.

The shift largely affected Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. It was after liberation that the survivors, including children and young adults, suddenly realized their inferior status as Jews in the Soviet state. Many recall that before the war, anti-Semitism did not affect them, but they began feeling its impact immediately after the war. The survivors often encountered hostility and discrimination at school, in their pursuit of higher education, and in the work place (Kandel, 2007).

Homecoming of Soviet child survivors. After liberation, surviving Soviet Jewish children returned home from hiding, ghettos, or evacuation. Some came back from the front line where, by the end of the war, they were fighting as young soldiers or partisans. They returned to their old neighbourhoods or long-lost relatives. Many Jewish communities had been destroyed entirely by the Nazi occupation; the remnants of other communities often consisted of small and scattered groups or just a few surviving friends or families. After the war, the children encountered great hardship, hostility, and discrimination. However, there was also an intense experience of *homecomin*g – returning to be embraced by the remnants of their Jewish communities, into the familiar environment, and to be among other people who had similar experiences. The children went back to Soviet schools, habitual culture and lifestyles in their home country, and their childhood dreams for the future.

The meaning of Soviet survivors' homecoming becomes clearer in comparison with the experiences of those who emigrated to the West. In the West, Holocaust survivors were introduced, as new immigrants, into established Jewish communities whose members did not have any war experiences. For a long time before the themes of the Holocaust became part of social discourse, survivors felt rejected by their host communities (Fogelman, 2001). The “conspiracy of silence” (Danieli, 1999) between the European immigrants and local Jews has been described by the survivors as one of their most painful experiences – their “second wound” encountered after the trauma of the Holocaust. Immigrant survivors felt silenced and marginalized by and among other Jews, from whom they had expected compassion and understanding.

Soviet Jewish survivors also experienced the second wound of silence, but in a different context. In the Soviet Union, in addition to emotional, psychological, and interpersonal factors, Jewish child survivors experienced fierce political oppression under the dominance of the totalitarian regime that rendered them and their communities voiceless. In that, the Soviet forces of silence and repression were larger and more severe than the communal or personal rejection familiar to immigrants.

Soviet survivors’ confrontation with politically imposed silence and marginalization greatly affected them. Moreover, the social context of their post-war homecoming also called forth some additional traumatic factors. These factors also made the Soviet situation different from the situation of the immigrants. Jewish European immigrants, after their long and difficult journey through displaced persons’ camps and the experiences of anxiety and uncertainty, landed in the war-free countries of Western democracy, where they could finally feel free and secure (at least in comparison with the communist regimes). As opposed to the immigrants, Soviet Jews remained at home, in the conditions of poverty, devastation, insecurity, discrimination, and often fear of repressions. The situation of Soviet Jews after the war was the situation of continuous collective trauma.

Paradoxically, the homecoming of Soviet Jews also called forth the experiences of validation and togetherness, because of the collectiveness of trauma. European immigrants in the West found themselves alone with their memories of trauma in their new environment, whereas Soviet Jews remained surrounded by people with similar traumatic experiences and by stories that echoed their own memories. Most importantly, Soviet Jewish survivors did not experience the rejection by their own kin. In the Soviet Union, there was practically no Jewish non-survivor establishment, as there was in the West. Individual stories varied widely, but all Soviet Jewish families shared one universal, indisputable collective memory of destruction and survival. Therefore, the painful divider of silence did not split the Jewish communities. The remnants of Soviet Jewry, as a whole, resisted the totalitarian oppression and silence. In defiance of the mainstream majority, the Jews became virtually united through maintaining the collective memories that did not comply with the Soviet official history revisions.

Soviet survivors’ individual stories of trauma were also echoed in many collective stories of their traumatized and oppressed non-Jewish compatriots. In the broader context of their home country, Jewish survivors did not feel entirely alone or isolated, because they shared the universal war trauma of the Soviet people.

Totalitarian terror: Post-war repressions. The Jews were not alone in their suffering during the totalitarian regime rule. The entire Soviet population was subdued under the fears and repressions of Stalinist political abuses. The repressions did not cease even during the Great Patriotic War, when the terror was justified by the need to fight the enemies of the people, counter-revolutionaries, and treason (Kandel, 2007). After the victory, the Soviet people continued to suffer from mass terror and repression. According to Applebaum (2003), approximately 18 million people went through the Soviet Gulag system of forced labour from 1929, when the system first gained its strength, to the time of Stalin’s death in 1953. In addition, about another 6 million were exiled or deported to remote areas of the Soviet Union and were legally obliged to remain in their exile. The repressions and forced labour system did not disappear with Stalin's death; the system of Soviet camps lasted "as long as the Soviet Union itself" (Applebaum, xvii).

Many Soviet soldiers who had been prisoners of war were arrested upon their return by the authorities of their own state. They were charged with treason, exiled to the labour camps, or executed (Dodik, 2004b; Kandel, 2007). Jewish survivors of the Nazi persecution had to hide their history. Every job or school application form included a question, "Have you or your relatives stayed in the German-occupied territories?" Failure to disclose the truth was considered a crime and severely punished. The disclosure was also dangerous, because the history of staying under occupation was often falsely equated with cowardice and betrayal.

Silencing the memory of the Holocaust: "Ideological taboo." Soviet official ideology suppressed the public memory of the Holocaust for many decades. The heroic history of the war was broadly reflected in Soviet literature, media, and taught at schools. However, the Soviet state used to impose a specific kind of "hierarchy of suffering." The suffering of the Jews during the war was ignored in public opinion, and it was not supposed to be seen as greater than (or even equal to) the suffering of the Soviet people in general. The particular role of the Jews in the war victories was also largely underplayed through the intentional ignoring of statistics and facts that demonstrated the considerable Jewish participation in the partisan movement and the Red Army battles (Altman, 2005; Shneyer, 2005). The events of the Nazi persecution of the Jews were omitted in the media and historical discourse.

The Soviet government rarely allowed Jewish communities to build monuments in the places of mass killings. Complete prohibition could not be enforced, because it was impossible to hide the facts of mass executions. However, in those rare cases when the monuments were built with the state permission, they routinely bore a standard "legitimate" sign, "Peaceful Soviet civilians murdered by German fascists." The very word *Jews* was prohibited and omitted; inscriptions in Jewish languages were banned. Most of these mass gravestones had no Stars of David or Hebrew names; such signs were denounced as "Zionist propaganda" (Altman, 2005; R. Levin, 1996).

Ideology of silence. The complex causes and patterns of suppression of the Holocaust memory in the Soviet Union have not been comprehensively analyzed by historians (Gitelman, 2001b). For the purposes of this study, which is not a historical analysis, but rather an exploration of personal and communal experiences of Soviet child survivors, I present several key factors that are relevant to the narratives of the survivors whom I interviewed.

First, these facts were inevitably intertwined with the stories about Soviet citizens' active collaboration with the Nazis, as well as the frequent incidents of anti-Semitism in the Army and partisan movement (Kaplan, 2008; A. Levin, 1998). The memory of these events did not match the myth about the flawless righteousness of the Soviet military effort, and therefore were threatening to the regime.

Second, exposing the true history of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union could result in the disclosure of the Soviet government's betrayal of its Jewish citizens. In the early days of the war, the Soviet government failed or purposefully refused to inform the Jews about the immediate threat of annihilation by the Nazis. No steps were taken to organize their evacuation; moreover, many refugees were not allowed to leave on the grounds that they did not have proper documents (Altman, 2002). The authorities failed to protect the Jews, although millions of deaths could have been prevented by providing the right information and support for evacuation.

Finally, uncovering the truth about the Jewish resistance and the sizable Jewish contribution into the Soviet war effort could catalyze the revival of Jewish identity and the rising of collective consciousness. This could empower the Jews towards opposing the growing domestic anti-Semitism (Gitelman, 2001a, 2001b; Kandel, 2007).

Strategies of imposing silence: The perpetration. The goal of annihilating illegitimate knowledge was often achieved through devaluing, denunciation, or physical annihilation of its bearers who spoke out. The best known and most destructive totalitarian act of post-war suppression was the notorious arrest and execution of the members of the Soviet Jewish Antifascist Committee (JAC) (Kandel, 2007; Markish, 2005; Veidlinger, 2002). The JAC was established by the Soviet authorities in 1942 to mobilize the support of Western Jewry for the Soviet struggle against Nazi Germany. The Committee included the most visible Soviet Jewish artists, writers, musicians and scientists. One of the significant projects of the JAC was *The Black Book* that contained eyewitness testimony and documents about the tragedy of Eastern European Jewry (Ehrenburg & Grossman, 2003; Jewish Black Book Committee, 1946). In 1947, work on *The Black Book* was banned, and it was denounced as an example of “bourgeois nationalism” and “rootless cosmopolitism.” The Committee was dismissed, its chair Solomon Mikhoels was covertly murdered, and its most active members were arrested in 1948–1949. After long imprisonment and torture, twenty-five of them were executed in 1952.

The patterns of perpetration involved in the JAC trial were reenacted in many repressive campaigns that mostly targeted the intelligentsia and routinely affected large numbers of Jews. One of the best known attacks that practically shook the entire Jewish population was the notorious Doctors’ Trial, the anti-Jewish campaign against "doctors-saboteurs." This campaign began with the arrest of nine Moscow physicians in January 1953. They were tortured and accused of the attempts to poison and kill top Soviet leaders. This was followed by mass propaganda and repressions against "Jewish nationalists" and "doctors-killers" across the country, with hundreds of people arrested, imprisoned, and many more losing their jobs and fearing for their freedom and life.

The Doctors' Trial campaign was closed in April 1953, after Stalin's death. The media announced that the trial had been "an error," and the majority of the accused physicians were rehabilitated. The immediate danger passed, for most people, and the overall scale of repressions decreased. However, the state-supported anti-Semitism, discrimination, attacks on Jewish culture and self-determination, and repression of the Jews did not end, but continued until the late 1980s (Kandel, 2007).

Summary: What Can We Learn from Soviet Child Survivors?

When recent Russian-speaking newcomers are questioned about their past, they often leave westerners with an impression that they are "hesitant to talk about the Jewish aspects of their war experience because of their fears from past times spent in the Soviet Union" (Glicksman & Van Haitsma, 2002, p. 229). Perhaps, the barriers for the new immigrants' recounting have something in common with Greenspan's (1998) notion that only those stories can be recounted which are "tellable by us and hearable by our listeners" (p. xvi). Our ability to narrate not only depends on the nature of the experiences or our openness for disclosure, but also is strongly influenced by the anticipated readiness of the listener to hear and comprehend. Conceivably, the newcomers feel that in the Western world, Soviet survivors' stories appear not hearable, because there are too many unknown contextual realities that will not be understood by a non-Soviet listener without sufficient learning.

Greenspan (1998) noted that both research and public perceptions related to the experiences of aging Holocaust survivors are deeply influenced by two discourses that dominate in many disciplines, from psychiatry to social sciences and political studies. One dominant Western perception lies within the “celebratory” discourse, in which heroism, resilience, and the triumph of human spirit are emphasized. The second, “psychiatric” rhetoric is also taken for granted and narrows the understanding of Holocaust survivors’ posttraumatic sequelae to expert definitions and in-depth interpretations of mental health damage and psychological pathology (see also Lomranz, 2000). Beyond these two sets of prevailing perceptions, the substantive content of survivors’ lived experiences remains obscured, so that “we might also wonder how much more, excluded by the language of both veneration and diagnosis, remains unheard; perhaps unspoken” (Greenspan, p. 51).

Neither of the two dominant Western discourses is familiar to the Soviet newcomers. In the Soviet Union, Holocaust survivors were never celebrated as the carriers of triumphant human spirit or as testimony bearers; on the contrary, their survivors’ identities had to remain hidden for decades, and their voices were silenced. The painful consequences of their past trauma were never recognized through proper professional diagnosis or treatment, because the theme of psychic trauma was another taboo in the Soviet public, medical, and psychological discourse. As my interview conversations have shown, discussions related to psychic trauma or posttraumatic stress sound foreign to most Soviet seniors.

Instead of the two predominant Western socially constructed streams of meanings, the Russian survivors’ “tellable” and presumably “hearable” stories are rooted in fundamentally different meanings dictated by the social experiences lived in their country. Their environments had surrounded them with other powerful discourses rooted in commonly reinterpreted historical narratives, prevailing social attitudes, suppressed memories, and phenomena deemed undiscussable by the Soviet ideology. Soviet survivors can tell “counternarratives” (Carney, 2004, p. 210) untainted by the habitual discourses that have been long established in the West. Thus, with the proper analysis of relevant alternative discourses, these narratives can reveal unconventional knowledge about the personal meaning of suffering and resilience in the trauma aftermath.

CHAPTER THREE

BACKGROUND: TRAUMA, RESILIENCE, AND AGING

> Every book, every magazine article, represents at least one person who is equivalent to the anthropologist's informant or the sociologist's interviewee. (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 163)

In this chapter I review the information that became background data for my study: the data I received from literature on trauma, resilience, and aging. In grounded theory research, the major purpose of literature review is sharpening the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher as she or he proceeds with their own field study. Literature provides sources of sensitizing concepts pertaining to theories developed within a range of relevant scholarly disciplines and gaps and problems evident within the current state of knowledge. The sensitizing concepts and themes emerging from literature enhance the researcher's ability "to uncover data that otherwise might be overlooked" (Glaser, 1978, p. 39).

In Russia, Jewish survivors remain silent in the academic research on trauma. The general theme of psychic trauma was practically absent from medical and psychological academic literature in Russia until the last decade (Tarabrina, 2001; Tzygankov & Bylim, 1998). Discussions related to posttraumatic stress or any kinds of social consequences of traumatic events were unheard of in the media, professional and academic writings, and the educational system. Lindy and Van der Kolk (1991) quoted a Soviet psychiatrist they met in a conference, "In the West, you have few victims and many healers; in the Soviet Union we have millions of victims and nearly no healers" (p. 439). The situation has changed in the last ten years, and there is an increasing body of academic literature in Russia related to posttraumatic stress disorder. However, virtually no studies focused on Holocaust survivors have been initiated. The theme continues to be practically invisible in the FSU.

This study is positioned in the Western context, as it relates to the chosen research method, selected disciplinary traditions, and the study's potential audience. Therefore, and also because of the scarcity of specific literature in the Russian language, this literature review is based on English-language studies. I focused on two main areas related to trauma and resilience in the life span perspective. One area related to childhood trauma, its aftermath, and resilience (contextually focused on child survivors of the Holocaust who immigrated to the West shortly after the war), and the second pertained to major theories on trauma sequelae in later life. The sources came from a variety of scholarly disciplines, such as psychology, psychiatry, social work, nursing, sociology, political studies, and history.

Early Trauma and Resilience in Child Survivors of the Holocaust

> Somehow, we children who were meant to die, have lived. We have survived even our survival. And in our various stages of continued hiding many have carved out substantive lives with careers and family. And some have even broken through the silence to write books, to rescue and defend our people, to re-ignite Jewish life. An incredible struggle. (Krell, 1999, p. 93)

The area of professional and academic literature devoted to traumatic experiences of child survivors of the Holocaust is densely populated by writers who either belong to this group themselves, or are closely related to it through family or community ties. Perhaps, there is hardly any other field of scientific knowledge where so many contributors to academic research approach the phenomena understudy from within, based on their own lived experiences. The presence of child survivors' voice in the academic discourse surrounding their own struggle with posttraumatic sequelae had many implications. Two aspects are particularly meaningful for the purposes of this study. First, the fact of their involvement, in itself, presented strong evidence of their remarkable resilience, and also indicated the deep impact of severely traumatizing experiences on their lives. It is known that a disproportional number of children who lived through the Holocaust have become psychiatrists, psychologists, paediatricians, nurses, or members of other helping professions (e. g., Moskovitz, 1983; Krell, 1999). Krell noted that, perhaps, the identity of children who survived due to the kindness of their rescuers, as they grew up, had incorporated the rescuing as a driving force of their lives.

Second, the survivors' voice rendered an invaluable enrichment to this field of knowledge by providing "participant" meanings to the research. It may be speculated that the child survivors' authentic involvement largely contributed to the shift towards the study of resilience in trauma-related psychiatric literature, after the long-dominant emphasis on documenting and measuring posttraumatic pathology. The professional engagement of child survivors has illuminated the universe of knowledge related to resilient responses and profound psychological effects of early trauma.

The histories of Jewish child survivors of the Holocaust who live with the effects of early traumata represent an unprecedented material for studying trauma sequelae across the lifespan (Valent, 1998a). Although the experiences of this group provided classical examples for traumatological research, they often presented non-classical, unexpected findings that did not fit the established theories, thus contributing to the developing of new knowledge, and calling for new research methods. In this section I explore the ways in which the study of child survivors of the Holocaust related to the existing theories of resilience. I chose to refer mostly to the theoretical contributions made by people who themselves live with the trauma of the Holocaust.

Ambiguities of the Inquiry into Resilience after the Holocaust

Within the study of Holocaust trauma in children, the conceptual exploration of resilience was rooted in the specific context of knowledge about the unprecedented experiences of a large number of survivors. For many reasons, initially after the liberation, a great body of literature was developed mainly to document the negative consequences of massive psychic trauma (Eitinger & Krell, 1885; Lempp, 1995). Some authors indicated that in research related to the victims of Nazi persecution, one of the strongest factors inhibiting the study of positive outcomes was an appalling contradiction between the unspeakable terror of the atrocities and the very notion of the "positive" effects of related trauma (e.g., Sigal, 1995). Data on resilience were omitted from research also because mental health professionals were the primary contributors to the literature, and only those survivors who were in need of help came to their attention (Fogelman, 2001).

In the first three decades after the war, the phenomenon of healthy adaptation did not appear among expected findings or as a centre of the academic attention. However, the inquiry into survivors' experiences presented indications towards positive outcomes even in the work of early researchers (e.g., Shuval observed hardening among survivors as early as in 1957). These aspects began to attract research efforts most evidently in the late 1970s and 1980s, after the publication of follow-up studies conducted with groups of children survivors who resettled in England (Moskovitz, 1983), Israel, and Canada (Sigal & Weinfeld, 1989). For example, by analyzing life narratives of child survivors, Moskovitz challenged the common assumption that severe early deprivation inevitably leads to impaired adjustment and lifelong emotional disability. She also criticized formal predictive attempts based on the objective measuring of pre-trauma personality features and other protective factors and vulnerability traits. Many other studies documented the resilience and posttraumatic sequelae of child survivors, and questioned the established diagnostic systems, intervention practices, and methods of conventional research (Pynoos, Steinberg, & Goenjian, 1996; Bluglass, 2001). Child survivors became one of the most illustrative groups that provided examples for the study of resilience.

One of the lessons drawn from the history of the inquiry with child survivors was that professional expert positions repeatedly proved problematic. Despite the prediction of many psychiatrists who concluded shortly after the war that the severely damaged children would never be normal again, most of them grew up as well adjusted and highly functioning adults, as the external evaluations and research documented in the recent decades. At the same time, however, it soon became apparent that the professional "premature assumptions of 'adjustment'" (Bluglass, 2001, p. 50) should be also taken with great caution. Many studies showed that well adapted child survivors may still carry deep, never healing scars (e.g., Amir & Lev-Wiesel, 2003; Halasz, 2001a, 2001b). The simultaneous evidence of resilient adjustment and devastating inner wounds was difficult to conceptualize. Psychiatrist Henry Krystal, himself a survivor, observed, "it is not rare in the 'survivor syndrome' to see people fully sane during the day, but psychotic every night" (cited in Greenspan, 1999, p. 99). The complexity of conceptualizing adjustment in the context of severe trauma remains one of the prevailing themes in research with child survivors of the Holocaust.

Identity, Memory, and Silence: Social Context of Coping with Trauma

The issues of memory, identity, silence, and suppressed recollection are central in many studies of trauma sequelae and resilience (e.g., Herman, 1992; J.

Kestenberg, 1998; Mazor, Gampel, Enright, & Orenstein, 1990). Themes pertaining to the cultural and contextual aspects of personal identity and collective memory are closely related to the experiences of child survivors of the Holocaust.

The experiences of unclear identity, limited ability to recount one's story, and blurred memories of the past have been identified in Western child survivors (Cohen, 2005; Krell, 1995, 1999). As opposed to adult survivors, many children who had to rebuild their lives after the war did not possess memories of their pre-Holocaust families, tradition, or culture that could shape their identities. The confusion of identity was augmented by the fact that many Jewish children adopted an adjustment strategy of striving to perfectly blend with others and hide or suppress the knowledge about their roots (Cohen, 2005; Wajnryb, 2001). The forced silence together with the ambivalent identity was shown to result in the sense of powerlessness, which further interfered with the healing of childhood trauma. Moskovitz (1983), in her survey of the children thirty years after the liberation, found that their "enormous hunger to know about oneself [became] more unbearable with silence" (p. 228). The author concluded that unknown or unclear identity significantly contributed to the children's posttraumatic pain (see also Balint, 2001; Fine, 2001).

It has been shown in research that the suppression of open recounting of the past experiences may affect the process of posttraumatic healing. Danieli (1999) described the process of the silencing the Holocaust survivors' experiences in North America when they arrived there shortly after the war. She coined a term "conspiracy of silence" that signifies the survivors' experiences of profound silence surrounding their war experiences, and found that these factors significantly inhibited the healing processes. Danieli wrote the following about the total societal reaction to Holocaust survivors, which they faced after their liberation and immigration:

> After liberation, as during the war, survivors were victims of a pervasive societal reaction comprised of obtuseness, indifference, avoidance, repression and denial of their Holocaust experiences. Like other victims, survivors' war accounts were too horrifying for most people to listen to or believe. Similar to other victims who are blamed for their victimization..., survivors were faced with the pervasively held myth that they had actively or passively participated in their own destiny by "going like sheep to the slaughter." Additionally, bystander's guilt led many to regard the survivors as pointing an accusing finger at them and projecting onto the survivors the suspicion that they had performed immoral acts in order to survive. Like other victims, they were also told to "let bygones be bygones" and get on with their lives. (p. 220)

The consequences of such rejection included the survivors' universal forced silence about their Holocaust experiences, sense of isolation, loneliness, and mistrust (see also Greenspan, 1998, 2001). Following Symonds (1980), Danieli (1994b, 1999) called this impact a “second wound”: the prevalent social discourse that effectively prevented the survivors’ memories from becoming part of the collective memory – their voices from being heard. This pervasive conflict, adding to the impact of the persecution, affected every level of functioning and coping for these people: personal identity, family dynamics, parent-child relationships, community interactions, and historical self-identification. Although the majority of survivors managed to cope and build new lives, in many cases it came with the overwhelming cost of personality changes and disturbed family and intergenerational relationships (Epstein, 1988; Williams, 1993).

Many researchers have found that communal rejection and political oppression create the environment in which the mechanisms of adjustment can become severely impaired in trauma survivors. For example, de Young (1998) described collective trauma in the context of oppression, in which

> [the] cultural system can offer no real explanation for the event or its aftermath, [and] the members of the culture are left epistemically disempowered, that is, they are at a loss to explain what happened and why, and to derive any meaning from their own suffering. (p. 3)

It is possible to apply Prince's (1998) term *historical trauma* to characterise the social nature of these experiences "occurring in the course of human history, that has an impact both on the development of individual persons and on the further stream of history" (p. 44).

Smith (1985) also found that individual resilience during mass atrocities can be enhanced by cultural protection or impaired by the lack thereof. The sense of belonging and social validation renders the specific opportunity to identify with unitary, communal experiential meanings. The support of relevant societal or inter-generational meanings provides trauma survivors with a shielding "cushion" in the process of their working through trauma (see also Sadavoy, 1997, about societal hostility towards returning Vietnam veterans, which affected their coping).

In the context of these literature findings, Jewish child survivors can be described as an extremely vulnerable group, deprived of social and communal protection in the processes of their identity development and working through trauma. The paradoxical relationships between the seemingly high vulnerability, the evidence of deep consequences of severe trauma, and the documented resilience of survivors have been broadly discussed in the Western research literature (e.g., Carney, 2004; Greenspan, 1998, 1999). With respect to child survivors in Russia, it remains to be understood how their posttraumatic adjustment was affected by the collective nature of their cumulative trauma, the pervasive social silence imposed by the Soviet regime, and the ideological oppression during their early development and adult lives.

Resilience Definitions: The Complexity

Defining resilience in the context of child survivors of the Holocaust is associated with unprecedented ambiguity due to the severity of the trauma and the timing of the traumatic impact at a critically formative period of children's lives. One of the simplest definitions was suggested by psychiatrist Sigal (1995), “By resilience I mean a capacity to adapt well to external and internal stresses” (p. 1). However, the simplicity proved illusory for many reasons, one of them being the uncertainty of defining the process of “adapting well,” or the positive outcome towards which the resilience is a pathway. Krell (1999), a psychiatrist and a child survivor, noted that distinguishing between positive and negative adjustment may be paradoxically ambiguous. The author stated, “I view survivors as emotionally disturbed only if they claim to never suffer depressions, nightmares, panic attacks, insomnia. To claim normality is abnormal” (p. 62).

The study of child survivors’ experiences proved fecund within a variety of disciplines and approaches, and produced an array of discourses associated with explaining the phenomena of trauma and resilience. Definitions pertaining to various discourses differ widely. As such, the dynamics of resilience and vulnerability in the course of posttraumatic reactions were broadly discussed in the framework of medical and psychiatric models, with the focus on operationalized definitions, measurement scales, and quantitative and controlled studies (McFarlane & Yehuda, 1996). Psychiatrist Paul Valent (1998b), himself a child survivor of the Holocaust, commented that purely medical approaches lacked insight into social, cultural, and experiential content components, and failed to account for adaptive, fulfillment responses. Similar pitfalls are inherent in psychosocial approaches to resilience that are focused on pragmatic explanation, expert interventions, and conventional measurement of positive outcomes. Greene (2002), in her article on Holocaust survivors’ resilience, quoted a classical psychosocial definition, “Resilience is an innate self-righting mechanism that assists people in redirecting their lives onto an adaptive path following disadvantageous or stressful circumstances” (p. 6). The psychosocial framework, in its quest to measure and "promote resilience" (Greene, p. 15), may also miss the complexity of individual processes involved in transcending the adversity of trauma.

Conceptualizing resilience may be associated with a variety of interpretations. Valent (1998c) linked the metaphoric meaning of the resilience concept with the linguistic origins of the word: "Resilience, according to the dictionary, means recoiling or springing back to the original shape after bending, stretching, or compression. Psychological resilience implies a similar springing back after having been subject to severe stressors" (p. 517). The author extended the interpretation of this basic definition by warning that the understanding of resilience remains restricted if it is perceived as an isolated concept. Although a useful explanatory tool, the concept "may be a self-comforting device which concentrates on the indomitable and triumphant human spirit and hides the devastating nature and pessimism of major childhood adversity" (Valent, p. 517). The metaphor of a resilient balloon, which is able to bounce back and form patches and knots to survive, is thus oversimplified. Valent broadened the metaphoric meaning of this simplification through this supplemental definition:

> Resilience is the capacity to spring back, form knots, be patched, and if necessary be encased in a cute package or be otherwise molded [*sic*] by the environment. Resilience also involves eventual exposure and recognition of what is inside, and untangling of knots and distortions. (p. 531)

Similar to most metaphors, the concept of resilience does not fully describe human experiences. Trauma survivors do not, in reality, "spring back to the original shape," because most still bear inner residual signs of the tragedy, even if their adjustment seems full. Bluglass (2001) commented that the word *recovery*, for example, is "not popular" among survivors of traumatic experiences, and that the variations and degrees of positive adjustment are endless and difficult to objectively evaluate or externally measure. The author warned against the over-normalization inherent in the professional study of resilience.

Concepts and Terms: The Values

In accordance with the ambiguity of defining resilience, many related questions arise. How to define the positive outcome, towards which the resilience is a pathway? What do we consider a desirable state of the individual after encountering severe trauma, so that she or he can be considered resilient? What are the values that guide the developing resilience theories, and how may they influence the definitions of outcomes which are called positive?

Personal posttraumatic outcomes are relative to circumstances and individual history. For example, many survivors have indicated that their selfless involvement in work and constantly keeping busy had become their ways to cope. High productivity in adults who were child survivors of the Holocaust has been widely described, admired, and considered as evidence of their resilience. However, some researchers interpreted the productivity itself as a symptom and labelled it “workaholism” (see comments on such interpretations in Suedfeld, Paterson, & Krell, 2005). Thus, the personal trait of high altruistic productivity may be described in a number of contradictory ways. It can be seen as a coping mechanism, a resilience indicator, or a symptom of posttraumatic damage. Some writers in the area of positive psychology claimed that personal productivity and altruistic attitudes were illustrative of “posttraumatic growth” and wisdom (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995, 1996; Linley, 2003). Conversely, the life-long high involvement in productive work can be interpreted as a risk factor in later life, because it has been shown that the loss of productivity may be associated with the relapse of posttraumatic symptoms in aging individuals (Graziano, 2003). In the complex context of “life-trauma dialectics” (Valent, 1998b), the value-laden categorizing of positive outcomes in conventional research may be associated with an error of reducing human experiences to a set of abstract, pragmatic evaluative concepts. Categorization should be therefore taken with great caution.

In this context, the observable criteria of positive or negative outcomes become uncertain because of the fallacy of attaching prescriptive values to the externally defined measures of positive change. In her follow-up study of child survivors’ adjustment, Moskovitz (1983) cautioned against the attempts at definitive evaluation: “Has our eagerness for scientific evaluation of functioning restricted our criteria for valuing human beings and led us unwittingly to judgements of superior and inferior, via assorted categories of normal and abnormal?” (p. 226). Labeling survivors’ lived experiences as functionally positive outcomes within the resilience discourse may be as damaging as deeming their reactions dysfunctional as part of the medical or psychiatric model. The interpretation of the meanings of positive outcomes, successful coping, and sufficient functioning, tied to the metaphoric connotations of the resilience concept, remains one of the central subjects of discussion in the literature.

Extrapolation of the Concepts: The Relevancy

There is no equivalent word in Russian that has the same metaphoric meaning as the word *resilience* in English (Muller, 1990). There are a number of Russian words that can express the concept, but each of the translation options has a somewhat different connotation. This does not mean that the notion of resilience is missing in the Russian culture. However, the absence of precisely equivalent translation, together with the existence of specific cultural connotations, implies that the simplified extrapolation of the idea of resilience should be taken with caution.

The non-equivalency of the concept of resilience in different cultures also implies that, although the general features signified by the concept are similar, the particular properties of this category might be inherently different. It is possible that many findings based on studying child survivors of the Holocaust in Western countries can be generalized in the context of Soviet survivors. According to many authors, the group of Holocaust survivors also shares features with other traumatized populations, such as adult survivors of other genocides (Kupelian, Kalayjian, & Kassabian, 1988; Savin & Robinson, 2002) and children of non-war trauma such as sexual abuse (Valent, 1993). However, there have also been indications of fundamental differences between these groups.

In Western countries, follow-up studies showed that most salient qualities of child survivors were their durability and affirmation of life, their ethical and spiritual involvement, active compassion to others, and individual adaptability (Moskovitz, 1983). These general qualities can be attributed to many Soviet Jewish child survivors. Thus, similar features indicative of adjustment have developed in the two groups of people who shared the experience of severe atrocities in childhood, but whose life histories significantly diverged after the war. Perhaps, the features of resilience that fall beyond the scope of the metaphorical concept of Western theories and public rhetoric connotations may surface from studying the individual life histories of Russian Jewish child survivors of the Holocaust.

Trauma and Aging in the Context of Holocaust Survivors

> Even among those who have spent years attempting to understand the dualities inherent in surviving, the debates continue: Is it “death in life” or “life in death” that should be the primary focus? Trauma or resilience? Injury or strength? Those who focus on resilience tend to dismiss those who focus on injury. The latter group, equally certain in their data, are dismissive in turn. ... Existing

> concepts simply do not well enough explain how the obvious strengths, creativity, and engagement so many survivors demonstrate really can coexist with a severity of injury that is also indisputable. (Greenspan, 1999, p. 49)

The effects of severe trauma may last throughout a lifetime. In some aging survivors, even after decades of successful, symptom-free adjustment, posttraumatic pathology may re-emerge and change the dynamics of their later life. It has been shown that the aging process can be associated with an increased risk of re-emergence or late exacerbation of posttraumatic symptoms (Aarts & Op den Velde, 1996). The relapse of painful signs can take a variety of forms, from minor symptoms of anxiety or sleep disturbances to depression or clinically diagnosed symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Dasberg, 1995; Sadavoy, 1997). As trauma survivors age, new research studies have emerged in traumatology to conceptualize and explain trauma-related processes in later years (e.g., Bar-Tur & Levy-Shiff, 2000; Fields, 1996; Hobfoll & Wells, 1998).

The field of traumatology developed from the study of populations other than older adults. The increased vulnerability to stresses in later life began to be recognized in research only in the early 1980s (Clipp & Elder, 1996). Until then, relatively little attention was paid to developmental issues in trauma responses, with the exception of childhood trauma, in the study of which the interplay of stress factors and the individual developmental stage was traditionally emphasized (Solomon & Ginzburg, 1998). It is symbolic that the term *traumatology* was coined by a child psychiatrist, Donovan (1991, 1993), who also advocated for a paradigm shift from biological psychiatry towards the emphasis on social and psychobiological effects of trauma. Many innovative ideas were developed in pediatric psychiatry, in which the study of childhood trauma was rooted. The unique developmental aspects intersected in this area with the issues of traumatology. Perhaps, the merging of the fields contributed to the generation of new ideas.

In this section I analyze some theories and approaches that apply to the study of trauma re-emergence in late life. I begin with discussing the general assumptions related to trauma re-emergence and the major, overarching approaches in traumatology. I continue and analyze the applicability of some theories in this field. For succinct illustration, I limit the discussion to a small selection of approaches and theories, a description of which is instrumental for the purposes of this study.

Approaches and Paradigms

The splitting of assumptions. In the last two decades, research and clinical literature on trauma and aging represented attempts to conceptualize the interaction between the consequences of early trauma and the normative process of aging. Two opposite positions emerged: one portraying the "pessimistic" picture of pathological consequences of stress and trauma, and the second documenting the "optimistic," positive outcomes (Lomranz, 1998a). On the one hand, many publications presented the position often called "vulnerability perspective," which emphasized the predisposition of aging survivors to the relapse of pathology connected to their remote trauma, or their high sensitivity to current stressors (Strug, Mason & Heller, 2003; Weintraub & Ruskin, 1999). On the other hand, many researchers maintained the "inoculation perspective" that addressed the strengthening by the development of useful coping strategies in dealing with early trauma. The inoculation through past stress enables aging people to maintain and improve their well-being (see reflections on both perspectives in Bar-Tur & Levy-Shiff, 2000). For example, B. Kahana and E. Kahana (1998) reported that one fourth of aging Holocaust survivors in their study said that their experiences "made it easier for them to cope with the aging process (e.g., 'Once you survive the Holocaust, you can survive normal aging')" (p. 165). Within the paradigm of positive psychology, there was a tendency to document the resilient outcomes of early trauma, which can include gaining wisdom, achieving posttraumatic integration and growth, and aging successfully (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995).

The splitting of the literature in two disparate streams reflected two major discourses, one focusing on conceptualizing, measuring, and treating vulnerability and pathology, and the other documenting and promoting positive outcomes and resilient aging. Neither of the opposite discourses was accepted as fully explanatory (Carney, 2004; Greenspan, 1999; Lomranz, 1998b). A remedial tendency represented efforts to demonstrate the possibility of high or poor functioning capacity in different areas. For instance, Dasberg (1995) defined this condition as "better instrumental coping, [and] worse emotional coping" (p. 3), and Danieli (1994b) commented on the possibility of isolated recovery or deterioration in different dimensions of the aging survivor's life. Alternatively, some researchers developed theories integrating the two positions by conceptualizing a continuum, or dialectical coexistence of trauma and resilience (Valent, 1998b).

The continuum of approaches. With respect to the above theoretical issues, there exists an array of overarching approaches. According to Valent (1998b), all approaches pertaining to trauma studies can be classified into two streams that represent major paradigms for understanding various aspects of trauma.

The first stream is derived from a medical model that is rooted in conceptualizing clusters of symptoms (e.g., reliving and avoidance of traumatic events), and concentrates on disease classifications and diagnostic criteria. According to Valent (1998b), this approach lacks insight into social and cultural components, underestimates the depth and diversity of human experiences, and ignores a variety of emotions, moral responses, and meanings. The medical model is focused on pathology, and fails to account for adaptive, fulfillment responses. It includes biological models of trauma, such as noradrenergic dysregulation, neurotoxicity, and hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal dysregulation (Weintraub & Ruskin, 1999). This cluster of approaches pertains to medicine, psychiatry, nursing, and some practices of social work and psychology. The concept of PTSD and related research and practices pertain to this stream of approaches. Despite the negative connotation of reductionism commonly attributed to this approach, it has been admitted as indisputably valid in conceptualizing trauma. In addition to the inherent value of discovering biological mechanisms and constructing diagnostic classifications, the model serves as a basic framework against which the trauma responses of higher levels may be better understood.

Valent (1998b) defined the second stream of approaches as the “descriptive-experiential model” (p. 5). This model is rooted in extracting meaning of human experiences and constitutes the “soul” of knowledge about traumatic reactions. The approaches pertaining to this paradigm belong to anthropology and those fields of sociology, psychology, social work, and aging studies in which narrative methods and phenomenology are practiced. The content of memories and the authentic voice of the trauma survivor are the centre of attention.

There is a third cluster of approaches not mentioned by Valent, which can be defined as a psychosocial model. It may be best described by Donovan’s (1991) classical definition of traumatology as “the study of natural and man-made trauma . . . the social and psychobiological effects thereof, and the predictive-preventive-interventionist pragmatics which evolve from that study” (p. 434). This approach embraces the psychosocial components that are insufficiently considered within the medical model. As opposed to the meaning-seeking experiential model that is focused on individual narrative and lived experiences, the psychosocial approach aims at pragmatic explanations, professional interventions and measurements, and conventional, expert-defined positive outcomes.

Despite recognizing the limitations inherent in each of the models, Valent (1998b) considered all of them valid, and suggested a holistic system, evolving from the continuum of paradigms:

> Traumatology as a science involves the study of responses to threats of physical and existential survival, the context and process in which stress and trauma occur, and the complex aftermath of the trauma process. Its challenge is to integrate understanding of the great range of aftermath responses and their connection to the torn fabric of human meaning and to help people redress the balance in their lives toward fulfillment. (p. 4)

It would be a simplification to try and label all theories and approaches by reference to pure paradigms. However, the above overview of the overarching models may provide an orientation system for the following discussion of theories applied to the study of posttraumatic sequelae in later life.

Aging and Trauma Sequelae

Within research and practice focused on the interaction between early trauma and the process of aging, the cross-application of theories has occurred. Because of the limitations of the space, I cannot embrace the entire breadth of theories, but have to put aside the discussion of such areas as the interplay between intrapersonal and cultural factors, the developmental implications of the age of incurring the trauma, and other aspects intrinsically implied in the traumatology of old age. To demonstrate general issues of the applicability of theory to older people, I primarily refer to the discussion of developmental factors together with some basic concepts of traumatology.

With respect to late manifestations of trauma, the universal developmental theories of aging were applied to the study of aging process in trauma survivors. Towards the same end, the generalized theories of traumatology were used to conceptualize trauma sequelae in aging individuals. This division is artificial, and I use it only to illustrate my analysis and the selection of examples.

The "deficiency model." The search for theoretical explanations of relapse or late onset of posttraumatic symptoms was associated with the application of a variety of developmental theories. For example, the re-emergence was attributed to the impact of inevitable series of losses associated with aging, such as illness, separation, retirement, physical and mental decline, and institutionalization. The homeostatic balance achieved by trauma survivors at a younger age becomes challenged by the weakening coping capacity, on the one hand, and the impact of multiple age-related negative factors, on the other. Pathological reactions associated with past trauma may be also triggered by witnessing stressful events such as accidents, natural disasters, or inter-personal violence (Fields, 1996; Lantz & Buchalter, 2001).

Theories that explained symptom exacerbation by increasing misbalance and failure to maintain equilibrium in aging individuals prevailed in the mid-1980s, but later were labeled the "deficiency model" and criticized by many authors (e.g., Aarts & Op den Velde, 1996). Hobfoll and Wells (1998) argued that the model based on senescence decline and cumulative loss did not account for opposite, also cumulative, protective forces of gained resources. The authors proposed a "conservation of resources theory (COR)" that conceptualized the interrelation of all life phases, rather than isolating the phase of old age, and presented later life as influenced by the "caravan of resources" that the person had accumulated, protected, and actively shaped throughout earlier life.

A theory of salutogenesis (Antonovsky, 1979). One of the comprehensive theories of successful coping and lifespan dynamics of resilience was developed by Antonovsky (1979, 1987). The author based his theory on studying immigrants, senior populations, people with disabilities, and individuals who survived psychic trauma. Antonovsky explored origins of health instead of origins of disorders, and coined term *salutogenesis* versus pathogenesis. Antonovsky analyzed "salutary factors" in order to understand sources of stability of a human being or a social group. His complex construct of Generalized Resistance Resources (GRR) categorized resilience resources in a number of levels: physical, biochemical, artifactual-material, cognitive, emotional, evaluative-attitudinal, interpersonal-relational, and macrosociocultural. GRR function on four system levels: individual, primary group, subculture, and society.

Antonovsky (1987) looked beyond the deficiency assumptions in developing his "Sense of Coherence (SOC)" construct, which refers to a person's general integrated way of viewing the world (including both intrapersonal and environmental elements). SOC includes three essential elements of personal world outlook that provide the basis for successful coping: perceived "comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness" of one's world. When an individual experiences severe losses, stress, or catastrophic events, it is suggested that the stronger the personal SOC, the more successfully the individual can rise to the challenge. Moreover, the SOC is presented as an active outcome of personal development process in the given context, rather than a rigid function of the deficiency of the changing interpersonal and external world. Thus the resilience construct becomes more complex, and involves the function of a process rather than just plain outcome. This theory provides arguments for confronting the statement of personal defences' failure due to bare senile weakness, suggesting that there is much more to the dynamic phenomenon of resilience in the older survivors of severe trauma.

Erikson's developmental model. A theory outlined by Aarts and Op den Velde (1996) provided another alternative to the deficiency model. The theory is based on parallels between Eriksonian developmental tasks of aging and the elements of trauma recovery process (first introduced by Krystal, 1981). The complimentary, mutually augmenting effect of both processes upon the aging survivor may result in the relapse or late manifestation of trauma sequelae. The authors presented five corresponding, integral stages that pertain to both adaptation to aging and trauma recovery, and evolve in parallel: "mourning for losses; giving meaning to past and present experiences; accepting one's past and present states; (re)establishing self-coherence and self-continuity; and achieving ego integration" (p. 368).

According to Erikson (1982), the developmental tasks of old age include achieving ego integrity and self-continuity. Successful aging, thus, can be understood as the full accomplishment of these intra-personal tasks. Similarly to the achieving of ego integrity as a condition of successful aging in Erikson's theory, the working through of trauma is considered a necessary part of successful recovery. Active memory is recognized as one of the necessary tools for achieving ego integration within normal aging. Working through of trauma and controlled remembering of the traumatic experiences are considered as essential means for making sense of trauma and mastering it. In this context, the intra-psychic processes of normal aging in the individual whose past is saturated with unbearable trauma can lead to inner conflict and re-emergence of posttraumatic pathology. Intrusive reminiscences, hypermnesias, compulsive returning of traumatic memories, and re-living of trauma have been described as typical symptoms of PTSD.

The theoretical parallel between the elements of trauma recovery and aging implies that in the survivors of severe early trauma, the accomplishment of intra-personal tasks of aging will inevitably call for fulfilling the task of working through the memories of trauma (Danieli, 1994a). Therefore, the normal developmental phase of aging is associated with a painful intra-psychic conflict in the trauma survivor, leading to the exacerbation of posttraumatic symptoms, unless the individual does not achieve the fulfillment of life-cycle developmental purposes.

The critique of successful integration theories. The explanatory power of Erikson’s theory allows a deeper understanding of the trauma survivor’s experiences than the simplified concepts of the deficiency model (see further application of Erikson’s theory in Suedfeld et al., 2005). However, the core of this theory is based on the assumption of ultimate integration as a necessary condition of success in both processes of aging and trauma recovery. The psychosocially defined determinants of successful adjustment involve achieving ego integrity with aging and, by analogy, full integration in trauma recovery. These assumptions might leave some areas of the survivors’ experiences outside the scope of the theory. For example, how do we explain high subjectively defined quality of life in aging trauma survivors who, inconsistently with the theory, admit not having mastered or integrated their traumatic experiences? These people still do not comprehend the meaning of the unspeakable adversities they faced in the past, or “make sense” of their trauma (Carney, 2004).

Lomranz (1998a) noted that in his biographical study of Holocaust survivors, most participants “felt a strong sense of ‘integrity’, but they resisted strongly, unyieldingly, when asked to affirm their past life in Eriksonian terms” (p. 237). They commented that integrating the Holocaust into the personal and cultural systems of values and beliefs, for many reasons, remained impossible. Lomranz suggested a concept of *aintegration* as a descriptor of older persons' "ability to feel well without necessarily having integrated all the various human biopsychosocial levels, or certain entities within each level . . . into an overriding whole" (p. 228). Paradoxically, for some survivors, the major coping mechanisms still remained rooted in the awareness (as opposed to denial) and tolerance of dual realities, the incomprehensible world, and inconsistencies that, in fact, had not been integrated as a necessary condition of adjustment.

Trauma and aging: Applying the theory of PTSD to older adults. Among the variety of established theoretical frameworks extended to the study of older people, the theory of PTSD is central, because it represents a fundamental paradigm in the general field of traumatology (American Psychiatric Association, 1994; World Health Organization, 1994). The conceptual definition and formulation of PTSD was largely associated with the study of Vietnam veterans (Clipp & Elder, 1996; Valent, 1998b). Consequently, it became considered applicable to all traumatic situations, including the manifestations of trauma in aging individuals. How well does this general framework apply to the study of older adults? By way of illustration, I draw a parallel with pediatrics, because in this area, as in gerontology, the developmental particularities are essential. The reification of PTSD diagnosis has been questioned in child psychiatry, because "the intimate relationship of these symptoms to the particular and complex experience of an individual child is in danger of being lost" (Pynoos, Steinberg, & Goenjian, 1996, p. 345). Similar concern with respect to gerontology was voiced by Brom, Durst, and Aghassy (2002):

> After the introduction of PTSD as a diagnostic category, research became . . . limited in its scope. . . . The almost automatic association between trauma and PTSD has diverted attention from the possibility that totally different responses or response patterns, such as personality changes, exist as well. (p. 198)

Although the contemporary critique of the PTSD concept corresponds to the current practical need, we should not forget that it is the history of its establishment that justified the value of this framework. Because psychic trauma was not formally recognized immediately after World War II, many people severely damaged by the atrocities of the war were denied validation and much needed support (Danieli, 1999). In the face of this injustice, and considering the demands of legal and public systems, it became essential to introduce specific diagnostic concepts that could “name” such phenomena as “survivor syndrome” (Bluglass, 2001). The similar need of Vietnam veterans was associated with the legitimization of PTSD in 1980. Because “things not identified are often not perceived” (Donovan, 1993, p. 409), formalizing the PTSD diagnosis served to justify support and treatment for trauma survivors and became instrumental in recognizing their suffering.

The current need for reviewing the diagnostic framework of PTSD, in particular in gerontology, is determined by the same factors that initially catalyzed its inception – the need for a professional vocabulary to reflect the reality of the survivors’ lives. Many authors have commented on the imperfections in current diagnostic systems (Friedman & Marsella, 1996; Pain, 2002; Kirmayer, 1996). The existing categories do not explain high comorbidity of PTSD and fail to describe the enduring personality changes resulting from prolonged interpersonal violence experienced in childhood (Luxenberg, Spinazzola, & van der Kolk, 2001; van der Kolk, 2001). The concept and criteria of a new diagnosis of a “Complex posttraumatic stress disorder” suggested by

Herman (1992) largely responds to the need for conceptualizing posttraumatic consequences that fall beyond the established diagnosis of PTSD (see also Pain, 2002).

In gerontology, the diagnostic and conceptual imperfections of the PTSD theory are augmented by common cultural and professional views on aging. The nature of posttraumatic symptoms in aging individuals is often overlooked, being masked under the diagnoses of behavioral and cognitive challenges of senile dementia, anxiety disorders, or depression (Aarts & Op den Velde, 1996; Graziano, 2003). Consequently, posttraumatic conditions often remain misdiagnosed, and the individuals may be offered inadequate, excessive, or insufficient treatment. In addition, there is a common view that the process of neurophysiological degeneration of old age results in irreversible brain impairment. These stereotypical interpretations may reflect on treatment approaches, and indirectly affect social and family relationships, thus depriving the seniors of validation, empathy, and compassionate understanding.

Summary:

Dominant Themes and Discourses in Literature on Aging Survivors

The contribution of theoretical knowledge originating from various disciplines related to both traumatology and gerontology has resulted in the creation of valuable frameworks for understanding the experiences of aging survivors of early trauma. However, although the existing theories had illuminating explanatory value, many theoretical concepts only partially fit this complex area.

The weaknesses of theoretical application in this context pertain to three major categories. First, historically, the experiences of aging individuals were not considered a priority in mainstream research. Indeed, “Freud himself rejected the elderly as a class and was pessimistic about their ability to change, an approach that led to the unfortunate neglect of the psychodynamic processes of later life" (Lomrantz, 1998b, p. 8). Therefore, the lack of specifically focused research resulted in the simplified extension of general theories to the field of gerontology. This practice was defined by Lomranz as the "leftover" principle. Leftover theories and methods borrowed from other areas of research may have had a constricting effect, because insufficient attention was paid to age-related issues. For instance, the general resilience theories, which were originally established in child psychology and social work, have specific implications in the context of older adults (Ryff, Singer, Dienberg Love, & Essex, 1998; Greene, 2002).

Second, because of the interdisciplinary nature of this area of knowledge, research continues to be fragmented, and bridging between disciplines and fields rarely occurs. Although the study of trauma and aging may involve biological, sociological, psychological, and medical approaches, it is rarely reflected in inter- or transdisciplinary research.

Third, the application of universal theories tends to impose overarching paradigmatic assumptions on particular situations. This is often associated with neglecting those elements of human experiences that do not conform to the proposed theoretical approaches or common discourses. For example, Glicksman, Van Haitsma, Mamberg, Gagnon, and Brom (2003) expressed concern with erroneous theorizing about aging Holocaust survivors as a presumably homogenous population (see also David, 2002). Gerontological research based on the experiences of Holocaust survivors demonstrated clinical and developmental differences between older survivors, who were adults during the Holocaust, and child survivors (Brom, Durst, & Aghassy, 2002). The imposing of preconceived psychiatric and psychoanalytic theories on peculiar individual dynamics was also criticized because of the over-pathologizing and oppression that such approaches can entail (Fogelman, 2001; Zajde, 2001). Beyond these prevailing, generalized assumptions, the substantive content of survivors' lived experiences and individual meanings remains obscured, limiting both our knowledge about survivors and the societal attitudes toward them.

It is possible that the need for conceptualizing the individual particularities in this field has led to the current tendency towards qualitative research methods in the study of trauma in older people, including the narrative and phenomenological approaches within the disciplines of psychology, psychiatry, sociology, nursing, and social work (Barron & Climans, 2001; Cohen, 2005; David, 2008; Greenspan, 1998; Myerhoff, 1978, 1986). In the light of the emergent complexity of this research area, it remains to be understood how the Western academic knowledge can apply to the experiences of Soviet survivors and other diverse cultural groups. For the purposes of this study, this review of the literature and research context was intended as background data for the comparative analysis of the major data sources presented in the following sections.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHOD, DESIGN, AND TECHNIQUES

> For all its beauty, a distinct concept always means a shrinkage of meaning, cutting off loose ends. While the loose ends are what matters most in the phenomenal world, for they interweave. (Brodsky, 1986, p. 31)

> A general assumption of narrative analysis is that telling stories is one of the significant ways individuals construct and express meaning. This assumption informs work by many investigators from a variety of disciplines having different theoretical perspectives. (Mishler, 1986, p. 67)

This study employed a combination of two qualitative research approaches: the classical version of the grounded theory (GT) method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978) and narrative analysis (NA) (Leiblich et al., 1998; Riessman, 1993).

The rationale for the choice of method was twofold. First, the theory development goal responded to the need for conceptual understanding of the processes under study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The GT approach was chosen for this study because it intended to examine a substantive, narrowly limited area with unexplored properties, with research questions posed broadly (Stebbins, 2001). The second approach, NA, was required because of the narrative nature of the data and the storied structure of the study participants' recollections. Each of the two components of the method presented tools for examining both the general and particular patterns that were meaningful for this study's participants, with no application of preconceived theories.

Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Research with Holocaust Survivors

Within a variety of disciplinary traditions, qualitative and quantitative methods represent equally valuable tools for gaining knowledge about the experiences of Holocaust survivors. To understand the benefits of such a broad methodological diversity in this area of study, it is useful to employ Valent's (1998b) concept of the continuum of approaches to studying trauma sequelae, spanning from medical theoretical models to the "descriptive-experiential model" (p. 5), which was mentioned in a previous section of this thesis. The application of diverse research methods in this area of study serves the multifaceted epistemological purposes.

On the one hand, the application of quantitative methods, which are characteristic of medical and traditional psychological models, has high theoretical value. For example, findings based on studying child survivors of the Holocaust possess great potential for generalization and theory development in the study of trauma. This group shares features with other traumatized populations, such as adult survivors of other genocides or children of non-war trauma such as sexual abuse (Valent, 1993, 1998c). Conversely, the value of descriptive qualitative studies tends to be questioned in the academic community with regard to the need for universality of knowledge. When the emphasis is placed on generalized knowledge, which can be relevant across individuals and populations, the preference is given to nomothetic, as opposed to idiographic methods of research (e. g., Suedfeld, 1996; Krell, Suedfeld & Soriano, 2004).

On the other hand, the attempts to generalize theories of trauma and resilience based on the experiences of Holocaust survivors have been also questioned. There have been indications of fundamental differences between various groups of trauma survivors (Savin & Robinson, 2002). Therefore, it is possible that some general theories of human adjustment will not fit the experiences of Holocaust survivors or predict their outcomes. This, for example, has been a historical case with the failure of the negative psychiatric prognosis given to the survivors shortly after their liberation (Fogelman, 2001). It is essential to consider both the general nature of human response to trauma and the specific historical and cultural context of each particular group (de Vries et al., 2005; Kirmayer, 1996). Some authentic meanings that are significant to Holocaust survivors can be missed or misinterpreted in the search for universal measurements and nomothetic knowledge, or through employing general theoretical frameworks.

Qualitative approaches respond to the demands of research with Holocaust survivors, because the characteristics of the target group are complex and diverse, and there exists a risk of trivializing the experiences of the survivors through impersonalized quantitative categorization (Zajde, 2001; Moskovitz, 1983). Therefore, idiographic qualitative studies have great value in that they allow discovering the particular, experiential aspects of this area of knowledge.

In the light of the dichotomy between the requirement of contextual sensitivity and the importance of generalization, the existing continuum of approaches renders necessary tools for achieving both goals. Combinations of research methods can be particularly productive (Krell, Suedfeld & Soriano, 2004).

Applying the Combination of GT and NA in This Study

In this study, the combining of GT and NA approaches met the emerging need for accomplishing two objectives: first, the developing of general theoretical conceptualisation of the participants' situation, and second, capturing the specific historical, cultural, and individual context of this particular group.

The Emerging of Narrative Metaphor

The "emergent fit" (Glaser, 1978, p. 4, 41) of the concepts associated with the narrative metaphor occurred at the initial stages of my data collection and analysis, being grounded in two early discoveries. First, narratives were the primary means by which the participants answered my questions in the interviews. My interview partners naturally narrated their life stories, almost as unbroken monologues. The intention of this research was to draw conceptual conclusions from these storied responses, therefore it was important to accommodate the analytical techniques to narration as the major form of the participants' expression.

The second prompting insight emerged from the realization that the participants' responses conveyed a variety of ideas indicating the cultural and historical origins of their individual interpretations. These data indications directed my thinking towards comparing my interview partners' interpretations and meanings with the common interpretations of similar events in the Western culture. I realized that it would be appropriate to sensitize myself to the relevant theoretical categories of the narrative and social construction of meanings. Thus, some sensitizing concepts borrowed from the narrative approach "earned its way" (Glaser, 1978, p. 4) into my analysis. This prompted me to adopt the narrative approach to my inquiry, while maintaining the principles, strategies, and goals of theoretical conceptualization.

Compatibility of the Methods

Within the principles of GT, I used the narrative approach as a major sensitizing theoretical concept and a root metaphor (Sarbin, 1986). Narrative, as a metaphoric concept, provided me with a tool for understanding social processes through the assumption that storytelling is an "organizing principle for human action" (Crossley, 2000, p. 47).

Broad applicability is characteristic of both GT and NA, but the universality of each method has its own specific nature. Whereas the universality of GT may be defined as the power of an epistemological instrument, or a route of general scientific logic of knowledge generation, the global applicability of the narrative metaphor lies in the dimension of a systemic worldview. GT represents a general, pragmatic, and distinct path towards conceptual knowledge. Narrative is defined as an overarching root metaphor, one of the many concepts that are "constructed to answer cosmological questions" (Sarbin, 1986, p. 5), thereby providing a prism for understanding social processes and human action. Both approaches cut across disciplines and traditions. Logically, the disparate nature of the universality of the two paradigms is conditional for their advantageous fit.

Theory development is, by definition, a nomothetic pursuit. Narrative research, conversely, is commonly understood as essentially idiographic, in that individual stories are unique and produce meanings that are not subject to broad generalization (Freeman, 2004). However, the assumption of idiographic focus, in relation to narrative paradigm, is not absolute. Exploring narrative materials can be effectively associated with a "categorical perspective" (Leiblich et al., 1998, p. 12) and with the focus on emergence (Mishler, 1986; Riessman, 1993), which is instrumental for reaching abstract conceptualizations without neglecting the density and complexity of the data embedded in participants' stories (Frank, 1997). NA was shown to provide tools for both contextual sensitivity and theoretical generalization: "Narrative is a cognitively efficient compromise between uniqueness and universality" (Robinson and Hawpe, 1986, p. 118).

According to Glaser & Holton (2004), "Classic GT is simply a set of integrated conceptual hypotheses systematically generated to produce an inductive theory about a substantive area" (para. 7). In this study, I adhered to the indispensable properties of the GT method: the principles of emergence versus pre-conception, conceptualization versus description, and constant comparative analysis. I followed the classical analytical strategies and techniques as conceptualized by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser (1978; 2002a, 2002b). In pursuit of conceptual universality, techniques and language borrowed from NA merged with the epistemological principles and procedures of GT, providing means to combine the depth of narrative inquiry with the advantages of theoretical generalization.

Implications of Research Situation

This study involved several conditions of the research situation that implied non-trivial, complex decisions for research design. The following three characteristics of this research situation informed the design of research strategies and procedures: the area that required an interdisciplinary approach, cross-language and cross-cultural character of data, and ethical considerations of working with aging Holocaust survivors. In this section I review these clusters of issues and explain how they defined my research design. Based on the implications of these issues, I describe the strategies that I used in my research, and provide the detailed description of data collection procedures and analysis.

Interdisciplinary Focus

The interdisciplinary focus of this study required the consideration of different disciplines' epistemological perspectives. Within traditions such as social work, psychiatry, and psychology, research is often based on data that are rooted in lived experiences and individual particularities of people, and the awareness of the researcher's personal input (P. A. Adler & P. Adler, 1987; Elliott, 2005). Data of this kind are common in narrative approach with idiographic features. Conversely, the epistemology of clinical disciplines is grounded in nomothetic rationale, because of the objectives of practical orientation and real-life application. Thus, the distinction between narrative and theory becomes somewhat artificial in the context of clinical research, because the goal of generalized knowledge is routinely achieved through the study of particular situations and stories, by drawing conceptual categories and integrating them into a theory.

In social work, research is essentially focused on social contexts and representation as a way of translating knowledge. For example, Riessman (1993), a social worker and interdisciplinary researcher, rationalized her affiliation with the narrative approach by the commitment to disciplinary tradition, in which the social worker “helps individuals make difficult events meaningful by putting them into an interpretive sequence” (p. vi). Riessman’s version of NA is distinctly merged with classical grounded theory principles and procedures (for the use of narrative and theory in social work, see also Handel, 1992; Padgett, 1998).

In psychology and psychiatry, objectivist epistemology has been traditionally strong, with the emphasis on generalization, causality, prediction, and the broad applicability of the discovered theory. The presence of a rich theoretical history imposes some degree of theoretical preconception on GT research, and contradicts the individual focus of the narrative method. Psychoanalysis often serves as a benchmark tradition used in many methodological texts to explain other approaches, and as a classic example of bridging the epistemological distinctions. Psychoanalysis, for instance, was represented as a predecessor of narrative analysis (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Wyatt, 1986), in that it is rooted in analyzing and reconstructing personal stories. In this representation, the use of narrative in psychoanalysis is threefold: It may be seen as an initial theory development base (analogue of GT), as an elicitation tool in psychoanalytic assessment, and as a therapeutic instrument. Psychiatrist Valent (1994) drew parallels between the psychoanalytic treatment and the retelling of personal narratives to an interviewer. Valent also reflected on the notion of co-

constructing narratives between the interviewer and the interviewee, as in an interaction event.

The applicability of methods does not always depend on the discipline. In contemporary research, traditional disciplinary epistemologies often merge. For instance, psychologist Freeman (2004) opposed considering narrative work “part of the club” (p. 72), whether it was a disciplinary “club” of psychology or science in general. Historically, the legitimation of both narrative and GT methods within scientific epistemology seems to have occurred in parallel with the merging of interdisciplinary borders.

The interdisciplinary orientation of this study provided an additional argument for the choice of method. The universality of GT approach implies relevance to a wide variety of research situations and disciplinary epistemologies (Glaser, 1992). In combination with GT, the narrative approach is beneficial for an interdisciplinary study, because this approach is universal and does not adhere to any specific type of scientific disciplinary logic. Indeed, “narrative analysis assumes a multitude of theoretical forms, unfolds in a variety of specific analytic practices, and is grounded in diverse disciplines” (Daiute & Lightfoot, p. vii).

Cross-Language and Cross-Cultural Implications

In this study, the primary source of data, namely, the texts of the participants’ interviews, was represented in the Russian language. The participants felt most comfortable with their native language, and it was their choice to be interviewed in Russian. Therefore, this was a cross-language study, in that the data texts were spoken and recorded in the language of monolingual participants that was unknown to the audience (the *source* language, Russian), and research results were presented in the language of the audience (the *target* language, English). The most common, traditional concern related to translation in research is the accuracy and equivalency of information transferred from one language to another – the quality and ethics of translation (e.g., Houbert, 1998; Hunt & Bhopal, 2004). More recently researchers began to analyze the challenges of representation across languages, multiple interpretations, reflexivity, and the integral role of the translator (e.g., Friedrich, 1992; Muula, 2005; Temple & Edwards, 2002).

In this study, the major anticipated challenge of translation was the requirement for cultural sensitivity of cross-language representation and interpretation of participants' meanings. Accurate linguistic translation, even when it is technically perfect, is not sufficient without the cultural and contextual translation, that is the interpretation of multilayered historical and cultural associations that can emerge in the data. These considerations made the function of translation in this study an integral variable of research, rather than a simple technical procedure (Shklarov, 2007; Temple & Edwards, 2002).

Another area of consideration in this study was adjusting translation strategies and procedures to the requirements of the research method. NA, among many other research methods, can provide most effective tools to achieve the objective of bridging between languages and contextual meanings. The GT method also provides adequate means for cross-language research. However, principles and procedures of the GT method, paired with the requirements of adequate narrative language representation by a bilingual researcher, called for an application of some strategies that differed from traditionally understood translation. These strategies included assuming a dual role of a researcher and a translator, intertwining the functions of translation and analysis, using translation-generated categories in the emergent theory, and seeking participants' input (Shklarov, 2009).

The researcher's dual role. Russian is my first language, and therefore I can work with Russian-language data without a mediating interpreter. In this study, I performed both functions: translation and analysis. My dual role as a researcher and a translator rendered the advantage of immersion in two parallel cultural meanings and contextual realities, and bridging the contexts across the borders between the two languages.

In more than ten years of my work with multicultural projects prior to initiating this study, I had extensive experience in oral and written translation in different settings and disciplines, ranging from client information on Holocaust-related claims, to survivors' life stories, and to professional publications in mental health and psychiatry. These experiences have sharpened both my sensitivity to the above issues and my skills necessary for achieving cultural relevancy in translation.

Intertwining translation and analysis. My dual role as a researcher and a translator involved translation techniques that were dictated by the objectives of the study and the nature of the GT method. Traditionally, the original text in the source language is expected to be fully translated and presented in the target language, before the analytical process begins or before the findings can be reported (Glicksman & Van Haitsma, 2002; Temple, 2006). However, the expectation of full, verbatim translation and its separation in time from the analysis did not fit the requirements of my study, first, because I assumed the dual role and performed both functions, and second, because the GT method implies conceptualization at all stages of analysis.

In my study, I noticed that coding and analysis could not be delayed until the full translation was completed; it began as soon as I attempted translation, or even prior to creating the written text. The activities of translation and analysis became intertwined. I transcribed the interviews fully in Russian, and then proceeded with open coding and writing memos in English, without prior full translation of the source texts. I skipped the stage of translating my transcripts verbatim. This technique proved useful, and allowed me to avoid the distortion of the original source-language words before their conceptual meaning became evident through the analysis. I realized that premature language translation could have influenced the consequent coding, and decided to preserve all my raw data in Russian.

In the stages of selective and theoretical coding, I worked with concepts signified by English words, constantly comparing them with the source language data. Thus, the comparison between concepts, data incidents, and emerging theoretical hypotheses occurred and was reiterated across languages, transcending cross-language boundaries. I translated selected excerpts of the interviews into English. This verbatim translation usually occurred at the time of writing memos that were grounded in the particular data excerpts.

Using translation-generated categories in the emergent theory. Generating conceptual theory from empirical data, as a cognitive process, has some similarities with language translation. Both activities are rooted in discovering and conveying conceptual meanings: the former from descriptive data into general patterns and a theory, and the latter – across texts written in two different languages. The direction of translation cannot be presented as a one-way vector. The constant search for a suitable word involves the reiterative comparison between words and textual contexts that flows in both directions to balance the equivalency of meanings between the source and target languages. By analogy, in search for working concepts, the procedures of grounded theory require continuous comparison that is carried out across the data and the emerging concepts.

A given concept is often signified in two languages by words that have similar meanings but bear different subtle nuances and cultural connotations (Hunt & Bhopal, 2004; Tsai et al., 2004; see also Schopenhauer, 1800/1992). These differences have to be captured in the translation. Often it is impossible to express a complex concept in different languages with precise equivalency, and the translator has to settle for the most effective compromise. This process of settling and compromise involves elements of theorizing.

A single word and its context in a participant's utterance can provide data for discovering a significant category or a number of interconnected categories. An analysis of the following incident illustrates my statement. One of my interview partners referred to herself in our conversation as a "victim of the Holocaust." My first reaction was to ask a probing question, "Do you consider yourself a victim?" The interviewee's answer was, "Yes, I am a victim." No further explanations followed, and she continued her story as if uninterrupted, without giving much notice to the issue. I understood that for her, this was not a question worth discussion.

I knew the difference between the cultural connotations of the word *victim* in the two languages, and sensed the potential discrepancy. In English, and in particular in the context of traditional conversations with the Holocaust survivors, the word *victim* bears a somewhat negative, inferior connotation that makes it relatively uncommon in the contemporary vocabulary of western-educated survivors. The connotation relates to the western discourse, in which this word is paired with the word *survivor.* The common victim-survivor dichotomy implies the victorious nature of survivorship, and the triumph of the human spirit over life adversities. Within this binary opposition, *victim* would be the negative polarity, and *survivor* – the positive one (for reference on binary opposition in social contraction and language, see

Gergen, 1999). It is possible that a Holocaust survivor who is used to western listeners would have recognized the prompt in my question ("Do you consider yourself a victim?") and responded to it differently. Conversely, for my research participant, in her language context of a former Soviet citizen and a Russian-speaker, there was no conflict between the two categories. My probing question and the conceptual connection I was trying to imply appeared irrelevant.

The Russian word *victim*, although a precise equivalent of the English word, does not always bear the same contextual nuances. In many contexts it has a somewhat heroic connotation (it also has a meaning of *sacrifice* that is stronger than in English). Conversely, a precise structural and grammatical equivalent of the word *survivor* does not exist in the Russian language. This makes it difficult to find a literal and grammatically accurate translation of the common word combination *Holocaust survivor*. In Russian, one would use such words as *victim*, or *[former] inmate*, or a combination of several words in an awkward grammatical form. Categories that emerged from the analysis of this and other translation incidents sensitized me and concurred with my other data. Analyzing the nuances of these words' meanings had direct relevance to my emerging theory.

This example is an illustration of a number of properties pertaining to the strategy of intertwining the functions of translation and analysis by the bilingual researcher. First, the functions of translation and analysis are inseparable in time and happen simultaneously. Second, constant comparison, which is an essential tool of analysis, takes place across language boundaries, transcending the technical stage of isolated translation. Third, the researcher needs to be sensitive to differences in language meanings and its implications for the emerging theoretical concepts. The analyst takes an active role engaging in the interplay, reiteration between the two activities. And finally, data for conceptual analysis can be collected from the very act of translation, and the differences between meanings or language structures can become a source of important concepts and theoretical categories.

Seeking participants' feedback. Using participants' feedback for fact checking and ensuring the accuracy of translation have been suggested as significant components of research design in the tradition of oral history (Hart, 1995; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1998). This study conformed to these standards and employed these procedures, to maximize the quality of translation and cultural sensitivity of cross-language representation. As such, I provided participants with interview summaries that were back-translated into Russian, for their review and approval. I discussed with the participants the translation of words that signified particularly challenging emergent categories, and invited their input (e.g., the translation of the words *resilience* and *survivor*). I asked them specific questions about the history of words' use in the Soviet Union (e.g., the English word *Holocaust* and the equivalent Russian word *katastropha*).

I made a translation of a summary of the thesis into the Russian language for the participants' information. In response to the translated summary, the participants provided me with substantial positive feedback, commenting on relevancy, fit, and explanatory power of the theoretical concepts expressed in the Russian language.

Ethical Considerations

This research was approved by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board.

Because this research was grounded in studying the Holocaust experiences, its ethical implications can be better understood through reviewing the cultural, historical, and clinical context of interviewing Holocaust survivors.

Giving testimonies and bearing witness was shown to have become a significant part of Holocaust survivors' resiliency resources (Giberovich, 1995; Greene, 2002; Malach, 2001). Within the Jewish community there has been a long tradition of documenting the Holocaust survivors' life stories, and a commitment to bearing witness and preserving the historical truth of Nazi victims' suffering and survival. Many community traditions involve bearing witness, for example, the Calgary Holocaust Education Symposium which celebrated its 25th anniversary this year. In this event, co-sponsored by the Mount Royal College and Public and Catholic School Boards, Holocaust survivors in Calgary share their memories with high school students. The event involves up to 2,400 students annually, with the educational purpose of better understanding of the human impact of the Holocaust, and promoting anti-racism and tolerance in the young generation. Holocaust survivors who chose to give their testimonials have reported that they saw these experiences as painful but also rewarding by way of making a difference in the minds of young people. Clinical studies have also shown that narrative approach to working with aging Holocaust survivors can have salient effect by involving and enhancing their capacity to cope with their memories (Barron and Climans, 2001; David, 2000).

I contacted the Oral History Department of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, with a request for consultation on ethical considerations of interviewing the Holocaust survivors. Although there are major differences between oral history and social sciences research regarding the ethical considerations of these two areas, the concern about protecting the rights of Holocaust survivors remains universal.

Expected benefits and risks for the participants. With respect to the ethical principle of minimizing any possible risk for research participants, it is important to note that the single anticipated source of possible risk factors in this study was associated with the participants' revisiting their traumatic memories, which had a potential for causing emotional distress. None of the feared adverse effects occurred in this research.

The participants in this study have lived with their traumatic memories throughout their lives. Many of them also have learned how to cope with their posttraumatic symptoms. However, some never have addressed these memories outside their close boundaries and beyond their families or close friends. In these cases, the relevant potential risk of the interviews was expected to be associated with the distress of recalling traumatic events of the past, which was described in literature as the "stress of divulging" (Green Cross Foundation, 2001). Revisiting the past may cause emotional discomfort, which the researcher has to be aware about, and make provisions for minimizing the risk. On the positive side, addressing memories of the past in a safe environment, such as in communication with an experienced professional, may help the respondents find the continuity and meaning, and reduce their risk of posttraumatic consequences in the future (Aarts and Op den Velde, 1996; Bar-Tur and Levy-Shiff, 1994; Danieli, 1999).

Safeguarding factors against the possible risks were built in the initial purpose of the study and its regular techniques and procedures (see Appendix B for a complete list of safeguard strategies). The study did not focus on the clinical examination of the participants' posttraumatic symptoms, but rather intended to explore their life stories as a whole, with the intentional emphasis on the sources of their resilience and strengths. Another key ethical aspect of the interviews involved providing the participants with a benefit of an opportunity to tell their stories and express their voice, often after many years of silence. Appendices C and D present the Informed Consent Form and the recruitment letter. All the documentation was translated into Russian, and potential participants were provided with both English and Russian versions of each document.

Confidentiality and privacy. This study gave the participants choice over their degree of self-disclosure and personal identification. At the time of the discussion prior to signing the Consent Form, the participants could voice their preferences. The participants' right for privacy was respected by providing them with an informed choice of whether they wish to disclose their personal identity in the reporting documentation and published results, or remain anonymous. Individual interview summaries were reviewed and confirmed with the participants prior to publication.

It was also expected that the desired degree of disclosure might vary individually. Indeed, although I recommended anonymity, some participants wished to be identified by their name. Three participants chose pseudonyms and wanted to remain anonymous, and six others asked to use their names. I suggested disclosing first names (including the chosen pseudonyms) and omitting last names in this publication, which met the participants' approval.

Participation in the study was voluntary. The participants were informed that they could choose to withdraw at any stage of the interview process, in which case the incomplete materials from their interviews would be destroyed, and would not be used for the study. None of the participants decided to withdraw.

Outcome of safeguarding procedures: No adverse reactions. In this study, none of the feared adverse effects occurred as a result of the interviews. There were no incidents of significant deterioration of symptoms or identified need for psychotherapy as a consequence of interviewing.

It is noteworthy that at the time of my follow-up calls, some of the participants reported mild reactions to the distress of revisiting their memories. Such reactions involved mild deterioration of some symptoms, with which the seniors were routinely coping in their regular life, such as sleep disturbances, increased intrusive thoughts, or anxiety. These reactions never lasted for more than three days, subsiding spontaneously. No new symptoms were reported. The seniors openly discussed their feelings with me, accepted my reassurance, and explained these effects as a natural part of their voluntary effort of reviewing their life. None of the participants felt the need for professional counselling, which was suggested to them free of charge.

Most participants expressed the sense of satisfaction with the interview process. They welcomed my follow up visits, expressed their gratitude for Russian-language written summaries of their stories, and willingly responded to my subsequent additional inquiries seeking their feedback and approval. In return, I expressed my gratitude to them and great appreciation of their participation in my study.

On a few occasions, the interview contact was instrumental in identifying a senior's need for outreach support or instrumental assistance, which was irrelevant to the intended content of our conversations. In such cases, I encouraged the participants to approach Jewish Family Service Calgary, and a number of seniors accessed the services.

Research Design, Techniques, and Procedures

Research design implies constructing research strategies, techniques, and procedures according to the chosen methodological paradigm and established tradition within the chosen method. In this study, the research design adhered to the classical version of the GT method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Glaser, 1992). From the narrative tradition, I adopted the notion of using of a story as a unit of analysis (Leiblich et al., 1998; Riessman, 1993). I also employed some technical elements and terminology of narrative analysis as practical tools within the traditional GT procedures of coding, writing memos, and theorizing. The procedures of sampling, participant recruiting, and data collection and analysis followed the principles of classical GT research.

The Sample and Data Sources

Sample size, sampling strategies, and inclusion criteria. This study was primarily based on data obtained from Russian-speaking Holocaust survivors who were children or young adults at the time of the Holocaust. I used broad inclusion criteria for potential participants, and these criteria changed from the initial steps of data collection to later stages informed by emerging analysis and theoretical coding.

Initial sampling was based on the criteria defined by the general area of study and research question, namely, I recruited Russian-speaking Holocaust survivors who were émigrés from the FSU, were born on or after 1925 (the age criterion: 16 or younger at the time of their persecution), and arrived in Canada within the last 20 years. No other criteria were considered (e.g., my choice of participants was not based on their gender, education level, severity of their Holocaust experiences, or former place of residence in the Soviet Union).

In the beginning of the study, the sampling was the one of convenience. I recruited people whom I knew in the community. Further into the study, I occasionally used the snowballing technique and selective sampling, as I already knew what properties I was looking for. As the analysis progressed, and because of the need to develop emerging conceptual categories, I used theoretical sampling: the procedure of choosing the sample on the basis of previous conceptualizations. At this stage, I extended the criteria to include three survivors who were not immigrants but still lived in Russia, and two survivors who were slightly older than the rest of the sample (born in 1923, they were 17 at the beginning of the war). According to Glaser (1978), the emerging need for exploration and comparison of particular variables in research justifies extending the criteria for sampling. By Glaser's words, *"Apparent non-comparability is irrelevant, if the variable to be compared has a value in each group.* Comparing on the basis of properties of groups has the purpose of generating theory" (p. 42). As we shall see, the inclusion of participants with slightly different characteristics enriched the theory with additional properties of central categories.

The study involved nine participants. The number of participants was defined by the emerging analysis. Initially, it was unknown how many participants would be needed to arrive at the stage of saturation (Glaser, 1967; McCracken, 1988). I continued recruiting interviewees until, for the purposes of the study, there was no more need for new participants.

Participants. The characteristics of the nine participants in this study were diverse in many categories. The characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Study Participants at a Glance

Name	Age in 1941	Current family status	Dates of interviews	Career	Holocaust experience	Current residence
Liza	14	widowed	2006, 2007	accountant	ghetto	Calgary
Fira	11	married	2007, 2008	teacher	ghetto	Calgary
Lydia	11	widowed	2006, 2007	physician	hiding	Moscow
Vera	12	widowed	2007, 2008	engineer	evacuation	Calgary
Leib	7	married	2005	engineer	evacuation	Calgary

Maya	10	married	2005, 2006	physician	evacuation	Moscow
Abram	17	married	2005, 2006	engineer	Soviet Army	Moscow
Alexander	15	married	2008	engineer	evacuation	Calgary
Hanna	17	widowed	2008	salesperson	evacuation	Calgary

Sampling from multiple sources of data: Triangulation. The emergent significance of social, historical, and cultural contexts for understanding individual trauma prompted me to refer to additional data sources that could provide relevant knowledge about the participants' life-long social environments. My search for these collateral contextual data, which is a form of selective sampling, began after I analysed my first interviews and discovered the relevance of contextual historical categories. This search continued throughout all further stages of my study.

Consequentially, in addition to my primary data sources, namely participants' interviews, I collected data from literature, including historical, sociological, Russian fictional and autobiographical literature, and current Russian-language media. I also included data emerging from "experiential incidents" (Glaser, 1978, p. 51) that were represented by personal experiences, observations in the community, and relevant stories from my informal informants: survivors whom I met in conferences and in the community, my present and former senior clients, friends, and colleagues. In these cases, I considered the data for comparison and as sources of abstract concepts, and therefore did not use any identifying information. In summary, my collateral data included the following three types of sources:

1. Contextual literature data obtained from historical, sociological, and political studies literature and from media.
2. Life story data obtained from informants other than my primary participants, for example, stories publicly told by Holocaust survivors in conferences or in the community gatherings. This also included autobiographical books by Holocaust survivors (often together with personal conversations with the authors).
3. Data from "experiential incidents" (with no identifying information disclosed). This included observations in the community, stories told by my former clients, observations of interaction between survivors, conversations with colleagues, and my personal experiences and memories.

I present the findings from the first cluster of data (contextual and historical sources) in Chapter Two. However, many categories of my theoretical analysis were grounded in comparisons between the findings from my primary participants' interviews and the data from all other sources: the technique often defined as one of the forms of triangulation (Creswell, 1998; Speziale Streubert & Carpenter, 2003). Triangulation is a term relatively uncommon for the GT method, but it approximates Glaser's (1978) notion of "outside comparisons" (p. 50) – sampling outside the initially defined substantive area, at the stage of theoretical sampling, after the basic problem in the emerging theory has been discovered. Outside comparisons are necessary for a broader development of emerging theoretical concepts and their integration within the theory.

Interviewing my parents. In the initial stages of my research it became apparent that my exploration often evolved around ideas and questions that kept emerging from the pre-acquired, pre-existing memory data that originated from my family past. Therefore, I felt that my research would be incomplete without analysing these data. I understood that I had to explore the life histories of two survivors whose stories I seemed to have always known – my parents. My parents' life stories also had been, for a certain part, a reason for my choice of research area. My routine, ever existing knowledge about the events of my parents' lives and the ways they used to tell (or not to tell) about them demanded my analysis. These were pieces of raw data which had been naturally given to me, and I could not move forward without having analyzed them. I requested an approval from my ethics committee, and continued with the routine informed consent procedure with my parents.

Interviewing my parents was my means of grounding the flood of emergent concepts that originated from my own life experiences – the data that were impossible to disregard, but that required additional, rigorous exploration. I intended to explore my parents' current narratives, which could reflect the meanings that they attribute to their past. I wanted to ask about the recent chapters of their lives. Having interviewed my parents and analyzed the resulting data, I was able to integrate my knowledge with the emergent theoretical conceptualizations.

My parents never emigrated and live in Moscow now. Thus, my initial focus on recent immigrants in Canada became enriched with the exploration of the context in which non-immigrants retell their stories. From these new data, the need emerged for a comparison of additional categories associated with the current context of residence – Russia or Canada. Later I added another participant who lives in Moscow, and this gave me an opportunity to compare the narratives of participants on both sides of the Atlantic, and better comprehend the meaning and impact of immigration and recent exposure (or non-exposure) to the Western context.

Recruitment Procedures

Potential participants were selected from a group of seniors connected to Jewish Family Service Calgary (JFSC), as it had been discussed with the agency. Many survivors knew me as their former outreach worker. Thus, I had access to potential participants through my connections at JFSC and in the community.

Selected individuals received a brief written recruitment notice (Appendix D), supported by a JFSC letter. The purpose of the recruitment notice was to give the prospective participants initial information about the study, and if they became interested, invite them to meet and discuss the details of their participation. With the individuals who expressed their interest, I scheduled a meeting to discuss their voluntary decision whether to take part in the research. In this meeting, I presented the participants with the Consent Form. We read the Consent Form together with the participants in our one-on-one meetings, and I answered all their emerging questions. After the initial meeting, I gave the survivors one to two weeks to make their decision and sign the form. At that time, I was available for phone calls, should the potential participants have any clarifying questions in the process of their decision making.

The recruitment notice was sent to seven survivors in Calgary. Five of them accepted the offer, and two rejected saying that it was too difficult for them to return to their memories. One additional survivor contacted me after seeing my name and brief information in the Jewish community newspaper. For three survivors whom I interviewed in Moscow, I did not use the recruitment notice, but approached them personally. I went with them through the same informed consent procedure.

Data Collection Procedures

Interview schedule. Gathering data from each participant included at least three meetings. First two meetings, with an interval of at least a month, were spent in in-depth interview conversations, with the analysis of each first interview occurring prior to initiating the next one. Approximately two months after the second interview, I presented each participant with a summary of his or her story based on our conversations, for their review and approval. This procedure routinely took an additional, third meeting, which usually yielded additional data. Each interview meeting was planned to last for up to two hours, but occasionally spontaneously extended to a slightly longer time (up to 150 minutes), by the participants' choice and by the natural course of the conversations.

Research participants were interviewed consecutively. I began the study by selecting one individual in Calgary. After analyzing and summarizing the first participant's responses, I selected the second interviewee, and conducted and analyzed two interviews with her. I repeated this interview cycle with the other participants. With the participants who live in Russia, the time interval between the interviews was approximately a year, which was the time between my visits to Moscow. I provided them with interview summaries via e-mail, and discussed it with them over the phone. The analysis of each of the consecutive interview cycles rendered data and ideas that guided my choice of selecting the next participant. I often contacted previously interviewed survivors for brief additional conversations, to discuss and check some of my emerging ideas. In the case of two married couples who participated in my study, there were a few occasions when both spouses participated together in such additional conversations.

I offered the participants choice over the language, and they all chose to be interviewed in Russian. All participants but one chose to be interviewed at their homes, and one participant asked to meet with me at the Jewish Family Service office. Participants were given full control over the degree of their participation and the pacing of the interviews. I routinely contacted the participants on the phone on the following day after each interview, to offer reassurance, emotional support, and to assess their distress levels.

The interviews were audio recorded using a digital voice recorder and saved in computer files. I transcribed them verbatim in Russian.

Interviewing strategies. No structured interview protocols or specific questions were prepared ahead of time. Consistent to the GT method, specific questions were supposed to emerge throughout data collection and analysis. Such an approach was expected to provide the freedom of “being sensitive to grounded problems of the area and their resolutions” (Glaser, 1992, p. 22). The method calls for careful consideration in the choice of direct interview questions. Glaser warned against counterproductive preconceptions that may occur as a result of premature, forced questions that are too specific for the given research stage. These principles are consistent with the interviewing techniques common in narrative tradition (Leiblich et al., 1998; Riessman, 1993).

The interview conversations were informal, unstructured, and their direction was determined by the participants, rather than by any pre-composed plan. I began the interviews by explaining the general purpose of my research. After my brief introduction, the participant’s stories followed almost without my interference. In fact, the interviewees’ first responses were so intense and spontaneous that the interviews neither required, nor allowed many concrete interfering questions on my part. The first interview responses naturally took a form of an autobiography, as almost unbroken monologues. I accepted this autobiographical turn with no hesitation, realizing that my main objective was to discover what was important for the respondents, and to explore the meanings they attributed to the events of their lives.

My submitting to the informants' choice of direction and themes proved to be fecund and yielded dense data. Second and other consecutive interviews were also unstructured and open, while guided by specific open-ended questions developed on the basis of the analysis of the first interview with the particular participant, and by the general direction of ideas in the research process with other interviewees.

Observation and field notes. I used field notes and observation journaling for recording data collected from sources other than participant interviews. As such, I recorded my observations during interviews and follow-up phone conversations with my study's participants, and some conversations with Holocaust survivors in conferences that I attended. I also recorded some observations in relevant community events, for example, survivors' presentations or their interactions with community members in Holocaust commemoration gatherings. On a few occasions, I made notes from conversations with my colleagues, in which we discussed relevant matters, such as Russian-speaking immigrants' inclusion in our community.

Extended time of data collection. Initially, I planned that data gathering from each participant would involve two to three one-on-one interviews of up to two hours duration. However, I was fortunate to extend my conversations with the survivors I got to know, by their choice. Greenspan (1998) noted that repeated conversations with Holocaust survivors, which he called "later conversations" (p. xvi), enable the listener to learn things that can be obscured otherwise. Although I knew this from having read Greenspan's book *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors,* it was only after the interviews with my study participants that I discovered the significance of later conversations, often with substantial time intervals between them, for the understanding of the survivors' realities.

I met with most of the study's participants several times beyond the initially planned two or three interviews. Some of them phoned me following our meetings, and we continued our conversations on the phone. Many interviewees requested additional meetings, and I had an opportunity to listen to them again. I recorded the data from these extended interviews as notes. I began my first interviews in August 2005, and it was July 2008 when I finished my data collection.

Data Analysis Procedures

A major strategy emphasized in GT approach is constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In accordance with the logic of the GT method, I began my data analysis with open coding, analyzing the transcribed texts of the interviewed and field notes line by line, and constantly comparing the incidents pertaining to each emerging category. As the concepts of different levels of abstraction began to emerge, I compared them with each other and the data incidents, making preliminary theoretical connections, and recording the emerging ideas in memos. Open codes proliferated fast, and I continued the comparison, trying to make connections between the emerging categories. I grouped the substantive codes together, according to their relevance to each other.

The process of developing grounded theory requires integrating the processes of data collection, coding in different levels of conceptualization, memo writing, and theoretical analysis. As is common in the GT method, all these activities in my analysis were intertwined and overlapped in time. I paralleled the processes of data collection, data analysis, and constantly compared the emerging categories with previously discovered categories and new empirical incidents. As the theoretical connections began to emerge between the substantive codes, I recorded and stored the theoretical categories. In the GT method, theoretical codes conceptualize the hypothetical connections between the substantive categories and their properties, with the subsequent integration of the hypotheses into a theory.

I completed the analysis through working across languages and intertwined the activities of translation and analysis. As a technical tool for storing, sorting and working through the data, emerging codes, and memos, I used NVivo7 computer program. The program served me exclusively as a technical instrument: as an efficient replacement for pen, paper, and sticky notes. I did not utilize the program's automatic coding or sorting options, but completed these functions manually, as in the classical GT method. NVivo7 can work in many languages, so I had an opportunity to analyze texts in both source and target languages simultaneously.

In accordance with the NA techniques, I used a story as a unit of analysis. Participants' narratives could be naturally divided into logically structured sets of complete, separate, and interconnected stories about their lives' events. The stories had clear temporal structure, so that each of them could be distinguished in the transcript by its beginning and end. Smaller storied units were interrelated within larger narratives, connected with each other through common meanings, characters, emotion, and images. In the narrative tradition, a story is symbolically divided into a number of functional components: an abstract, orientation, complicating action, resolution, and evaluation (Riessman, 1993). Analysing the narratives by its components sharpens theoretical sensitivity for conceptualizing the underlying meanings, which can be expressed in both content and format of the stories. I paid attention to the participants' language, tone, imagery, and structure of their stories.

It took me a considerable time until the core variable (core category) emerged, and I could begin to code selectively for the core variable and its properties. I continued to code selectively until the analysis led to theoretical saturation, which is achieving the stage when no new conceptual information emerges from the analysis of any new data. At that time, the core category and all other relevant categories were sufficiently developed, with the ideas recorded in memos. The final stages included sorting the memos and writing up the theory.

Narrative Terms and Constructs

The choice of narrative approach for this study, as a sensitizing metaphor, defined the use of the language in which I expressed the emerging concepts. In the subsequent sections I operate with terms and constructs adopted from the tradition of narrative analysis, which I define as follows.

Narrative. The word *narrative* originated from the Latin *narratio* (noun: narration, story) and *narrare* (verb: to tell, to narrate). It is also related to the Latin word *gnarus* (adjective: knowing, skilled). The Greek noun *gnosis* originated from the same Indo-European root *gno-,* "to know." Literally, narrative means *a story* that is a unit of speech that has a beginning, middle, and an end; the story exists in time. The story is told in a sequence of events, in which events are tied to each other with logical connections, so that the story has a meaning. The meaning can be expressed through both the content and format of the story. By telling stories to others and to ourselves, we make sense of the world and our lives – we use narratives to create and convey meanings.

Plot is the meaning-bearing structure of a story. Through the storyteller's plotting the story, the infinitive factual chain of events is intentionally transformed into the meaningful, purposefully structured sequence. Events plotted are logically linked to each other and ruled by causal or other meaning-making relationships. These relationships give the simple facts specific meanings, which the storyteller intends to convey.

Script is the characteristic, value-ridden, and recognizable pattern that reiterates in many similar story units. Script makes the particular story relate to other similar stories. In other words, the concept of script can be understood as *a theory* – a common pattern that can explain many stories recounted by the same or different storytellers. Scripts often dominate over many narratives. Once discovered, the script of the particular story can explain the story's origins, its connections with other story units, and the forces that had brought the story to life and made it coherent.

For the purposes of this study, I also define personal script as a recurrent individual pattern of meaning making and behaviour, which emerges from a particular person's narrative. Through conveying the characteristic patterns of meaning making and action, personal scripts speak about one's identity (McAdams, 1988, 1993). Scripts are constructed, reconstructed, and repeatedly enacted by people throughout their lives. There can be both continuity and change within script patterns during one's life.

Storylines are units of the narrative, or narrative threads that relate to particular experiences or actors (characters). Various storylines represent multiple portions of the story, told relatively separately, but interrelated and joined together in the entire narrative. Storylines can be interrelated through a common script. In this case, a storyteller can plot entire *chains* of storylines that signify a common script, colored by a variety of contexts and actors.

Motif. In narrative theory, *motifs* are recurring images, structures, or statements, which are used by the storyteller to convey the meaning of the story. Motifs can be also used as key symbols that serve to connect different parts of a story with each other.

Leitmotif is a leading motif that appears routinely in the story, symbolizing an important, central meaning. Leitmotif, as a key element of a story, often serves as a symbol that conveys the dominant meaning without lengthy evaluative statements, but rather through referring to a familiar image, object, or emotion. The reappearance of the leitmotif throughout a story can represent its continuity and coherence by making connections between different storylines.

Social discourses. In semantics, discourses mean linguistic units, or conversations. In social sciences, a social discourse is a coherent way of making sense of the world, which is adopted, or institutionalized, by a large social group or society. Social discourses affect the personal world outlook of the society's members, through influencing their views on their life events and through scripts that are often "prescribed" to people. In other words, for an individual it is not possible to escape the influence of a social discourse.

Collective narratives. Collective narratives are narrative scripts that are created and lived by a group of people with a shared history and common sense of identity. In collective narratives, the entire group can be a symbolic protagonist, or agent of the story. Individuals in the group can construct their personal stories as a symbolic part of the collective narrative; they identify with collective narratives of their group (a phenomenon associated with the relationship between personal and group identity). Analyzing individual scripts can reveal the underlying larger collective narratives, historical patterns, and purposes that influence the individual story making. Collective narratives originate from and are influenced by the group's collective identity and, in turn, serve to shape, stabilise, or transform the collective identity of the group and, consequently, the identities of its individual members.

Adding Narrative Family of Theoretical Codes

Glaser (1978), in his seminal book *Theoretical Sensitivity,* identified 18 families of theoretical codes. Examples of the families are the six C's family (contexts, causes, conditions, consequences, covariance, and contingencies), processes, degrees, temporal ordering, dimensions, strategy family, identity-self family, and mainline family (e.g., social control, recruitment, and socialization). According to Glaser's concept of theoretical coding, the process of discovering a theory implies the use of existing "coding families," or clusters of theoretical codes, which can be employed and combined by the theorist, as they emerge from the data.

The family of narrative categories is not listed in the basic classification of theoretical codes, but Glaser (1978) invited grounded theorists to think of "more theoretical coding families" (p. 82), as the new codes arrive and emerge from other fields of knowledge, and as long as the chosen codes are relevant. Following this recommendation and the "emergent fit" (p. 7-8) in my study, I conceptualized my theory through the use of a cluster of relevant theoretical constructs from the tradition of narrative analysis. In this study, I used many of the classical theoretical categories suggested by Glaser, and in addition, constructs and terms adopted from the narrative tradition. I applied the emerging narrative theory constructs as a family of theoretical codes that conceptualized the hypotheses integrated into my theory.

Summary

This study involved the accommodation of several complex conditions of the research situation: the choice of a largely unexplored area of inquiry, the interdisciplinary area of research, the implications of cross-language and cross-cultural analysis, and the ethical considerations. Considering these conditions, the goals of this study were twofold: to develop the theoretical, interdisciplinary understanding of the processes under study, and to capture the specific historical, cultural, and individual context of the distinct micro-culture of Soviet child survivors. In designing and completing this research, I adhered to the essential principles of the GT method and applied the techniques, language, and the emergent theoretical codes borrowed from the NA tradition. The choice of the combination of the GT and NA methods corresponded with the complexity of the area of inquiry and the nature of the posed research question.

CHAPTER FIVE

PERSONAL ANCHOR SCRIPTS IN NARRATIVES OF RESILIENCE

> Storytelling reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it. (Arendt, 1968, p. 105)

> Life stories, mariners know, are where we build a ship and a harbor at the same time, and complete the harbor long after the ship has gone down. How, then, to keep/stop narrating? (Newton, 1995, p. x)

In this chapter I introduce the narrative analysis of life stories recounted by the study's nine participants. The results of this analysis are presented in nine conceptual summaries outlining the most significant patterns that emerged from the participants' narratives. Each individual pattern is presented as the storyteller's major personal scripts. I begin with reviewing the individual narratives and continue with the abstract conceptual conclusions derived from the comparative analysis of all nine accounts.

One of my study participants, Liza, defined some of her most explanatory utterances as her "theory." Although she was, in fact, joking at that moment, her words metaphorically referred to our joint efforts (not only with Liza, but also with the others) to make sense of life events, explain the experiences, and conceptualize the core meanings of individual survival and adjustment – all of which a theory would do. Not all of my informants were as articulate as Liza in naming their explanations as theory, although I heard other similar words from them, such as *postulate, credo,* and *talisman.* Through recounting their life stories, each of the narrators appeared to have constructed a rich explanatory picture of their ability to cope and achieve fulfillment in their lives. In my analysis, I aimed at capturing these explanatory scripts and formulating the survivors' emerging self-theories.

This presentation is not a set of the participants' biographical facts. (Their factual, chronological stories are presented in Appendix A.) Neither is it an attempt to fully describe the survivors' complex storylines. I did not aim at constructing an exact personal portrait of each survivor, because depicting their individual characteristics was unnecessary for the purposes of this study. The focal point of this analysis was creating conceptually coherent excerpts from their multiple storylines. The goal was to capture a quintessence of interrelated scripts that appeared central in each of the life stories.

Anchor Scripts

Beyond recalling extraordinary tragic events, severe deprivations, and general hardships, the survivors told stories about other events, values, and relationships that they directly or indirectly associated with their survival, healing, and fulfillment. These positive components were woven into a variety of plot lines and significant images that, in the first listening, seemed to be related to suffering and trauma. In each participant's narrative, the stories about actions supporting survival, coping, and fulfillment formed into recurrent patterns, which I called the survivors' personal scripts. These recognizable scripts reappeared many times in each of the participants' narratives, both as a foundation of individual action and as a personal way of explaining the meaning of life events.

Both aspects of script creation – the patterns of action and the ways of meaning making – related to the narrative construction of the individual identity of the storyteller. The most significant personal scripts were used by the narrators to construct and explain the essence of who they are. These scripts were presented as part of one's personal identity.

The major scripts that emerged in the interviews signified the strategies of overcoming trauma and hardships. These strategies were created and preserved by the survivors and their loved ones in the face of life atrocities. I named these particularly meaningful, salutary, and identity-defining individual scripts *anchor scripts:* the patterns of behaviour and meaning-making that were used by the narrator to stay afloat, find the meaning, and keep stable in the face of life turmoil. *Anchor scripts* are self-constructed, richly developed, and well integrated narratives that define the personal identity of the storyteller through meaningful realities other than trauma. Creating, developing, and reenacting the anchor scripts represent personal strategies of resilience.

In the narratives of this study's participants, anchor scripts appeared to shape a space of safe refuge and meaningful purpose within their identity. In each of the survivor's narratives, this secure and positive part of their identity prevailed over the significant aspect of the self that was affected by the experiences of trauma, loss, and stigma. As we shall see from the survivors' stories, their ability to richly construct and reenact the scripts of resilience enabled them, at various stages of their lives, to face, accept, and make sense of their recurring traumatic memories.

Individual Anchor Scripts

The limitations of an attempt to represent the survivors' voices through schematic conceptual accounts are evident: Generalization presumes a certain level of reduction. The intent to dissect the naturally flowing conversations of many hours inevitably leaves out the individual flavour of the participants' speech and details of their plots. However, despite the confines of space and abstraction, this analysis aimed at bringing forward the peculiar individual voices of the survivors. The approval of my writings by the storytellers gave me confirmation and reassurance.

Liza: "I did not take it into my soul"

I met Liza long before I initiated my research, through my community work. She is a radiant and confident personality, known for the ability to raise people's spirits. Liza was born in Ukraine, and during the war she was in a ghetto in Transnistria. Liza's parents were murdered, and she survived in the ghetto alone. Her older brother survived separately, and they reunited after liberation, when Liza was 16.

"I am a very fortunate person, and I have lived a very happy life." These were the first words I heard from Liza in response to my request for an interview. According to Liza's self-definition, she possesses some kind of "inner strength" which has always helped her keep her head above water, even in her darkest times. The nature of this strength became clearer as her stories evolved.

Liza, an eloquent narrator, metaphorically referred to the key theoretical concept that also emerged in many other narratives: "I did not take it into my soul." This formula is an agency statement. It can be understood only through the lens of pain that is apparent in her stories. Her soul is soaked with mourning and longing for her murdered parents and others she lost. Her stories and her tears speak of grief about the lost world of her childhood, the love of her parents, and her early unfulfilled dreams. However, she deliberately constructs meaningful scripts that define her identity (her soul) by actions and meanings other than trauma; she is determined not to let the trauma define her soul. Liza's script speaks to the intentional cultivating of her adopted attitudes of hope, love, honesty, and personal independence.

Liza noted that her key to happiness was in hard work, in which she managed to bury her grief and sorrow. This universal and simple strategy, in trauma theory, is often associated with suppression or denial, but in Liza's stories it transcends the pain to find meaning in honest work to make a difference in the world: "The reason that I am happy is that I always tried to help someone, wherever possible" (Liza Jan 27, 2006 part 2, 342-343). This script is rooted in her vivid memories of loss and her first lessons of recovery. Here is Liza's earliest story of recovery, after she reunited with her older brother:

> But they did not pity me. This is a very important factor. [My brother and his family] did not make a victim out of me, they did not pity me. It never happened that they gave me a better piece because I needed to get better – no, I ate like everybody else and worked like everybody else. … I believe that this is a very healthy factor; if they had pitied me, I would get withdrawn into my misery, but this way I was always busy, I was always doing something, and I felt that I too had a responsibility for something in this family. This is a very positive factor – people should never be pitied. …
>
> Well, of course, you can imagine how they received me, how many tears and how much sorrow we shared. But after that, my brother said, 'This was the fate.' I was terribly hurt: how come, we were together [with my parents], and together we went through these times, and suddenly just a few months [before liberation] such a terrible thing happened and my parents perished. And my brother said, 'Each person has their own fate. You have to understand that this was your fate, this was inevitable. So it happened, and that's it. So stop thinking and stop crying, you are a big girl, you will work and\you will study. You have to live and become a decent human being. If you are able to help other people – you do it all your life.' And so it was in my family. [Another story followed about her son supporting his friends in need]. (Liza Feb 7, 2006 part 1, 222-228, 241-247, 253-270)

The brother's line of "stop thinking and stop crying" was preceded by the shared tears, acknowledged pain, and expressed sorrow. Liza's story of trauma was voiced and could be heard. At the same time, the three components of her major anchor scripts were born and started developing: the retreating to hard work (and independence), the value of helping others, and finding meaning in being embraced, accepted, and loved by people of her kin.

The script of finding meaning in being embraced, accepted, and loved by people of her kin runs through her entire story. Liza was fortunate to be surrounded by people who shared her pain and her values. The earliest episode of being embraced and rescued followed Liza's parents' death, when Liza ("a lost soul in the ghetto") survived thanks to another Jewish family who took her in. In a later turning point of Liza's life story, she became embraced by yet another significant Jewish connection through the family of her husband. Liza's mother-in-law (the second wife of her husband's father) was the only survivor from her family; she had lost three children in the Holocaust. The following story is an intense account of Liza's finding love and refuge within a shared identity, intertwined with a common painful history:

> When we first met [with my mother-in-law], I came in, and she embraced me, and we wept together for half a day, we could not say a word, and she says, 'You are my daughter, [long lost and] found' (crying, pause). She had a girl like me [killed by the Nazis]. (Liza Feb 22, 2008 part 1, 706-716)
> And then I got into this family ... Mother – she was so kind, she dressed me, she accepted me ... but she died very young ... And she gave me a platinum ring with a diamond; I still have it today – I gave away everything I had, but this ring I kept and treasured, for good luck. (Liza Feb 22, 2008, Part 1, 585-620)

Discovering the meaning of kinship unity defined her ways of coping with her loss in the Holocaust, and also gave her an anchor in the times of post-war oppression:

> The thing is that when after the war I started to work, then – God forbid – nobody knew that I was in the ghetto and all that had happened, because at that time nobody disclosed it ... We never talked about it ... But we used to – you know – kind of on the sly, on the sly... My family was better off than the family that took me in [in the ghetto, after my parents were killed]. We helped them always, all my life; because their mother was alone with four children, and they had no luck ... had very hard time. (Liza Feb 22, 2008 telephone, 22-56)

Another major script of Liza's narratives is an unconditional gratitude to life and fate, with the ability to tenaciously hold on to what fate can provide. The account of Liza's meeting the love of her life, her husband Yakov, spells out this script: "I found him by chance, in taiga." The serendipity of this encounter was stunning. Yakov grew up in the same place where Liza was in the ghetto, but by mere chance they met after the war in Russia's Far East. He saw Liza in her town, when he happened to pass by in the forest where she was working with a group of girls:

> [Yakov] said, 'When I saw your eyes, I understood [it was my fate]." Imagine, first, Jewish eyes are always sorrowful, and in addition, after such life… He said,

> ‘I died when I saw this little girl.’ I was short and skinny and looked exhausted. And after this encounter [Yakov] left, and there was a train crash, and he was [injured] and taken into a hospital, and he was in hospital for a whole year. And he did not know my address or my last name or anything, but he said, ‘All that time your eyes stood in front of me.’ And as soon as he was discharged, he came to our town and started searching for me. He knew I was with the girls who came from the food factory, and that my name was Liza – nothing else. So he called the food factory and said, ‘There is a girl working there, her name is Liza, she is small and dark.’ (Liza Feb 7, 2006 part 1, 196-216)

Her soul still hurts today with the returning memories and mourning for her husband, who never reached his dream of “living in a free country.” Now, at the age of 82, Liza continues to use many of the same anchor scripts she constructed when she was a child. She applies them almost religiously to her everyday life struggles, such as fighting arthritis pain or adjusting to the challenges of immigration. Liza’s meaning-making skills are not embodied in religious rituals, but she believes in the spiritual roots of her resilience. Here is Liza’s improvised “theory” that she shared with me in one of our latest conversations:

> I cannot be angry with God. I don’t know what his name is, but I can only be grateful to him. I never ask anything from God, I only thank him because he always sees what I need. Everyone has their own theory (laughs). (Liza Feb 22, 2008 part 3, 113-117)
>
> But I do believe in something. There is something that leads me through my life, and I don’t know what it is – maybe it is called fate, maybe it is called God, or it is called something else – I don’t know. But something leads me through my life, and I always try to do good things for people, whenever I can. (Liza Feb 22, 2008 part 1, 953-969)

Fira: “We survived to tell the others what we went through”

Fira, a professional educator and exceptional storyteller, was recommended to me as a study participant by a colleague. Fira was 11 when, together with her family, she was forced into death marches, Transnistrian ghettos, selections, and witnessing mass executions. The stories that Fira shared with me were complex and multifaceted, but her strongest anchor script is rooted in her assumed mission to pass on to people the memories of the past. She assumes the obligation of *a keeper:* the person who must preserve and cherish the memories and lessons of the past, along with the knowledge about the communal values that gave her people the strength to survive and cope. The keeper saves these memories and meanings from oblivion and shares them with others, when they are ready to listen. It was her father, himself a keeper, with whom Fira associates the initiation of this script:

> Survive and tell! As father always used to say, we survived to tell people … so they will believe it in the future … we meant the Jews, because we [Jews] had not believed that this could happen in the 20th century, that they would kill people like this, we had not believed! (S. And did your father manage to tell?) He used to tell a lot to the Jews in our town. If we met with the Jews who had not been there [in the ghetto], who had not suffered, he told them about it. It was mostly Jews, they were closer to us. We did not just simply go and retell. People used to come to my father and ask, 'Have you heard about [this person]? Have you run across such and such?' And he told them, and he told them what we went through. (Fira September 7, 2007, 304-330, 349-352).

In her father's belief, the source and the motivation for his keeper's obligation followed his family's survival due to divine intervention. The mission to keep and share the message supplied him with both the strength to survive and the task to fulfill.

The message of the keeper carried many purposes. Warning was aimed at preserving life: The keeper delivered the knowledge of the past to arm his people for their defence in the future. Alleviating the pain was another purpose, when Fira's father helped reunite families ("Have you run across such and such?"), or revealed the stories of those who perished, so these stories could be kept in the hearts of their surviving loved ones. Fira's narrative included a chain of storylines joined in one central script of recovering and voicing the memories that had miraculously survived, after being buried together with those who carried them. These are stories of recovering the names of murdered people and finding evidence of concealed events. The script of the keeper was echoed in the father's life-long work of establishing

Jewish memorials in the placed of mass killings, against all the odds of the Soviet ideological constraints. His obligation was to protect the right and dignity of his people for commemoration in the Jewish tradition.

Fira follows her father's script of warning about the unspeakable past to protect her people in the future. She is also a keeper of her mother's voice of love, knowledge, freedom, and tradition. The mother's motif sounds strong in her childhood stories, echoed in the stories about her three bright older sisters. The legacy of her mother carries the power of Jewish family values and the ideas of open mind and women's equality. Despite the stereotypes of her orthodox environment, her mother always used to take the agency of a leader, a decision maker, a protector of the needy, and a free thinker. Education was set as a priority for her four daughters. Fira's stories about her mother speak of resilience, generosity, and the power of community.

Fira fulfills her keeper's mission through her inborn talent as a teacher, writer, and a storyteller. Fira's choice of profession went along with her passionate wish to contribute, lead, nurture, and pass on the message. Her desire to become a doctor was unrealistic after the war, but she chose another occupation in which she could fulfil her dream. She became a school teacher. Fira recounted a chain of stories about great teachers in her life, but this one was the first and most transforming:

> I returned from the camp, and the first question was, what I will do. To study – to study was my goal … To my great regret, the name of this Jewish teacher did not stay in my memory! He prepared us for school [after three years without school in the ghetto], free of charge. At that time, [remembering the name] did not seem that important, it was like, 'Oy, he wants to teach us – thank you!' He gave me the foundations of everything I did not have, you know. A yiddishe neshumah! [the Yiddish for "a fine Jewish soul"]. Not only me, we were about 15 children who used to come to him, all Jewish of course, straight from the camp, ragged, hungry, barefoot, but he taught us patiently, and explained – so all this remained in my memory, this was my foundation. (Fira October 13, 2007 part 2, 226-228, 237-247)

The script of the keeper and a giver continues into the present. Fira treasures the stories of her personal survival along with the many communal stories and collective legends, from life events of her famous Jewish compatriots (Mikhoels, Grossman) to the protagonists from world Jewish literature (for example, the novels by Leon Feuchtwanger). She often tells these stories with the same passion, tone, and engagement as the stories about her family; she lives them in her heart. In the Soviet Union, Fira used to search ardently for these stories in the scarce sources available from Soviet publications. Now in Canada, exposed to the abundance of information sources, she continues to search selectively for the same streams of knowledge – narratives that reverberate with the knowledge she carries in her soul.

Reading has become one of her vital sources of strength. She asserts that books are “her bread.” This is an astonishingly powerful metaphor for a person who had once barely survived hunger, and often identifies bread with life: “Oh Bread! It was – it was something heavenly! That’s how we used to eat bread... So that God forbid one little crumb should fall down. Well, nobody will understand me now” (Fira October 13, 2007 part 4, 141-146).

The knowledge that Fira has kept and passed on to her children carries the communal values of history and tradition. Despite Soviet oppression, she has secretly observed religious rituals and raised her family with this knowledge. She is proud of having taught her children and grandchildren about the tragedy and loss of the Shoah, and, first and foremost, about Jewish tradition and their Jewish roots.

Following the script of a keeper comes with painful personal consequences. Since liberation, Fira has struggled with flashbacks, fears, and nightmares. Now that she is aging, the repercussions of trauma make it more painful for her to keep retelling. Every incident of recounting provokes re-emerging pain. Not unlike Liza, Fira struggles with the persistent consequences of trauma, which she treats as her own peculiar but natural challenge, a part of her life. When Liza and Fira happened to talk to each other about their feelings, one of them admitted, “I thought I was the only one.” Each of them takes control of their pain, all alone in this struggle. Fira describes the source and imagery of her re-emerging memories,

> I will tell you: in the past, we worked; we were busy, always on the run … we did not have time to think. But now, when, as they say, you are already reviewing your life, you return to what happened then. And sometimes the details that come to your mind are such that you get scared, as if it were right here – it is happening right now – you can see it all. Perhaps, the child’s memory photographed it, and [the image] had been there all that time, stored in some place, but now it is coming back to the surface – at times, at times. And for me – I thought it was only [me], but my sister told me the same thing. Well, I cannot sleep and I am seeing everything, just as if it were all happening today, I see this marching column – all this, you know, it is horrible! This is... well, it is not easy. (Fira October 13, 2007 part 2, 359-375)

Keeping the message is painful, but this is how she has been cultivating her anchor script from its early roots, naturally and intentionally, despite the pain, now into her late life. Fira continues to retell and record her stories, to warn and protect the living, and to keep and honor the memory of those who perished. Along with the messages of the tragedy, she treasures and shares the other narratives – the ones of love, unity, resilience, tradition, and generosity. Keeping and sharing these other stories, in return, continue to keep the storyteller strong and resilient throughout her current struggles.

Lydia: “The human being makes himself”

I met Lydia through my professional connections, long before I initiated my studies. She is an experienced, highly respected psychiatrist in Moscow. For a long time after I met Lydia I did not know that she was a Holocaust survivor. She never identified herself as a survivor, until a few years ago, when she was encouraged to apply for German restitution. At that time, Lydia also became a member of a survivors' group. Lydia lived in hiding in occupied Odessa for nearly three years. She survived together with her little cousin and mother, who had been a survivor of terrible pogroms and starvation during the great famine.

Lydia is an exceptionally independent, analytical, and original thinker; she is also an articulate and passionate speaker. Because Lydia is a child psychiatrist, her personal interpretations of her life experiences, at times, refract through a professional lens, while remaining universally human. It is an intricate task to conceptualize even a few facets of Lydia's complex narrative. Questioning Lydia about trauma (despite my expectation of a professional angle in her response) brought about a confident statement:

> I do not believe in trauma … these are all global things… war, occupation, Stalinism – well, it's like a hurricane, natural disasters, elements of nature – you depend on them, they may kill you, but if you are, after all, allowed to exist – the rest depends on you – the human being makes himself. (Lydia November, 2005 Part 1, 1815-1835)

The determination to "make herself" and "create something significant in this life" has been Lydia's major anchor script from the time when she was a child. After the war, during many years of poverty, humiliation, and oppression, Lydia continued to believe in the universal human responsibility for "not just walking along with one's life, but creating it" (Lydia Nov 2006 Part 3, 204-205). As an evolving young adult, still tortured by painful consequences of trauma (to which a diagnostic label was already attached: "I was diagnosed with 'total asthenia' after the war – can you imagine!" she says with a laugh), she set out on a quest for a greater intellectual power, from which she was hoping to draw support for her vision of fulfillment:

> When I was young – I was a realistic person in this sense, and I knew that I was not some genius or a great one, right? But I was determined to find for myself such a genius person, whom I would be helping, and together with

> whom I would be doing something [meaningful]. And so I found myself Grunia Yefimovna Sukhareva [a prominent child psychiatrist]. I found her all by myself, because at first I became a graduate student with Filinskaya, but this did not satisfy me at all – this was not the level that could satisfy me, either morally or intellectually – imagine such ambitions! I was determined to find a person in whom I would have a faith, and serve them, you know – it was *me* who was searching, it was *me,* you know. (Lydia Nov 2006 Part 3, 164-183)

Lydia's interpretation of her posttraumatic healing is far from retreating into denial or ignoring of the suffering ("I cannot tell it was an uninterrupted straight line"). She is no stranger to pain and does not deny its source; as a psychiatrist, she has a clear understanding of the nature of her persistent anxiety, nightmares, fears, and what she calls "a lot of different neuroses ... and severe psychosomatic disorders." However, Lydia's credo is not letting the trauma define her life: "I don't want to think about it, I have rejected it and started my life anew." She has learned to survive by placing her faith into the power of personal agency, together with the value of knowledge aimed at serving humanity.

At all the turning points of her life, alone or together with her loved ones, she set out to create the meanings that brought her closer to shaping her envisioned destiny.

> In those moments I was, well, I was making statements. I wasn't just getting married – I was making a statement; I wasn't just joining Grunia Yefimovna [her great mentor in psychiatry] – I was making a statement. I always, in general, used to make [life-defining] statements ... Of course, we do depend on circumstances – the war, the famine – we cannot escape them, but we still can make something from our personal lives, we can make something (with emphasis). (Lydia Nov 2006 Part 3, 204-221)

Lydia believes that suffering should not be used to justify helplessness, unless the person chooses to become a victim. She is also adamant in distancing her personal quest from any assumptions of a "positive" impact of trauma. The concept of "posttraumatic growth" is definitely a rejected idea within her belief system; neither would she accept any attempts to attach heroic or victorious connotations to her experiences. Lydia would not be a good candidate for a celebrity survivor. In relation to the commonly stressed notion of child survivors of the Holocaust becoming meaningful contributors to the society, she comments,

> Because it was only negative, only fear. I think it is not productive; it cannot help build anything, thank God it has been overcome! But to build something on it – it is impossible, on the contrary – it is possible only to destroy. I think that everything I have in me, I have saved despite, despite, but not created because of [the suffering], you know... (Lydia Nov 2006 Part 2, 349-355)
> I had it all in me, but not because of [suffering], not because of it, I am telling you; I had had it always; I wanted to create something significant in this life, but I don't think that this was ever associated with [trauma of] the Holocaust – I cannot say so. Maybe it was different with other people, maybe … But I doubt that suffering can ever be productive, I don't have this feeling. (Lydia Nov 2006 Part 4, 43-50)

Lydia lived through the turmoil of the Doctors' Trial, open pogroms in psychiatry, and severe anti-Semitism in the 1950s, when the brightest psychiatrists were exiled, fired, or imprisoned. She was a friend and supporter of many eminent persons of that time, both Jewish and Russian, some persecuted by the regime. At all times she was able to analyze and understand the underlying social causes of the events, was aware of the depth of the tragedy, but felt powerless and small under the pressure of the regime. She did not have any illusions. However, she did not let the humiliation and hatred of the totalitarian regime define her life. Moreover, she was not afraid to speak out. On the common Soviet "mental phenomenon" of denying Stalinist abuses, Lydia comments,

> What is it they did not know? I knew everything, since a very early age I knew everything, absolutely everything. (Lydia Nov2005 Part 1, 148-151)
> I was a terrible anti-Stalinist; those people who knew me then remember that they were scared to walk in the street or ride on a bus together with me, because I always had a very loud voice, and my utterances were such that everyone jumped with fear that we would be immediately approached and taken away somewhere (laughs). (Lydia Nov 2005 Part 1, 381 – 389)

Humour is an important part of what Lydia defines as resilience. She returns to the theme of humour on many occasions; it belongs to her script of "making oneself." In Lydia's mind, humour is not only an individual strategy, but also the means of affirming the power of communal unity and exceptional group identity. Her type of humour serves to share the joy of togetherness and to signify mutual understanding and support. This is also the sort of humour that she finds most common among other Holocaust survivors:

> My son was amazed [as he met survivors in a group]: these are all aging people, who have suffered so much, and who are far from wealthy, but they are glowing, and they keep joking ... and it is not something superficial at all – this humour does not mean being superficial, you know, it is, perhaps, some sort of high intelligence, or maybe protection. (Lydia Nov2006 Part 2, 120-138)
> Jewish humour – it is built on the Jew's ability to laugh at himself, at his fellow-tribesmen, you know, and he is not afraid at all that he will humiliate himself or someone else of his own kin this way. That's how strong, how deep his feeling of his own exceptionality is. (Lydia Nov 2006 Part 2, 286-297)

Lydia, together with her husband, used the strategy of creating alternative anchor realities in which they could make a substantial difference in their world ("Our marriage was a special alliance – it was something very spiritual"). Together, they found ways to filter the totalitarian reality out of their significant world. They worked to "disengage" from the lies. The problem of silencing the Holocaust also belonged to the realities from which Lydia was determined to "disengage." She explains,

> But we lived in such an atmosphere where this [the Holocaust] was not the only thing that was silenced because there were lies and only lies everywhere, so to say, and it was necessary to just disengage from it. So we disengaged and lived our own inner lives, and this question did not stand out as a separate one, you know … This was, somehow, not that important, because there were so many other things that were important. (Lydia Nov 2006 Part 1, 137-154)

Lydia has constructed and lived the rich anchor script of fulfillment despite trauma – the spirited script of faith in personal agency, knowledge, communal unity, and bringing good into the world. Her narratives of "disengaging" from both past trauma and present injustice are paired with the life-long, warm engaging in love and helping. Her adamant belief in human strength is shadowed by her fierce insistence on the futility of any "positive" impact of suffering. Perhaps, it is Lydia's vigorous determination to change the one part of the world that is within her power that gives her strength to face the other part of her world: the narratives of pain. Through remaining anchored in her lived script of fulfillment, Lydia finds ways to relate to the stories of individual and historical trauma and its aftermath.

Vera: "The war time made me a fighter, it made me a Mensch"

I met Vera in Calgary, through my community work. She is a retired engineer. Vera was born in Kiev, and when the war broke out, fled together with her family to Kyrgyzstan, where they experienced severe hardships, but managed to survive. When Vera learned about my research, she called me and volunteered to participate. With Vera, I had many long conversations and we still continue to meet and talk.

Early on in our conversations Vera defined herself as a fighter, a survivor, a strong one; this is the major script that defines her narratives. She was only 12 in the first days of the war, when, as she notes, "her childhood ended." Since that time she had to endure numerous fights for survival. As her family stories started to unfold, it became clear that Vera's family began their fights for survival at least two generations before her.

Women in Vera's family had a history of having to begin their lives "anew, from the total zero," after having lost everything. Vera's grandmother and mother lost their family and home to the massacres in Jewish pogroms in 1915 – 1917. Two of them, struck by the tragedy, left their home town and set out on a long journey, risking their lives in the midst of the civil war, to reunite with their relatives in Odessa. Their past had been destroyed, but they were strong enough to begin anew, in a new place. Vera's mother was an adolescent at that time.

Vera is a second generation survivor of the Jewish pogroms that had a most severe impact on her mother and grandmother. Like them, Vera started from zero three times: first, as a young girl after the war; second, when she moved from the Ukraine to Israel in 1974 alone with her two sons and her aging mother; and third, when she immigrated to Canada. As Vera reflected on new beginnings imposed on her family by life atrocities, her tally began with her grandmother, and the number of incidents reached at least five. With respect to the pattern of tragedy, loss, and resilient recovery, Vera maintains that she has always been an optimist. She continues,

> I have never whimpered, and always looked into the future with hope ... ready to begin my life anew ... Life is like a zebra, the black stripes and the white stripes alternate ... we knew that we had to cross the black stripe, and then things would sort themselves out again. (telephone conversation, October 2007)

Vera was the only daughter, the main heir of her family's script of fighting and survival. Ironically, in her family she had to become the one who took on the responsibility to protect her mother and grandmother. Vera describes her mother as a kind, intelligent, and devoted, but weak, troubled, and powerless person. Vera's mother was acutely afraid of any authorities and had severe migraines that prevented her from working outside the house. Vera recalls,

> Mother never had a strong will power … she had fears, fears [because] she already knew the pogroms and the first [civil] war, and her fears originated from then ... and from all the disasters of her youth. (Vera October 25, 2007 part 2, 113-117)

The mother's fears did not pass on to the daughter, as Vera asserts, "because someone ought to carry [the responsibility], so these years made me a survivor." Someone had to be strong and take care of the family during the years of evacuation and later, upon their return. Vera stood strong in her small everyday struggles, working for a piece of bread and searching for fuel to heat their tiny room in their exile during the war. There were also larger, more vital challenges. For instance, when the family returned home after the war, their apartment had been taken by strangers. Vera, then 16, single-handedly managed to win the family's apartment back. This was an outstanding victory, considering that so many Jewish families had lost their homes, with the Soviet authorities ignoring their plea for protection.

Vera also encountered many disappointments and defeats. She often felt betrayed or at least unsupported by many significant people in her life. Her high education and professional success did not come easily to her, in the environment of fierce discrimination and pervasive anti-Semitism in Ukraine. ("Can anti-Semitism ever be not pervasive?" she commented on my notes.) She felt the totalitarian tyranny on her own skin; like Lydia, she was no denier: "I always knew [about the repressions], I always knew it all." Her victories in her continuous battles, first for her family's survival, and later for her career and the safety and education of her sons, left some deep scars. Vera notes in the midst of recounting her odysseys,

> Oy, nothing was easy, nothing came easy to me. Indeed, it all weighs upon my shoulders, it weighs upon my shoulders. My older son says, 'Mom, you are a fighter and you can walk through walls' (she says with a bitter chuckle). (Vera Feb 17, 2008 part 1, 476-478; 683-684)

When I asked Vera if she wanted me to bring her the audio recordings of the interviews that we had made, she was not interested. Her argument was that every night, when she lay in bed without sleep, her memories kept "replaying" in her mind, as if through some sort of audiotapes. She had her own, mental audio files, she said, and therefore, did not need any tangible tapes. She said it in a bitter tone. Vera often feels very lonely and sad now. Once again, her struggle is arduous, "I live in an unstable equilibrium, emotionally and physically. One little push is enough to put me out of my balance. I hold myself together by the effort of my willpower" (Vera Feb 17, 2008 part 1, 724-730).

Vera has written her memoirs. She has six volumes of handwritten manuscripts, with attached photos, letters, and keepsake objects, which she showed to me ("Maybe my sons will want to read it, some day"). Not unlike Fira, she is the keeper of her and her family's stories and messages. She is also used to searching books for stories that echo in her mind. The public library is her weekly destination; she says that she uses a sort of "intuition" that helps her find exactly what she is looking for, when she scans the library shelves (her son jokingly calls her "a Jew-searcher," because almost everything she reads somehow relates to Jewish life and history). As a stunning echo of Fira's statement that "books are her bread," and unaware of Fira's words, Vera uses another metaphor, "Books are my vodka; books to me are like vodka to a drunkard" (Vera Feb 17, 2008 part 1, 749-752).

Vera's greatest passion now is genealogical research. She has created a family tree and a large genealogy map, with more than 100 names that go back to the 6th generation of her ancestors. Vera had lost all connections with those relatives who lived outside the Soviet Union, because correspondence with them was impossible and dangerous during the Soviet times. Because of the risk, Vera's parents never shared the family history with her when she was a child. They were afraid, she says. Nevertheless, many years later Vera conducted substantial research and found and contacted many relatives on both her parents' sides in Israel, the US, the UK, Italy, and Spain. She has met many of them, and now maintains these contacts. Since she began her search, she discovered many relatives who have achieved high social status, recognition, and fame; many of her relatives are well known as accomplished musicians, engineers, and doctors.

Vera's life-long script of a survivor and a fighter can be now traced in her active act of affirming her strong, deep roots. She struggles to search for these roots and devotedly studies their origins and nature. Perhaps, she also strives to discover some fundamental historical meanings that would echo her sturdy individual scripts, despite the images of oppression that are still alive in her memories. Vera comments, “They [Soviet authorities] used to call us ‘rootless cosmopolitans’ … We are not rootless ... Wherever the Jews settle, their roots are deep and wide” (telephone conversation, October 26, 2007).

Leib: “I always wanted to learn, I loved to learn”
“I did, of course I did fight. I am never able not to fight”

I met Leib before initiating my research, and chose to interview him because I admired his shining, cheerful personality and inexhaustible curiosity. Leib was born in a small town in Ukraine. During the war, his mother with Leib and his two little siblings fled to a small village in South Urals, and they all survived. Leib also survived the Soviet prison, where he spent nearly a year, in miserable conditions and no contact with his family, after a wrongful accusation. Before coming to Canada, Leib was an engineer, inventor, and educator in Kazakhstan.

Leib’s tone is often ironic, sometimes angry and frustrated, and almost always sanguine, analytical, and confident. One of his overarching scripts is based on drawing his strength from exploring new knowledge, active learning, and free, independent reasoning. Leib recounted chains of storylines that spoke of him as a man who lived his life in constant passionate learning, and found power and purpose in absorbing knowledge, continuously analyzing his realities, and owning his independent, nonconformist conclusions.

Thirst for knowledge, in his narratives, overpowers fear, stress, and trauma. His first childhood memories of the war speak about curiosity, instead of fear, in his seven-year-old mind: “It was very interesting as we explored the trenches,” was the first comment Leib offered. During the war he and his family did encounter severe hunger, cold, fear, and uncertainty. Leib went to school, for the first time, in evacuation. His mother worked around the clock for a little bread, and did not know about his going to school for weeks. Thus, the decision to learn was his earliest big independent decision. The script of learning saturates his storylines about most powerful episodes of his life. Even during the hard times of his adult life, for example, in prison, he used to have enough exploratory and spiritual power to fuel his resilience (he remembers reading books in prison and getting to know other people’s life stories).

Leib’s seeking new knowledge can be interpreted as an expression of a script of power, agency, and independence. Another expression of his power script links together his many storylines about speaking out and fighting for his truths. These are multifaceted narratives. Even their early initiation in Leib’s childhood speaks of many meanings. The earliest story is about standing up for himself and others, when they were bullied at school as Jews. At that time Leib was nicknamed by his peers Bar Kokhba: the name of the prominent leader of the Jewish revolt against the Romans in the second century. This story conveys the meaning of his proud identification with an oppressed group, and the sense of power found in the very belonging to this group and its proud stories (Bar Kokhba). These childhood memories are also about the sense of recognition of his agency power by the others in his group – the group of his Jewish peers, Leib’s earliest version of an oppressed but righteous community.

Bar Kokhba script weaves throughout Leib’s later storylines, and spells an independent, defiant, and confident power. Later on Leib stressed another facet of this script, namely, refusing to conform to the realities that others see as “normal.” As an independent thinker, he could recognize the wrongs under the façade of habitually indoctrinated truths. Leib was simply “unable” to remain silent, despite the threat of dangerous consequences under the Soviet regime. His friend commented on one of Leib’s rebellious steps, “You might as well have burnt down our Institute building … and it would be a lesser scandal than what you have done” (Leib September 23, 2005 part 2, 283-292).

Now as Leib grows older, he theorizes on yet another motif tied to his Bar Kokhba script: his bewildered recognition of a miracle, or divine intervention that accompanied him in his fights:

> (S.: You have always been an atheist, haven’t you?) Yes I always was, but then ... What, do you believe that there is God? I don’t know how one understands God, but there must be something there. When we already come closer to this, to the grave (with a chuckle), we begin to think it through. There was a number of incidents in my life when I thought only God was helping, because it was against all the laws of nature that this would happen this way. Well, for example, I was let go out of prison. It was not natural absolutely; it was just some kind of luck which was granted me from above ... someone pulled me out of the trouble, it was atypical absolutely. Usually in the Soviet prison, if you have already gotten in there, you are lucky if you are rehabilitated [legally] posthumously (with a chuckle). This is typical. It was typical if one turned into dust there ... but to get out of there [safe] like I did and to overcome all this pack of wolves ... (S.: But don’t you give yourself a credit too, that you overcame it?) No, yes, I do think that I have overcome, but this was totally against the laws of nature ... I did, of course I did fight, I am never able not to fight, but I believe it was just a miracle. (Leib October 21, 2005 part 1, 379-419)

Bar Kokhba script is inseparable from Leib’s narratives about his Jewish identity. This facet of his script speaks about protecting his right to be Jewish, despite the attached stigma. He accepts this identity unconditionally and proudly, together with all the vulnerabilities that it entails: “To me, it was always, I had no doubts about it whatsoever, and I did not seek any answers; it was already in my brain, in my bones” (Leib January 24, 2006 part 1, 76-80). In Leib’s self script as a fighter, he identifies with one of the common collective narratives about Jewish identity, which he generalizes as an identity of an agent of change in the midst of the fearful and conformist majority. Leib gives a name to the bearers of this identity script, the proverbial “salt of the earth” (the Russian connotation of this proverb extends beyond the English meaning of worthiness and goodness, and refers to rare, exceptional people, who are capable of improving the world):

> I always did what I wanted, I was never afraid to argue or to speak out ... This is … maybe even something Jewish ... Millions know that this is hopeless [to fight this injustice], they are not more stupid than I am, and they understand it too [but they keep silence] … So this is ... a marginality of a kind, such extreme restlessness ... It does not make absolutely any sense to fight. But … these people are ... salt of the earth ... yes, these are the ones. You know, this salt, it does not bring any good to the person who has this salt (laughs) ... But it did help in some cases … I always tried, and then it appeared that I was a fool and had not thought it all through; I had started it in vain. I had this thought, but somehow [I succeeded]. It happened as a miracle, you know, it happened many times in my life. A wise man, he would not have taken upon this task ... he has already compared his strengths with the difficulties and he would not do it, but I could never help it. I never had enough wisdom to imagine these difficulties. (Leib October 21, 2005 part 1, 741-774)

In some storylines, Leib seems to depict his life as a set of opportunities to speak out and make a difference. In others, he perceives his life path as a fascinating book to learn from. Now that Leib is aging, he seems more inclined to constructing his narrative through developing the script of a learner. He finds so much to learn from any situation: “I always found time for everything interesting”; “I read the Bible because I was curious.” When he arrived in Canada, Leib started working in the Jewish funeral home. He took this job to remain independent, but he also told me with enthusiasm about his interesting observations as he worked there (he was never religious and did not know elementary things when he was hired by this Jewish religious organization). Leib is struggling with many challenges of immigration, but the flood of new information is not a burden for him. On the contrary, his mind seems to absorb the new environment as another “interesting” material for exploration. To my question about the emotional cost of his past struggles, Leib explains,

> I used to fight, but well, of course, I too was depressed at times, just like anybody else, to a greater or lesser degree. Of course, when you see no solution there, you fall into depression. But then, there comes the morning again, there comes the sky (laughs), and you must do something else, and then again do something else. (Leib October 21, 2005 part 1, 563-571)

Maya: "Everything that's mine I carry with me"

Maya is a retired physician and lives in Moscow. She was born in Moscow, but her family was living in Lithuania when the war broke out, and they had to flee. Maya was ten at that time. She survived the war in Siberia, where, together with her younger sister, she was placed in an orphanage and separated from her parents.

Two major foundations of Maya's life script – the "postulates" that she offered as a foundation of her love for life and ability to cope – emerged early in our conversations, in the first minutes of our initial interview. One is related to her family:

> The main core of my life, something primordial that always helped me was my family... my parents, and everything I knew about my family's past. My parents ... by their very existence they gave me an example of how one should live and what are the most important things in life. (Maya, April 25 part 1, 9-19)

A minute later, Maya continued by defining her second source of strength:

> The second postulate that I adopted since a very early age is this Latin proverb that my dear mother used to tell me; of course, I was little at that time and did not have any idea of Latin. She used to say, 'Everything that is mine I carry with me.' That is, you can lose everything, but your knowledge will always remain with you. (Maya, April 25 part 1, 67-74)

Maya is a sunny and caring personality, a physician unconditionally devoted to her profession (or, rather, to those she helps). For over forty years, she was a general physician in a psychiatric hospital (like her mother before her) – a job that she used to interpret as serving people who feel most oppressed, hopeless, and devalued. Perhaps because of her radiant, almost Schweitzerian reverence for life and respect for human dignity, she was unreservedly trusted and loved by her patients. Maya used to be told that she was the most desirable visitor at her patients' bedside, because, as a general physician, she treated psychiatric patients as persons, as opposed to almost everyone else in their environment. The patients often said that her kindness brought them hope. Maya always speaks with awe about other devoted physicians. In her family, there were many admirable doctors; the trend runs for generations. Maya radiates love and appreciation for life, with the gratitude for everything life can bring. In her narration, however, this definitely positive outlook appears at the background of its inseparable shadow, which is irresolvable grief for her and her family's losses.

Maya grew up in very close connection with her many uncles, aunts, and cousins who had come from the Ukraine and settled in Moscow. They spent all their holidays together, and lived in close proximity to each other and in constant intense communication, like a small but extremely strong, richly interconnected community. They stood for each other both in their peaceful everyday life and throughout the darkest times. As such, when the worst happened, and Maya's aunt was arrested and sent to Soviet labour camps, her other aunt adopted and hid the little daughter of her exiled sister. The girl's father had been executed as an "enemy of the people." Hiding a daughter of the "enemy" was associated with an enormous risk. Maya knew it, and was instructed to keep the secret.

The image of a large, sturdy kinship, a unity unconditionally reliable for support and rich with fundamental values and strong cultural identity, runs through Maya's narrative as the major leitmotif. All the elements of her anchor script seem to have originated from and attached to this central unity: her professional devotion, love for life and culture, her Jewish identity, and her altruistic belief in love and kindness. She maintains that, because of her family, she always knew that she would become a doctor, marry a Jew, work selflessly, and remain attached to high spiritual values instilled by her kinship.

Maya was ten when her family's flight and evacuation severed, for a long time, her most vital connection to her source of strength. She was placed in an orphanage and separated from her parents. However, she stayed in the orphanage together with her little sister and two cousins. Their small group's sense of unity might have been protective against the loneliness, fear, anxiety, and hostility of the others (as Jews, they were bullied by other children). Like Vera, Maya admits, "From that moment, my adult life began." However, as opposed to Vera's adopted position of a fighter, Maya is used to find quiet refuge in her inner world and enmeshment with her family.

Fighting is not Maya's territory. She believes in selfless giving as a universal antidote against human hostility – the belief that is transparent in her mother's saying, as she recalls it,

> [My mother used to say,] 'You should always be good to people, be better [kinder] than the others, and you will live with dignity – even though you are a Jew.' Then, you will be able to choose your friends, you will be able to choose your work, and you will be able to choose how to live your life – and so it was in my life, just like my mother said. (Maya, November 25 part 1, 135-137).

The anchor script of selfless giving appears in Maya's numerous storylines, in which she or her family were not rewarded in any way for their skills and contribution, except for the satisfaction of their own passion for work, and ample expressions of abstract personal gratitude and appreciation from other people. The chain of such storylines in Maya's narrative formed a pattern, a general script, in which the essence of altruistic giving was expressed as finding the spiritual meaning and purpose of one's life. This purpose, once again, belonged to the category of "omnia mea," in that it did not guarantee any realistic privileges or material wealth, but rather served as a personal intangible anchor for finding the meaning despite hardships.

Finding refuge within the richness of personal and communal virtues, in Maya’s stories, pertains to people who were powerless to change their environment, and could not afford confronting the hostility. However, there is an astonishing power, almost defiance, in the determination to maintain and pass to the children the cherished communal values and identity. By holding on to each other and protecting each other in this, seemingly passive kinship alliance, Maya’s family remained in control of their lives. Maya recalls,

> I remember very well that he [Maya’s father] was dying to go... you see at that time the state of Israel had already been established, but to go there [it was a taboo even to talk about it]... He wanted, he longed to go and see that land, and he bought – you know, at that time it was very difficult to find a radio receiver which could tune in to the Voice of Israel broadcast. And he used to tune in, and when he listened to this music, when he heard this call-sign – he looked all transformed in these moments. And we all, the entire family, we listened to these broadcasts. (Maya April 2005 part 3, 464-485)

Despite the seemingly evident powerlessness, there remained the freedom to feel united and “transformed” by these communal experiences, which could be a source of “great joy” in the family’s adamant commitment to remaining who they are. Although they could express this commitment only in such small acts as singing songs or listening to the forbidden radio stations, these were acts of resistance. Perhaps, this defiant core identity script gave Maya the courage to take an enormous risk and openly speak out, as a medical student, during the notorious Doctors’ Trial. She stood up for her Jewish peers and professors who were attacked and in tangible danger. In doing so, despite being no fighter in her heart, Maya remained loyal to her family’s nonmilitant but powerful, unshakable values.

Maya’s narrative is complex and multifaceted, but her major anchor scripts are almost always presented through the lens of her kinship integrity. Her greatest pains, too, have originated from the tragic loss of her kin’s lives to the Holocaust. The rich fabric of her stories seems to be derived from one, emotionally and spiritually charged, bittersweet source that belongs to the familial and communal unity.

Abram: "My brain and my soul were always busy, and I had no time to think about those things"

Abram lives in Moscow, and has recently retired from his work as an aviation designer. He is the only participant in my sample who was a fighter during the war. At the age of 17, he volunteered for the Soviet Army, while his family fled from the occupied area. By the end of the war, his entire military unit had been destroyed, he was the only survivor. His home community was destroyed by the Nazis, and when he returned, he found nobody alive.

Abram's major script speaks of embracing the whole world around him, but it also speaks of a resolute withdrawal from those aspects of life that he is not willing to accept. Passionate work is the central anchor script of his narrative. His fascination for knowledge makes him open to a vast variety of experiences. His contagious enthusiasm, erudition, and warm attitude create a charisma that draws people towards him. Absorbed by work, Abram has learned to ignore social realities that violate his inherent vision of the world. For many years, such pervasive realities as systemic anti-Semitism and political abuses simply stayed beyond his conscious notice. He seems to have deliberately pushed the analysis of these realities away from his mind, like an annoying foreign body:

> I though that this [anti-Semitism] was just because of certain people, who were uneducated, uncultured ... that it was lack of education and culture in just a few people, while the entire society was fine ... and it was only later that I understood it. But even then, I used to push these thoughts away, and anti-Semitism also was just pushed away from my mind, like a drop of water from a greasy surface, that's all. In other wards, I did not let it into my heart. Although I felt that it was there, I did not let it into my heart ... And it was not

> common to talk about it, it was not common. We just held on, well, I cannot explain it now. Well, I just lived my life. I had my own close environment, normal environment, so that, in fact, I did not feel these things. (Abram April 1, 2006 part 3, 419-456)

In his past, he did not talk about his war memories. There was nobody left in the world, in whose mind Abram's memories were alive, and he was unable to overcome his grief: "My tank crew, we were like a family, closer than brothers, and I recall them often, I can clearly remember their faces" (Abram April 1, 2006 part 3, 1029-1031). As opposed to other former fighters, Abram never belonged to any veteran groups, and did not participate in military parades. The official Soviet veneration discourse related to the heroic victory never became part of Abram's personal script. Perhaps, he could not be recruited into the Soviet pure heroic saga because his memory about the victory was too closely intertwined with the memory of unthinkable suffering and loss, which was not a part of the dominant Soviet story for a long time. In addition, his lone, unshared memories went beyond the battlefield. By the end of the war, nobody remained alive in his home community. All his Jewish and Roma friends, and many in his family had been murdered by the Nazis. It was always too painful to recall, as Abram explains,

> Life is life, and there is nothing we can do about it. Good memories remain in our mind. Well, many things are simply forgotten, or, rather, not forgotten but stored somewhere in the depth of one's mind, and do not surface. But sometimes you suddenly recall such things that you are surprised – you think it is all gone, and some of these things even seem like they did not happen to you, but they happened to someone else. [But suddenly] it replays in your mind again and again, like some fragments of someone else's [memories], but you know for sure that it was all yours, that it was yours (pause). Well, for example, I remember that I saw dead bodies on barbed wire, and I saw a person running, without an arm, his arm was shot off (pause, and Abram recalls more images) … It is only now that I can [talk about it], but then, right after the war, of course, it was very hard. I would wake up of my own scream at nights … I dreamt about it, and screamed in my sleep, but then it went away. Well, I was very lucky [that I survived], something led me, there were so many critical moments, and everyone was killed around me, but I stayed alive somehow –

> this was like a miracle. For example, when all my crew was killed and I was wounded and got into a hospital. (Abram April 1, 2006 part 3, 925-959)

The images that Abram "stores in the depth of his mind" have begun to surface only recently. Perhaps, he allows them to surface now, because he feels strong enough to face them. He was able to tell me about his condition after the loss of his tank crew. One of his friends had died in his arms, when Abram was trying to carry him away from the burning tank. Abram was only 19 at that time. What he recalls is an acute stress reaction:

> I was delusional and screamed nonsense all the time, and in the hospital … they got a doctor to watch me, and he treated me. I remember his medication: it was a mixture of pure alcohol with chocolate, one glass per day. I had to drink it (laughs). But this helped me somehow, it stopped my screaming. Well, I don't remember that time clearly, and the only thing I remember is the kind face of this man who watched me. (Abram April 1, 2006 part 3, 1006-1017)

Abram maintains that after the war, his passionate life pursuits used to always protect him from the impact of his past. Questioned about his coping with the memories of the war, he summarized his anchor script, "My brain and my soul were always busy, and I had no time to think about those things." In our later conversations, it became clear the "no time to think" had been only a simplified approximation to conceptualizing Abram's strategies of coping. Beyond providing a simple escape from his traumatic memories, his pursuits seize his heart and mind, and become part of his identity. This part of his self renders him not only a safe refuge, but also the sense of meaning, a secure territory within his identity. In that, the nature of his pursuits is broader than the common defenses of denial or suppression. Safely grounded in the anchor script of creativity and passion, he has managed to actively build his life in such a way that his posttraumatic pain, although ever-existing, never defined his identity:

> Sometimes I had these dreams ... because these things don't simply go away, you know... But I had no nervous breakdowns, I did not ... maybe it is my constitution, maybe it was something genetic. (Abram June 27, 2006, 841-849)

Perhaps, Abram's rich anchor script has become an integral part of his identity (the part that he calls his "constitution," almost "genetic" trait). Due to his ability to build his powerful narratives of self, he could resist, and later face the other part of his identity, filled with the memories of loss, suffering, and grief.

In Abram's passionate attachment to his work, there appeared two distinct meanings. One pertained to creativity and thirst for knowledge, which seems somewhat similar to Leib's quest for exploring the unknown. Another meaning appears akin to Maya's concept of selfless giving as part of one's "omnia mea mecum porto," that is giving to the world for the sake of the gift, with no expectation of any benefits in return. Maya is Abram's wife, and their comments on this subject were so similar to each other that it is relevant to quote Maya, as she voices her husband's altruistic position:

> [Abram] was never promoted at work. He could have long, long ago become a General Constructor of this firm all right, but he did not want such an administrative position. He had bright mind and he worked so hard that his Head Constructor even said, in a large gathering he said, 'Look at [Abram] and follow his suit,' he said, 'You know, if he lived in America, he would have become a millionaire long ago, so many ideas he has had and with his huge enthusiasm.' He had so many of those patents for his inventions; he never got paid for them of course. But he was so greatly appreciated, and he was surrounded by people who gave him great respect and loved him so much. And that is why his life at work was so smooth and uneventful. (Maya April 2005 part 3, 568-581)

Maya's reference to "smooth and uneventful" life at work relates to avoiding the pervasive anti-Semitism and discrimination. Indeed, in the stories of many survivors, they retrospectively viewed their selfless contribution to the society as an unintended, but powerful protection against hostility. In Abram's narrative, the motif of such protection is parallel with his script of withdrawal, which echoes Lydia's image of "disengaging" from the hostile world. Not unlike Lydia, Abram is used to ignoring the impact of the lies and absurdities of the Soviet reality ("like a drop of water from a greasy surface"), through adopting the stubborn and proud position of non-belonging. To define this active act of disengagement, Abram often uses the verb *to abstract*, for example, "You know, somehow I used to abstract myself from it, and I kept abstracting" (Abram June 27, 2006, 459).

To some extent, the strategy of abstracting, in Abram's narrative, also pertains to his painful memories. He does not accept the notion of full mastering or "integration" of traumatic memories. In his view, it is impossible, a simplification:

> It is impossible, simply physiologically impossible to comprehend or integrate [these memories]. Because when these snapshots, these horrible war moments come back to the memory, you try to push them away. And this does not happen consciously or intentionally, it just happens on its own, automatically, as if some physiological, unconscious thing. And when you begin thinking about these things intentionally, you feel very bad, and the nature works its way, so these things get pushed away again, there is nothing to do about it. In general, Freud was right – even though he was a Jew (with a laugh), he defined all these concepts exactly as they are, and they do work in reality, that is, it is human nature. (Abram April 1, 2006 part 3, 813-830)

In Abram's narrative, he appears to have found the right balance between "abstracting" from his memories and mastering his world. At times, his narrative evokes the sense of enormous pain, but always at the background of other powerful realities, which he has woven into the very core of his life story. He attributes his genuine, focal meanings to these, other scripts of passion and creativity, and not to his trauma. From his position today, he plays with this (stunningly echoing Lydia's) metaphoric image of trauma and recovery:

> There are things in life that are not under our control. Well, it's raining and that's it; if you have an umbrella, you open your umbrella and cover yourself. But if you don't, you get wet, and there is nothing to do about it. Consider you

> will have to dry off later, and all will be good again (with a laugh). (Abram June 27, 2006, 337-342)

Alexander: "We Jews do not know how to be false"

When I interviewed Fira, she suggested that I also talk to her husband Alexander. Their stories of survival during the war were very different, but when they got married after the war, they had to cope and struggle with all the hardships together. Alexander and his family had survived by fleeing from the Nazi-occupied Ukraine, as opposed to Fira who was in a ghetto. Like Fira, Alexander received financial compensation from Germany as a Holocaust survivor. However, he says that he is not a "real" Holocaust survivor, as compared to his wife. Alexander is a retired engineer.

There are two major streams of storylines in Alexander's narrative, both forming significant scripts of his self integrity. In one of them, he tells a chain of stories about himself as a Jew and a member of a greater unity of his people, in which he is vitally and naturally connected with his roots and loyal to his kinship. Fira, his wife of over 50 years, is an important participant of these storylines. It is illustrative that Alexander begins his first interview with this preamble:

> Yes, but [to tell about] me – me alone – it is, it means nothing. If we were all together with my family, to scarper, so to say, [from the Nazis], we survived the occupation there, and we returned together – that means we had all these experiences together. So I can say nothing about myself alone at that time, while I was still a minor (with a laugh). And when I became independent already – then I must [tell] together with her (points at Fira, sitting quietly beside us at the table). (Alexander July 25, 2008 Part 1, 7-20)

Yet in another stream of storylines, Alexander's script is one of a strong agent and idealist participant in the pure Soviet narrative of building the perfect, honest society. As a believer in this narrative and within this part of his life script, he values the "real," undistorted ideas of the communist discourse. Untainted communist values used to naturally fit into his identity:

> I did not know how to be false, and I used to be a believer in honest communism. This was my life position, [because] the real communism had been simply distorted, destroyed and turned into a handful of corrupted people, selfish people who cared only about themselves, not others. But if there were real communists in power … then maybe the Soviet Union would not have failed. This is my life position, because we Jews do not know how to be false, that's it. If we take to believe in an idea, we are loyal to it to the end, that's how the Jews are. (Alexander July 25, 2008 Part 3, 1-11)

Alexander's script speaks to his living in two worlds at once. One of these worlds pertains to the mainstream Soviet reality, in which, due to the circumstances, his everyday life used to unfold. Another world of his narratives is his marginalized Jewish world and tradition. Jewish culture is an integral part of his identity. Alexander has not forgotten the Yiddish language and always remembers that his grandfather was a rabbi. He asserts, "I feel that I am a Jew by all categories" (Alexander July 25, 2008 Part 2, 305-311).

Alexander's first encounter with the split between his worlds presents in the story of changing his name at the age of five. Changing his name, the most fundamental childhood experience one can remember, occurred when his family moved from a small Jewish village to a Russian neighbourhood in a large town:

> Srule [his Jewish first name] – I did not like this name at all. My mother used to shout my name in the street, when she called me to come home [when I played with other kids], and then I used to run in the opposite direction (laughs). I did not like it at all. Sasha they called me later, because I was embarrassed in front of Russian kids who surrounded me, I did not feel comfortable among them, because [my name] was very eloquent, too eloquent (laughs). So when my mother shouted, 'Srule!' so the entire neighbourhood could hear, I ran away. But at home we spoke Yiddish, and my parents went to the minyans [religious services], on holidays ... My mother kept strict kosher, she had separate dishes for milk and meat, she was very religious [she was a daughter of a rabbi]. (Alexander July 25, 2008 Part 1, 382-400)

Another turning point in Alexander's story of building his life in the midst of the larger world appears in his recounting of his experiences in evacuation during the war. At the age of 15, in a small, remote Russian village – his family's destination as they fled from the Nazis – he found himself in a position of strong agency in the large world, in which his Jewish identity seemed to have no relevance at all:

> I was the only mechanization expert who remained in the village, and the only metal turner, because the head person who was a metal turner left [was conscripted to the Army], and then the older apprentice went too, and I remained the man in charge, and I was responsible for everything. I taught myself to be a metal turner, nobody trained me, and I had to learn on my own. (Alexander July 25, 2008 Part 1, 791-796)

Years later, Alexander succeeded in becoming a respected, honest, and knowledgeable worker, loved by his Russian colleagues. He was well adjusted in the environment where, as it seemed, his Jewish self did not matter. He was never "false" in his efforts to mix with his Russian environment and identify with the Soviet reality. Yet, apparently, he was still immersed in his family kinship, in which Alexander, a grandson of a rabbi, always remained a "Jew by all categories." Alexander recalls the events that led to his finding his true love through an arranged Jewish marriage, a traditional *shiduch* (Jewish matchmaking). This experience naturally wove into his youth narratives, but definitely stood out of the context of his parallel, almost conformist script of an honest Soviet citizen:

> My uncle Gedalia was a shoihet [a Jewish clergy] in Soroki [a small town in Ukraine], a highly respected person, and he introduced us to each other. He knew her parents; they used to go to the services together. My uncle and Fira's father, they were the same age. And they made a match, and this story is very interesting. I was working in Kazakhstan at that time; I had been an engineer there for a year by then. And [Fira] had graduated from the university and was working in Soroki. So they sent me her photo, and gave my photo to her, and we started writing letters to each other. This lasted for a year, one letter every week, without meeting each other in person. We still keep those photos that they gave us. And then I came to Soroki for a short vacation, and we saw each other for the first time, and got married immediately. Then, we went to Kazakhstan together, right after the wedding. (Alexander July 25, 2008 Part 1, 156-178)

Both sets of scripts appear essential in Alexander's narrative, and both speak to who he is. Similar narratives that belong to the two worlds are inherent in other survivors' narratives (in particular, in the stories told by Abram, Leib, and Maya). As I analysed my participants' stories, I discovered many similarities, in this aspect, with Gitelman's (2001b) work with Soviet Jewish veterans. Soviet Jews (and even more so, their Western interviewers) often have difficulty bringing together these two distinct experiences of self. Alexander was able to formulate the merging of his two distant self-narratives in this simple sentence: "We Jews do not know how to be false."

Never "false": this is the key explanation to this common dichotomy. As Alexander's narrative unfolded, his embracing the Soviet script appeared peculiarly selective. He portrayed many elements of the Soviet discourse that he actively rejected from his individual story. He was an adamant anti-Stalinist: "When Stalin died, it was such an awesome celebration among the Jews, the Jews celebrated" (Alexander July 25, 2008 Part 2, 1-5). He could never stand dishonesty, lies, and injustice, and used to take an obvious risk and speak out in many situations. When we talked about "honest communism," Fira sarcastically commented (the couple chose that Fira be present during Alexander's interviews),

> His manager used to say, 'If tomorrow an inspecting committee comes [to our plant], I don't want Alexander to be at work. Because if the committee asks him something, God forbid he will tell the truth!' (both Fira and Alexander laugh). (Alexander July 25, 2008 Part 3, 27-29)

Alexander's narrative speaks to strategies of selectiveness that can be explained as *filtering* the dominant discourse against his inherent belief system and life script. First, he tends to disengage (or abstract himself, in Abram's words) from certain realities, which his sense of justice must filter out. For example, like Abram, he asserts that he never felt the systemic anti-Semitism and did not know about Stalinist repressions for a long time. Second, Alexander selects and adopts certain elements of the Soviet discourse that appeal to his innate human and traditional values. He is able to weave these sets of "benign" beliefs into his own script. Among these values, Alexander sincerely adopts the concepts of brotherhood, internationalist equity, universal justice, and altruistic work towards the bright future promised by communist rhetoric. In his self narratives, he is ready to practice these ideas consistently, without acting "false," as long as they fit into his other beliefs.

Alexander's narrative embraces large sets of pure values adopted from the Soviet world, but only those values that he can naturally accept. Perhaps, Alexander's belonging to the dominant Soviet narrative is deeper than it appears in the stories of other Soviet survivors, who also lived between worlds. However, the core of his life script is anchored in the values that originated from the indestructible roots instilled by family and Jewish tradition. It can be said that Alexander's pre-existing, traditionally rooted anchor script prevented the adverse realities from entering his genuine self.

Hanna: "You know your roots are Jewish. You can believe it or not, you can want it or not, your roots have already grown – it's impossible to cut them out"

I met Hanna through my community work in Calgary. She was born in Dnepropetrovsk (Ukraine), in a religious Jewish family. During the war, she fled to Kazakhstan where she survived together with her parents. Her brother was killed in the front line, and many of Hanna's extended family members were murdered.

Hanna's story evokes a strong sense of continuity from her childhood throughout her growth into an adult, and into her later life. Her narratives speak to personal and intergenerational continuity, and her universal script is based on drawing her strength from traditional spiritual wisdom. Her language is simple, down-to-earth, and powerful; her statements are strong and unequivocal, and the music of her speech is distinctive, genuinely Jewish (she can speak six languages, but has always spoken Yiddish at home). Hanna is an outstanding storyteller. As she constructs her story, she often refers to her parents and her childhood. Not unlike Maya, Hanna postulates,

> My parents were my foundation, they were my foundation, and though they did not give me high education, they gave me a Jewish education that is very high. (Hanna July 24, 2008 Part 1, 237-254)

The images of her parents permeate her entire life story: "When I feel low, it supports me that I pray, and [I know that] my mother prayed, and she is still praying for me today, and my father too ... wherever they are" (Hanna July 24, 2008 Part 1, 156-166). Hanna keeps attached to her roots, and this vital connection keeps her strong. The parents' leitmotif, together with her childhood stories, and stories about raising her own children, create a narrative quilt of a fundamental intergenerational continuity and attachment to traditional roots:

> Everything I know, my children know too, and they are interested too. My mother used to always tell my daughter about her parents and her nine brothers and sisters. If my daughter were here today, at this table, she would tell everything exactly as I am telling you. She understands absolutely everything in Yiddish, but she cannot speak, because my mother and father – when I got married, we lived together in our apartment. So when they needed to share some secrets with each other, they said it in Yiddish, so that the children could not hear, so they do not tell anybody else. And my daughter grasped it! (with a laugh). (Hanna July 24, 2008 Part 1, 1-15)

Hanna is the only person in this study's sample group who never received any formal postsecondary schooling. However, she has mastered the depth of an alternative, cultural knowledge of a very special sort. She is so knowledgeable in the orthodox Jewish ways of life that the wife of Calgary Hassidic rabbi trusted her to be a nanny for her children. She worked for the rabbi for a few years after her arrival in Calgary. For a Soviet émigré, being entrusted with such a responsibility was an extraordinary recognition, of which Hanna is very proud. The nature of her "very high" Jewish education unravels through the many facets of Hanna's narrative, and indeed appeared as a foundation of her resilient life story.

Passion and respect for knowledge, as a general motif, reiterates in Hanna's life story, despite her own lack of formal schooling. This universal script of almost every Jewish narrative is enacted in Hanna's stories about her daughter and grandchildren, in which the chain of intergenerational connections can be distinctly traced. Hanna gave high musical education to her daughter, who now teaches the violin. It was Hanna's mother who insisted on teaching the child music (the mother was illiterate and could not sign her name). Following the steps of Hanna's daughter, her granddaughter became a musician too. Hanna's grandson also received a high and prestigious education and became a lawyer. She is very proud of all the children. She is especially proud of them because they remain close to their roots; she managed to pass her Jewish education on to the children, despite the overwhelming pressure of the Soviet environment in which she raised them.

Hanna's narrative includes the motif of living "between worlds" in the Soviet environment, which echoes a similar motif in the other survivors' stories. However, Hanna's story is distinct from the others' in that she builds her own Jewish world much further from the other, general Soviet part of her existence. The wall she constructs between the two worlds is also much stronger and taller. She accepts almost nothing from the dominant Soviet rhetoric or prevalent Russian culture. Her first stories that describe the vast distance between the two worlds relate to her childhood, when her family secretly kept orthodox Jewish tradition in the midst of the hostile Soviet Ukrainian world. Hanna and her brother knew from a young age how to distinguish between the two realities of their lives, and understood which of the two realities was the main and more vital for them. Hanna's childhood story easily intertwines with the story of her raising her daughter, who grew up with the same secrets, under the same threats, and adamantly attached to the same roots:

> My daughter knew it very well – she did not tell anything outside the home, even what you ate at home, and what it looks like at home, she would not tell [at school]. Because there were some people, non-Jewish, who were nosy and wanted to know. She would never tell about the candles we used to light [for Shabbat]. Because she felt it must not be talked about, she just felt it, just like me, when I was a child. Don't tell, nobody must know. But if you ask her, she would know it all. (Hanna July 24, 2008 Part 1, 17-25)

Hanna kept a Jewish home and tradition at all times, which is an extraordinary accomplishment for a family living in the Soviet Ukraine throughout the most dangerous years after the war. In 1973, Hanna left for Israel among the first few Soviet Jews who were allowed to emigrate after a long time of prohibition. The way Hanna speaks about Israel is illustrative. Her tone changes and she shines when she describes her spiritual connection with this land. Her mother died in Israel, and Hanna considers it a divine sign for a righteous person (a universal traditional story of connection with the Holly Land):

> [My mother] was a righteous Jewish soul, and it was in Israel that she passed. She went from Poland to Ukraine, through Kazakhstan and Chernovtzy, but she came to Israel [to die]. (Hanna July 24, 2008 Part 2, 46)

The script of willful independence of the realities of the Soviet state is a significant element in Hanna's mastering her memories of the Holocaust. Her "disengagement" from the Soviet realities (which appears in many survivors' stories, as a nearly universal strategy) has supported her immunity against the overwhelming silence that surrounded the Holocaust. Hanna maintains that because of her vital connection with her family and her community, in which the stories of suffering and survival were always validated, the oppressive silence did not affect her. Her individual narrative is immersed into the broader, familial and communal narratives about the historical events, and thus lives beyond the dominant ideological discourse. To my question about her feelings regarding the ideology of silencing the memory of the Holocaust, Hanna offers an unambiguous answer:

> It did not bother us at all. We lived our own lives before the war, during the war, and after the war – all on our own ... Our father had seen enough of what was done to the Jews before the war and after the war, and he perceived it very [emotionally], and he knew everything ... But we did not talk to anyone about it, because it was very dangerous, it was dangerous to express your views to other people, because you never knew what the others were up to ... We used to talk about everything among ourselves, we use to tell everything to each other, but it did not bother us absolutely [that it was silenced on the outside]. (Hanna July 24, 2008 Part 1, 294-300)

Hanna's narratives of loyalty to her familial kinship, religious tradition, and cultural roots appear essential for her making sense of historical events and her individual past experiences. Through these narratives, she can voice the meanings that she attributes to suffering and survival. Hanna's judgement is unyielding:

> I wish the Jews never forgot their Jewish roots ... We have all experienced the same [suffering], some more and some less ... They persecuted the Jews, and there were very hard years [of the war], and the years of hunger. This impacted the Jews more than all the other populations of the country. So why should one refuse to light the candles on Shabbat? Is it too difficult? Are they too expensive, these two candles? I don't understand why one should reject that. If I am a Jew, and Hitler had nearly killed me, then probably there is some reason that I wasn't killed, so why should I abandon my faith after all that? Why? Lama? [Hebrew for why] Is there an answer to this question? No, there is no such answer. (Hanna July 24, 2008 Part 2, 17-32)

Hanna tells me about some emotional discomforts and symptoms that she attributes to her returning memories of the past: the episodes of "depression" (as she names it), with intrusive fears and dreams. She offers an explanation, "It did not happen to me before, when I was young, but this (pause) maybe it is because I am more mature, and I give it more thought now" (Hanna July 24, 2008 Part 1, 229-237). She is managing, and asserts that all her life, she had some inner strength that supported her always and supports her now. To my question about the source of this strength, she explains,

> What is my strength? It is that I am a Jew and I am not afraid ... This was my baggage – that's how it was – this is what nobody in my life can take away from me, and this was my strength ... There were many other things that were not important at all, but this was important ... (Hanna July 24, 2008 Part 1, 314-319)

Anchor Scripts of Power, Agency, and Choice

Each of the survivors' anchor scripts is multifaceted and unique. Some overarching scripts can be followed through the narratives of many survivors, but although akin to each other, the scripts are as diverse as the participants' life stories. Among the great variety of meanings conveyed by the survivors' scripts, the most significant are the overarching concepts of power, agency, and choice.

One of the universal power scripts is the script of hard work, "When I am overwhelmed with pain, I work hard and this gives me refuge." There are countless facets to this universal script. It can mean finding meaning in helping others, "I work hard to always help people," or working hard on one's passionate pursuits, "I keep my brain and my soul busy with work that I passionately love." Other facets of this script can be enacted in selfless giving, "I work to help others and ask nothing in return, so I find meaning in my work," or bringing good into the world, "I find my purpose in working hard to make a statement and serve humanity."

The script of hard work speaks of power and agency. One of the other similar scripts is the script of a quest for taking control over one's own life, "The human being makes himself, and I can make something from my life." Power and agency can be also enacted through the universal script of learning and valuing the knowledge, "I take power over a threatening situation by mastering the knowledge."

The general script of a change agent is also central in many narratives and has many facets. It can be followed through the personal script of a fearless rebel, a fighter, Bar Kokhba, “When I am hurt by injustice, I do not accept it and always fight back, because I can change the world.” In other narratives, the script of a fighter involve less risk, but rather speaks of taking responsibility for surviving and protecting others, “When we are threatened, I never give up and fight for survival.”

In other survivors’ narratives, the script of a fighter is not central. In these stories, power and agency take the shape of a script of disengaging through making one’s choice, “I did not take it into my soul,” “I disengage from the lies and choose to live my own life.” The script of disengaging might express the motifs that echo the script of pursuit, “I disengage from threat and lies; instead, I engage in pursuit of fulfillment, knowledge, and construct my own life.” The agency is also spelled out in the script of disengaging through willfully choosing one’s beliefs, “When I am challenged with lies, I choose my beliefs and am earnest; I am never false.”

Yet other scripts are based on the power of communal kinship, such as the script of kinship support, “I rely on the love of my kin,” and the script of tenacious communal resistance, “To resist threat, we stick together, preserve our values, and remain who we are.” The script of holding on to one’s roots also speaks of the power of choice, “My strength is that I am a Jew and I am not afraid.”

The power of making one’s choice is a common facet of many scripts, such as the script of following serendipity, “When a miracle comes my way, I recognize it and choose to act tenaciously to hold on to it,” or the script of gratitude to fate, “I choose to be grateful for what I have.” The power of the keeper’s script is a special one. This is an age-old script of enacting individual and collective agency despite oppression, “When I grieve my losses, I find meaning in passing the warning message on to the others.” The other universal and age-old script, “I carry inside me everything that is mine,” also spells out the freedom of choice and powerful spiritual resistance.

Soviet child survivors’ anchor scripts appeared in their diverse story plots, being enacted at different times and life stages, in various situations, and by multiple actors in the storylines. In each individual life story, specific anchor scripts comprised a unique, recognizable personal pattern of power, agency, and choice. Once discovered, these salutary scripts rendered the storyteller’s explanatory personal theory of survival and resilience.

Common Properties of Anchor Scripts

Individual narratives of the study’s participants were diverse. The separate, idiographic analysis of each life narrative revealed distinct individual patterns of story construction, which reflected the survivors’ strategies of making sense of their life events and personal identity – the explanatory scripts embedded in their storylines. Having studied the narrative patterns individually, I proceeded to examine the abstract common properties of the survivors’ scripts, in a nomothetic analysis of their general patterns. The following conceptualization cuts across the individual anchor scripts, with the goal to discover common features within the vast variety of survivors’ stories.

“Omnia Mea Mecum Porto”

From a number of survivors, in different contexts, I heard a Latin proverb: “Omnia mea mecum porto” (“All that is mine, I carry with me”). The meaning of this saying is commonly interpreted in association with the essential and indestructible value of knowledge and education. As opposed to material wealth or access to social privileges that can be destroyed or taken away, the accumulated internal wealth of knowledge, meanings, and values will always securely remain with the person. The “omnia mea” constitutes a part of what the person is – a part of one’s identity, the entity carried within oneself. This part of one’s identity cannot be taken away, and therefore has a protective power, as a universal internal space of refuge from the hostility, losses, humiliation, and wounds inflicted by the outer world.

The salutary power of the anchor scripts of the survivors’ stories is akin to the concept of *omnia mea.* Anchor scripts are constructed and reenacted as part of one’s life story, so that they represent the indestructible part of the narrator’s identity. By creating and tenaciously holding on to these value-ridden scripts, the person can construct and nourish those parts of his or her self that stand outside of trauma. Therefore, the person’s self is no longer solely defined by the painful experiences of the past (the Holocaust) or the present (stigma and oppression of anti-Semitism, or the challenges of aging). The important property of all anchor scripts is their characteristic of being *carried within* the person, thus providing a stable and meaningful space within one’s identity.

Action and Meaning Making

Anchor scripts, as an abstract category, are understood as a representation of two interrelated facets: the scripts of *action* and the patterns of *meaning making*. Many individual narrative patterns can be understood as simple scripts of action. Soviet survivors’ stories present multiple examples of such action: engaging in meaningful hard work, keeping and passing the message, accomplishing challenging intellectual tasks, working to bring good into the world, and selflessly helping other people. Anchor scripts can be presented also as acts of meaning making within one’s identity and life history. With respect to meaning making, personal beliefs or spiritual values, through being woven into the lived storylines, become indestructible, protective personal possessions. Some examples of these values in the survivors' stories are the value of knowledge, the purpose of surviving "to tell the others," the value of being embraced by the others of one's kin, religious and spiritual values, and the meaning of cultural and kinship roots. The valued meanings are constantly reenacted in various action scripts within multiple individual storylines.

Intentionality and the Later Life Stage

Both action and meaning making aspects of the anchor scripts, in the survivors' stories, are the functions of active agency. *Intentionality* is a common feature of the Soviet survivors' anchor script. The narrators often clearly articulate their strategies of resilience, and reflect on their intentional, deliberate practicing of these strategies. As the survivors recount their life stories, the history of constructing their anchor scripts unfolds.

The recounted history of creating an anchor script often begins from the inception of the script, as, for example, in a childhood story about a favourite teacher or a mentor, a story of being rescued, or a parent's life story that spells out the narrator's adopted personal script. The narrator often interprets the story of inception from the perspective of their present knowledge (for example, the present feeling of gratitude towards a teacher whose name the narrator did not memorize as a child, when she did not realize the full meaning of the event). Further, the narratives lead the listener to the understanding of the anchor scripts' rich development, as the scripts are revealed in the narrator's interpretation of various life situations. The survivors present chains of stories that are similarly plotted and joined together through the same meaningful scripts, for example, chains of storylines about serendipitous events, about actions taken to learn and receive education, or about tenacious struggles for keeping the religious tradition.

The intentionality of developing and maintaining life script development is a feature that cuts across many narratives, as the aging survivors now recount their life experiences. The feature of intentionality of the aging survivors' narratives is associated with *life stage*. Many survivors note that it is only now, with age, that they have become able to realize and explain their past experiences. They now give more thought to their memories. The aging storytellers often appear aware of their past actions towards the active script development. Throughout their life stories, survivors describe experiencing and re-experiencing their salutary scripts, and often consciously register and articulately explain the emergent pattern. Many are articulate in explaining their resilience strategies, and able to conceptualize their skills of purposeful development and cultivating their adopted anchor scripts.

Relation to Resilience: Strategy and Outcome

The survivors' ability to create and reenact their anchor scripts can be interpreted as both their *strategy* of resilience and the resilient *outcome* of their posttraumatic recovery.

The dual connection of anchor scripts to resilience, as both a strategy and an outcome, emerged naturally from the survivors' narratives, and thus do not suggest any contradiction. On the one hand, the survivors have been active agents in constructing their anchor scripts, and remain active agents in their later years. This form of active agency suggests the developing and implementing of a strategy of resilience. The survivors' salient scripts have been constantly constructed, reconstructed, and implemented in various situations during their lives.

On the other hand, once created, the anchor scripts become a vital resource of one's individual resilience, an asset that belongs to their personal identity and cannot be taken away. Consequently, the survivors' richly developed individual scripts of resilience represent an important outcome of their life's work – an acquired individual quality of a survivor, which can be evaluated as an outcome, or an ability to spring back that resulted from the application of their adopted strategies.

Undercurrent: Hidden Below Mainstream Discourse

In the Soviet context of anti-Semitism and silence, most meaningful and salutary images of the survivors' narratives were immersed in forbidden tradition or silenced realities (e.g., Jewish religious symbols, the old world's values and histories, and resistance against the oppression). Therefore, many essential stories had to remain hidden below the surface of mainstream discourse, as if *undercurrent.*

The salutary and identity-defining scripts that I called undercurrent could be both vital for the person's resilience and stigmatizing in the dominant environment. As we have seen from the narratives of Soviet child survivors, their anchor scripts often had to be placed by the narrator in the space between the dominant Soviet reality and the suppressed world of the genuine roots of these narratives. It was often difficult for the narrators, as young children and at later stages of their lives, to make sense of this division. Many elements of the survivors' identity scripts were stigmatizing (as in the story of Alexander's "too eloquent" Yiddish name), dangerous (as feeling the spiritual connection with the State of Israel), or contested by other, dominant truths (as being conscious and outspoken about the political repression). Many images could bear stigma and expose the narrator to hatred. The children's telling of their most important stories could go against their natural instinct of conformism and fitting in with their non-Jewish peers.

Communal Roots

The undercurrent, hidden nature of the survivors' scripts is associated with their other important property: their *communal roots.* Because these stories often did not fit into the dominant discourse, they could be voiced and validated only within the survivors’ communities. Therefore, communal support was the core condition of the Soviet child survivors’ ability to develop their anchor script of resilience.

Most of the storytellers consciously relate, in revisiting their life histories, to the roots of their story development. The stories about the inception and development of the survivors’ major anchor scripts are often related to significant people in their community groups. The roots of the survivors’ scripts are almost always communal. They include other people as initiators (e.g., following the example of one’s parents or rescuers), central agents (e.g., other Jews rescuing and embracing the person, validating her story), or recipients of the narrator’s actions (e.g., the recipients of the message passed by the keeper, or the recipients of help given by the storyteller). Some stories include others in the community as spiritual guides (e.g., the narrator’s intellectual and moral mentors). The source of many major anchor scripts can be clearly located by the storyteller within the common stories told in the community.

The sources of the survivors’ personal anchor scripts are often rooted in the collective narratives and universal, traditional stories of their communities (e.g., the religious narratives, the collective memories about Jewish history, or collectively shared literature). The connection between child survivors’ anchor scripts and their communities’ narratives emerged as a core component of the survivors’ posttraumatic healing (the theory that explains this connection is presented in Chapter Six).

Coexistence of Resilience and Trauma

The anchor scripts in the participants' accounts are often shadowed by the leitmotifs of irresolvable pain and sorrow. The storyteller’s script of resilience often intertwines and coexists with the storylines of loss and grief, as in the stories about rescue in the ghetto, working hard to overcome one’s painful memories, or following the values instilled by a lost parent. The complex coexistence of *trauma* and *resilience scripts* is another property of the anchor scripts that is common in the Soviet survivors' narratives.

Throughout the survivors' stories, the listener can notice the presence of the wounded part of the storyteller's self, expressed in the images and storylines that evoke the insurmountable sense of pain, interconnected with the intentionally emphasized scripts of resilient agency. There are still some spaces within the storyteller's wounded self, which the survivor is not ready to revisit. Some of the memories remain untold. At times, the existence of this pain seems to be the very purpose for the narrator's developing of the tenacious scripts of survival. Along with the indestructible values of the resilience scripts within the survivors' "omnia mea," the survivors also carry with them their painful memories and unresolved grief. These parts of the narrator's self, too, cannot be taken away.

Perhaps, the schematic relationship between the resilient self and the traumatic memories can be imagined through the utterance of a Holocaust survivor cited by Langer (2003): "I don't live with it. It lives with me" (p. 358). From the survivors' narratives I understood that the ability to *master* the traumatic memories through creating anchor scripts is not the exact concept, in the interpretation of the survivors. Their memories of pain and loss continue to "live with" their resilient selves, often with no possibility of complete integration or mastering. It is questionable whether the survivors ever can become masters of their traumatic memories. However, in their narratives, the survivors appear as skilled masters and active agents of creating, developing, and living their meaningful anchor scripts of resilience.

Summary

The analysis presented in this chapter was founded on aging Soviet child survivors' narratives about their past and present life events. In their stories about recent events, their major anchor scripts remained as meaningful as they were in their earlier narratives. There was no interruption, within the chains of the participants' life stories, between their ways of explaining their coping and fulfillment then and now, except for their current ability to reflect more deeply and analyse their history. According to the analysis of the interviews, the participants' current patterns of storytelling and resilient meaning making have seamlessly embraced the patterns that they have constructed for themselves and practiced earlier in their lives.

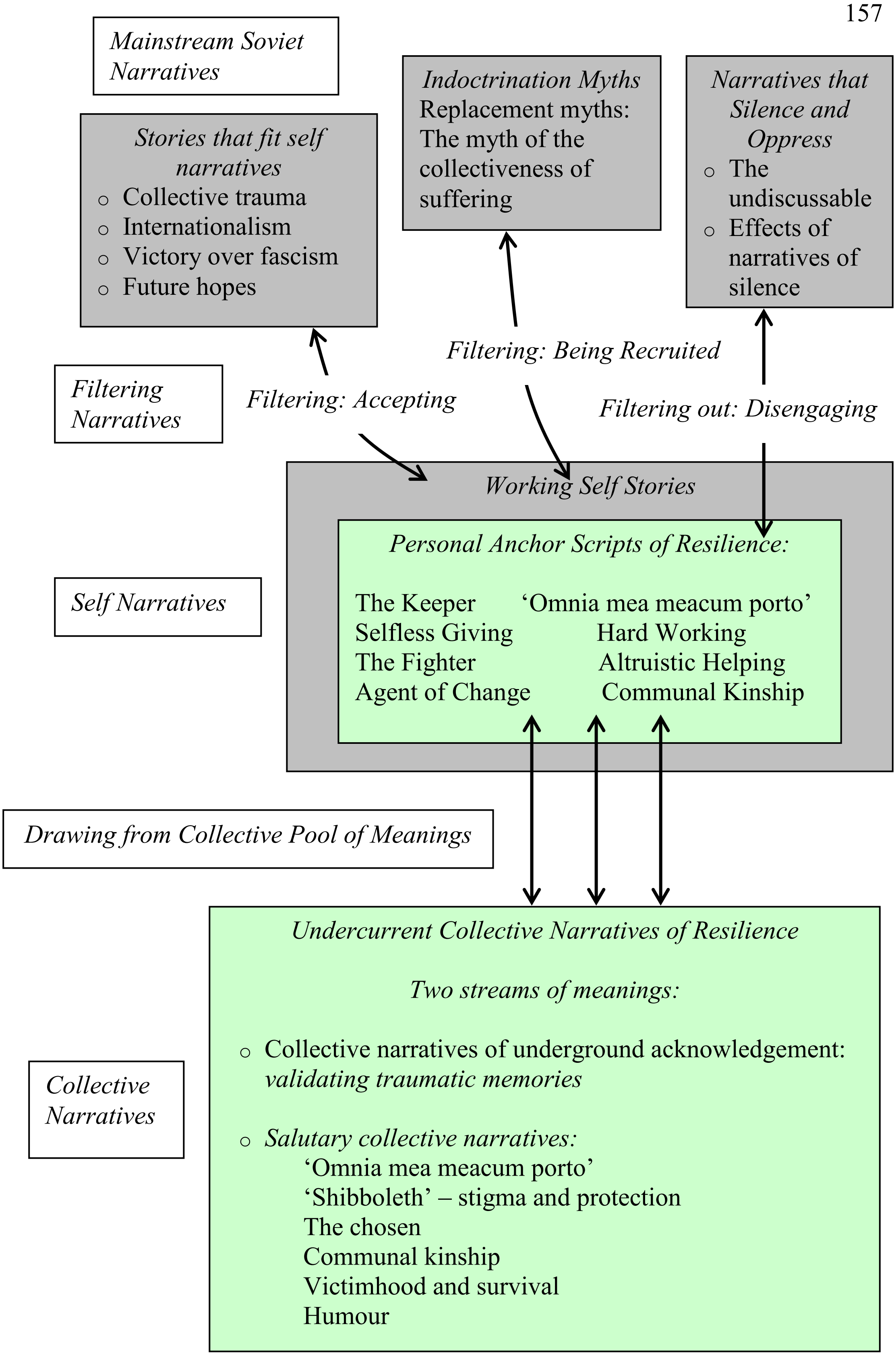
In this chapter, I focused on the analysis of the participants' individual patterns of resilience, and only briefly referred to their stories' connection with the narratives of their social environment. However, individual narratives of Soviet child survivors' consistently refer to the powerful impact of their social and historical environment in post-war Soviet Union that influenced their early posttraumatic recovery. The survivors' anchor scripts of resilience are connected with the collective narratives of their environments. It is important to return to the closer analysis of the social contexts of the personal narratives. The theory presented in Chapter Six is explanatory of the relationships between child survivors' anchor scripts of individual resilience and the collective narratives of their social environments: the discourses of the dominant Soviet mainstream world and the oppressed, hidden narratives of their Jewish world. The theory explains the vital importance of the Soviet survivors' connectedness with their community's undercurrent narratives for the validation and rich development of their individual anchor scripts.

CHAPTER SIX

A THEORY OF NARRATIVES OF RESILIENCE

In Chapter Five, the analysis of individual life stories narrated by Soviet child survivors revealed their individual strategies of resilience in the face of the trauma of the Holocaust and post-war totalitarian oppression. Their individual narratives were saturated with the motifs related to the collective narratives about Jewish values, culture, and collective memories about the historical tragedies, injustices, and resilient survival. The connection between the individual anchor scripts and the collective Jewish narratives emerged as a major overarching factor. This positions the individual resilience strategies of Soviet Jewish child survivors in the context of collective narratives of Jewish communities and, at the same time, within the context of Soviet mainstream society.

Figure 1 outlines the major concepts of the theory which provides structure for the chapter. I begin in the first section by introducing the construct of *undercurrent narratives* and explaining their significance for individual resilience. I continue by explaining how the participants lived between the world of mainstream Soviet discourse and the undercurrent world of Jewish collective narratives. In the third section I focus on the impact of mainstream Soviet collective narratives on child survivors, and discuss how participants constructed self stories that allowed them to succeed within Soviet society. In the fourth section, I focus on the world of Jewish collective narratives, their properties, and major scripts that supported posttraumatic healing. I conclude by extending the discussion from the focus on the survivors' adult life strategies and narratives to the implications of collective narratives for their childhood and later life (Figure 2).


Mainstream Soviet Narratives
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Salutary collective narratives:
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Victimhood and survival
Humour

Figure 1. Narratives of Resilience in Soviet Jewish Survivors of the Holocaust.

Undercurrent Narratives of Resilience

Posttraumatic recovery of Soviet child survivors was occurring in the environment of their country's dominant discourse of silencing the memory of the Holocaust. They did not have the privilege of openly voicing their traumatic memories, nor were they granted the benefit of societal acknowledgement. However, the collective narratives of oppressed Soviet Jewry represented alternative scripts, in which the same events were given alternative meanings. The personal narratives of the members of Jewish communities were immersed in these silenced collective stories.

I called these silenced, but tenaciously maintained stories *undercurrent narratives.* These stories are invisible from the mainstream dominant discourse surface, but secretly thrive within the marginalized Jewish communities. Undercurrent narratives intertwine with the dominant narratives or defy them, while remaining purposefully silenced by the mainstream. In the context of oppression, these age-old narratives are cherished and maintained by the members of marginalized groups, because they support their collective resilience and protect their identity.

From the individual perspective, sharing these alternative scripts with the group could rationalize and justify the *personal undercurrent anchor scripts* that also had to be hidden below the surface of mainstream discourse. These hidden personal stories could be validated by something greater than personal experiences, namely by the communal affirmation of the entire group. Thus, collective narratives had a protective and meaning-making power in the face of the hostility of the outside world.

Nearly all participants in this study related to the Soviet dominant oppressive stories as significant in their lives, and I was struck by the realization of a subtle connection between the forced silence and child survivors' individual posttraumatic healing. This realization was unexpected, but its explanation came in the survivors' responses to my probing questions. Their responses were so markedly similar to each other that it is relevant to refer to this illustrative statement offered by Lydia:

> But to me it seems that there is no such great dependence, well ... in fact, it is not so at all. To me it seems that there is no such thing in the Jews – such great dependence on what is happening around them; it is also one of their characteristic features that they are somehow ... by their inner essence they are protected from all this. The very awareness that he is supported by his own … this feeling of certain exceptionality – being the chosen – there is such thing, and it protects the person … Well, I don't give a damn (laughs) ... I am chosen by God (laughs) ... [The Jews] did not give a damn; they knew everything about their own troubles, so to say, and they were surrounded by people … who were close to them and with whom they shared their views, and this, I think it was quite enough for a Jew that he always had support from his own people. (Lydia Nov2006 Part 2, 181-207)

The existing communal support protected survivors from the overwhelming ideological and political pressure. Shared undercurrent communal knowledge provided a confirmation to the silenced personal narratives of the group's members. This confirmation served as an antidote to the oppressive social silence, which had no central significance for the survivors' individual posttraumatic healing.

Self Narratives: Living Between Two Worlds

Jewish child survivors' early healing and adjustment upon liberation were defined by the two worlds to which they belonged. On the one hand, in order survive again and grow in their given environment, Jewish children had to blend in and identify with mainstream society and become at one with the common Soviet post-war narratives. On the other hand, their identities were defined by the world of their marginalized and fragmented Jewish communities. The knowledge of the latter world was closely intertwined with the grave memories of persecution and loss.

Both worlds were vital in the Jewish child survivors' early post-war adjustment and healing. Therefore, vital significance pertained to the interplay and conflict between the collective narratives of the two worlds. Making sense of this parallel existence was a hard task for someone who struggled with the unresolved consequences of severe trauma, and was particularly sensitive to rejection and silencing. At times, the burden of belonging to a marginalized group made the children vulnerable, considering their desire to be accepted among their peers.

To adjust and grow, the children had to develop two stories about themselves, each to fit into the picture of one of the two distinct worlds: one rooted in their Jewish identity and personal anchor scripts, and another lived by the adopted scripts of the Soviet mainstream world (see Figure 1). The latter self narratives perfectly blended and worked with their given environment: the working self stories between worlds.

Working Stories Between Two Worlds

Immediately after the war, child survivors’ first priority was to return to regular life, pursue higher education, and build their future. They could not afford to let the past trauma define their present lives. Blending in was natural, because Jewish children could identify with many Soviet mainstream stories and feel at one with their non-Jewish peers. They were able to construct their personal working stories to fit the standard, dominant Soviet narratives.

Because of the universality of war trauma in the Soviet Union, Jewish survivors’ “legitimate” working self narratives could include the memories of loss, suffering, or having been orphaned. These experiences were not specifically Jewish. The legitimate discourse allowed for expressing the desire to take vengeance on the enemy (e.g., fighting with the partisans or in the Soviet Army). However, the working story could not have any Jewish content in the atmosphere of Soviet marginalization of the Jews. The accounts of specifically Jewish suffering, such as incarceration in ghettos or escaping from death marches or mass shooting were untellable to outsiders.

Liza’s story is illustrative of constructing the working stories between worlds. Immediately after liberation, during her journey to reunite with her brother, Liza learned her first lessons of telling the legitimate part of her story, which caused compassion because it resonated in the minds of her random non-Jewish listeners,

> Oh, it happened so many times... they [the Soviet militia] used to catch children in every train station. There were very many orphans... those who did not have documents were sent to orphanages... but I had good documents that I was going to my brother... It happened so many times... The train stops, and there is a village nearby... and a woman comes up and begins talking to me, ‘What, are you traveling alone?’ – ‘Alone,’ – ‘Where are you going?’ – ‘To my brother,’ and I begin to cry, the same moment... And she, ‘I have a lunch left over today, take it, eat the sandwich.’ And the bread was [precious] by cards only ... You know, everything assimilated in me during this journey of nearly a month and a half. So many people gave me their kindness and cared about me, even militia men – you know what kind of people usually work in militia – but even they, oh, they felt so sorry for me – of course, I showed them the documents that I had... Nothing Jewish was on my mind... (Liza Feb 22, 2008 part 1, 446-523)

As Liza describes herself at that time, she was too small for her age, a child with frequent tears in her expressive eyes, emaciated and exhausted. The story that she was telling reached her listeners as a story of a lost orphan, a perfect story of innocent suffering (her “good documents” also made her story legitimized). There was a strong appeal of a happy resolution that the listeners must have craved to hear (reunited with her brother, she would be protected and safe). Liza could filter out the Jewish part of her narrative because it was irrelevant to the resonance of validation or, rather, she intuitively felt that it could interfere with this resonance.

In Liza’s story, her Jewish memories emerged when she met her future husband. I asked Liza what happened with her “assimilation,” and she responded,

> And then I got into this family... I came to meet [my husband's] parents... They spoke Yiddish and looked at me like this... my mother-in-law, she was so kind... When we first met, I came in, and she embraced me, and we wept together for half a day, we could not say a word, and then she says, ‘You are my daughter, [long lost and] found’ (crying, pause). She had a girl like me [killed by the Nazis]. She loved me so much … so I cannot blame my fate; as I

> say, people in my life did so many kind, good things for me. (Liza Feb 22, 2008 part 1, 588-607; 646-716)

This moment of sudden shared tears and the feeling of complete emotional unity marked the outburst of forcibly suppressed memories that unexpectedly became safe to express. This episode was a turning point in Liza's journey. Liza recalls her connection with her newly found family as the beginning of her difficult healing; she notes, "They helped me out of where I came from," out of her pain of trauma and loss.

Many child survivors developed such perfectly legitimate (and perfectly true) working stories that led them through the obstacles and threats of the system, towards their goal of adjustment. For example, Fira and Maya told stories of adjustment in their careers, and Alexander recalled his perfect blending in with his newfound responsibility when he was in evacuation. In these stories, the Jewish identity of the narrator had little or no relevancy. The outside self narratives helped the children play by the socially imposed rules and fit in their environments. These were the strategies well familiar to Jewish child survivors around the world (Krell, 1999).

Semyon Dodik's (2004b) memoir gives an account of his first job application after the war, which included his written autobiography (a common Soviet practice). This story could not include the words *Jew* or *ghetto,* and he had to filter out any "illegitimate" Jewish fragments of his experiences. Semyon recalls creating this working story together with his entire family who helped him with his filtering task: "We extremely simplified my complex history of surviving under occupation, to avoid unnecessary questions" (p. 56). Semyon had risked his life to save his fellow inmates from execution, but this heroic story had to remain untold too, because it could not be purified of its Jewish content for public presentation.

Echoing Liza's story and the stories of other participants in this study, Semyon's account speaks about the collective effort of solidarity and validation (his presentable story was created with the input of his family). It was not that painful to cut his Jewish self out of his presentable identity, because there were people who knew and accepted who he was. The practice of constructing the story was often a collective strategy, in which people routinely supported each other.

Mainstream Soviet Narratives

The mainstream discourse had a powerful impact on child survivors' lives. Among many post-war Soviet narratives, the immediate relevancy in this study pertains to stories related the war and the Holocaust. It is important to understand how Soviet child survivors adopted, rejected, or lived by these mainstream narratives.

Filtering Narratives

The major strategy of selective adopting or rejecting the mainstream world's narratives can be explained as the *filtering* of these narratives against one's inherent belief system. Soviet child survivors shared with their non-Jewish peers many collective narratives that supported their struggle to make sense of the events. However, some dominant narratives silenced, oppressed, and conflicted with the children's memories and undercurrent values, and thus had a potential to inhibit the processes of their posttraumatic healing.

The analysis of the participants' stories revealed three categories of narratives within the Soviet dominant discourse, with respect to the survivors' filtering strategies (see Figure 1). The first two categories related to the survivors' blending in with the mainstream world and constructing their working self stories. First, the filtering resulted in the accepting of some stories that *fit the self narratives* of the survivors.

Second, child survivors often became recruited into the Soviet *indoctrination myths* that permeated their social worlds. The totalitarian indoctrination forces were irresistible, and Jewish children often adopted the narratives of this category. Being recruited into believing these myths could damage the children's ability to make sense of the events of their lives. The narratives of the third category of the Soviet discourse could be never accepted by child survivors, because they conflicted with the very core of their beliefs. The survivors disengaged from these narratives. This last category included dominant narratives *that silenced and oppressed*.

Stories that Fit Self Narratives

Mainstream narratives that appealed to the survivors' human and traditional values could be adopted as their own. These "benign" interpretations of reality could be woven into their individual stories – the working self stories between worlds. As we have seen in Chapter Five, these narratives included the stories of internationalist brotherhood, equality, and the communist ideas of universal justice and altruism. These idealistic scripts could fit naturally with the survivors' personal meanings.

The mainstream Soviet narratives of suffering during the war were relevant for practically all Soviet citizens, and were also accepted by Jewish survivors. The entire Soviet people experienced the enormity of war-time and post-war suffering. Almost every family, regardless of their ethnicity, had suffered losses and hardships. Across the country and among all its citizens, every aspect of life was affected by post-war devastation, poverty, and distress. Hence, the Soviet collective narratives of suffering intertwined with the stories of the Jewish tragedy.

Sharing the experiences of the Soviet people's national trauma became a significant part of Jewish child survivors' early individual narratives. Many of this study's participants reported feeling at one with the Soviet people and sharing the common beliefs of the post-war Soviet Union. As Maya noted about Abram, "It so happened in his life that, having been a soldier in the front line during the war, having spilled his blood for this country, he was brought up this way*"* (Maya April 2005 part 3, 557-560). These Soviet narratives worked naturally with the survivors' individual and collective stories, for example, the ideas of international unity and resistance in fighting against German fascism. The survivors' genuine values did not become compromised as they adopted these elements of the official discourse. In the words of Alexander, "We Jews do not know how to be false [in our beliefs]."

Indoctrination Myths: Being Recruited

Because of the immersion in the universal context of Soviet post-war realities, child survivors often became recruited into believing the Soviet myths of their time.

As part of myth creation, Soviet authorities used the general strategy of manipulating the devastating effects of Soviet war trauma in order to replace the undesirable knowledge about the facts of political abuse. As a replacement myth, the Soviet regime constructed powerful narratives about the Soviet people's righteous suffering and heroism during the war. Narratives of pure righteousness of Soviet socialism served to guarantee the bright future under the socialist leadership. Along with pride in the victory and the grandiose dreams for the future, Soviet public consciousness was permeated by artificially-fueled, oversized collective vigilance towards the alleged "enemies of the people." The loss of over 20 million Soviet lives also served as an ideological foundation for the myth of indiscriminate *collectiveness* of Soviet people's suffering. Through this myth, the regime denied the scope of the Jewish historical tragedy and ignored the loss of Jewish lives as a separate category of victims. The Jewish experiences during the war were utterly silenced.

The narratives of Soviet collectiveness and victorious heroism, together with the post-war enthusiastic call for selfless work towards the communist future, fit effectively into the entire people's natural desire for a rational and positive explanation of the past, validation of their present suffering, and confirmation of their hopes for the future. The dominant totalitarian narratives were readily accepted by the majority of people, and irresistibly impacted the beliefs and values of virtually every citizen. These narratives were omnipresent in the Soviet post-war culture.

The narratives of global collectiveness in the face of shared suffering served to suppress stories about domestic political persecution and the silent suffering of marginalized groups. The myth covered such authoritarian actions as the prohibition of Jewish memorials in places of mass killings and destroying Jewish cemeteries. It justified the increasing anti-Semitism and atrocities, such as the arrest, torture, and execution of JAC members who spoke out about the Jewish people's tragedy. At the individual level, child survivors who became recruited into the collectiveness myth might have experienced a severe internal conflict between their Holocaust memories and the internalized Soviet beliefs. The indoctrination myths could suppress the personal meanings that were vital for child survivors' recovery, and therefore affect their ability to make sense of their trauma.

The dominant Soviet discourse surrounded Jewish children and permeated their social world. Judith Herman (1992) in her seminal book *Trauma and Recovery* noted that in the context of political abuse, indoctrination by the dominant myths serves the need of the existing order to be supported by bystanders and often by the victims themselves. From the perspective of the victims of such abuse, these patterns represent the perpetrator's power to reconstruct reality in a way that maintains the status quo and renders the victims and witnesses demonized or invisible. Herman conceptualized the silencing of victims as the most powerful tool of abuse, “The more powerful the perpetrator, the greater is his prerogative to name and define reality, and the more completely his arguments prevail” (p. 8).

Narratives that Silence and Oppress

There were many elements of the dominant myths that Jewish survivors could never accept, for example, the outward denial of the Jewish historical tragedy and the growing repression of innocent people denounced as “enemies.” In many survivors, the rejection of these realities involved their awareness and conscious denunciation of the rejected ideas (“I was a terrible anti-Stalinist”). However, most of those who “always knew” became silenced under the threat of persecution, and tended to consciously but quietly *disengage* (or abstract) from these realities. In other survivors, the act of disengaging involved their earnest unawareness of the rejected realities. They denied this knowledge and, for a long time, simply did not see or tried not to analyze the systemic nature of the atrocious events. They often tended to blame “bad people, lack of education” for the incidents of anti-Semitism or wrongful arrests.

Among the many totalitarian narratives of oppression and silence that were rejected by child survivors, the most relevant pertain to the silencing of the facts of political abuse and the entire reality of Jewish experiences. These narratives reflected the denial of the realities that permeated the survivors’ world, but were undiscussable within the mainstream discourse.

The undiscussable. Together with other citizens, Soviet Jewish survivors of the Nazi persecution experienced the universal war trauma. In that, they were at one with their non-Jewish compatriots. However, Jewish children also faced unparalleled adversities. During the war, they were specifically targeted by the Nazis, and were aware of the threat of total annihilation. Many of them survived atrocities about which there was no knowledge among the mainstream population. Upon liberation, Jewish children were confronted with anti-Semitism and singled out among their peers.

As we have seen from Chapter Two, it was long before the war that the Soviet authorities eliminated the world of Jewish tradition from public Soviet discourse. By the time of the war, Jewish culture had already been prohibited from the legitimate reality. Therefore, in the post-war Soviet Union, neither past nor present Jewish experiences fit into legitimate public discourse. The Jewish condition in the Soviet society became undiscussable *(undiscussable* is a term coined by Bar-On (1999) in reference to facts that are intentionally eliminated, within "totalitarian logic," from all spheres of social consciousness). The totalitarian discourse suppressed and silenced any knowledge that had a potential for raising public consciousness. Leib illustrated his story about silence with a metaphoric image of a prison, in which sharing undesirable knowledge was a crime (for Leib, this image was not metaphoric but rather literal, because he had personally experienced such abuse):

> Did I listen to Western radio stations? It was very hard to listen, I mean I always tried to listen, but you know, when the radio jamming is on . . . It's like when I was in prison, when they take the inmates to the prison yard for a walk, they turn on this noise . . . they turn on these special loud noise devices, so that the inmates could not talk to each other, so you don't hear each other even if you are close. So it was like this, when you tried to listen to those radio stations. (Leib October 21, 2005 part 2, 129-171)

The undiscussable space within Soviet public discourse also included the entire area of the events and conditions of totalitarian tyranny. The entire population suffered from fears and repressions of the totalitarian regime. Both Jewish and non-Jewish victims of Nazism became vulnerable to Soviet persecution after the war. In the words of Lydia, "[In our country], those who had been prisoners there, and were fortunate to return home, once again were put into their own, domestic concentration camps.” The facts of political abuse were eliminated from legitimate public knowledge. The majority of the country’s population was forced into either a paradoxical earnest ignorance, or forced into silence regarding the country-wide arrests, executions, and mass incarcerations. The knowledge about these facts became illegitimate, or socially undiscussable.

In the context of filtering the dominant narratives, child survivors disengaged from the narratives of silencing the Jewish experiences and facts of repression. However, despite the strategy of disengaging, the dominant silence greatly impacted the children’s adjustment in the world of their everyday lives in the Soviet Union.

Effects of the Narratives of Silence

Most Soviet citizens had no means to fully comprehend the extent or systemic roots of political oppression and historical revision. The oppression reached people indirectly, through the influence of their everyday world, in which their voices were muffled. In the micro-context of their immediate environment, child survivors’ experienced silencing, absence of a frame of reference for their memories, and the oppressive influence of Soviet doublespeak language that rendered them voiceless.

Forced silence. The high-level political executions, such as the JAC trial and the banning of the *Black Book,* were reenacted countless times in private, individual events that had similar meaning and followed similar patterns. Each of the life histories recounted now by Jewish child survivors includes moments akin to having their virtual personal “black books” arrested, when their individual and family stories of persecution were banned from being told. The narratives of these events were forced into secrecy and hiding, as if underground.

Many survivors recall that they felt a strong impulse to tell about their experiences, but their desire to tell was met with cold rejection:

> We survived to tell people … so they would believe it in the future! … because we [Jews] had not believed that this could happen in the 20th century, that they would kill people like this, we had not believed! ... I tell you, in all my life in Russia nobody ever asked me what I had gone through, except my own [people] of course. (Fira September 7, 2007, 304-330).

In some communities, the knowledge about the past events was secretly shared among family and close Jewish friends. Other survivors recall that such discussions rarely happened even among their families ("it was uncommon to speak about it"). In these cases, children often knew very little about the factual events, and their knowledge was limited to scattered overheard stories. However, child survivors maintain that they carried the knowledge about the Jewish tragedy "in brains, in bones" (in Leib's words). Together with their families, in the hostile environment of social silence, the children struggled to make sense of their memories.

Beyond their non-Jewish peers' rejection and family secrets, there was another, more tangible factor of silencing: the threat of political persecution. Survival under the Nazi occupation became a dangerous stigma after the war:

> The thing is that when after the war I started to work, then – God forbid – nobody knew that I was in the ghetto and all that had happened, because at that time nobody disclosed it ... because at once, if you were looking for a job ... the first question used to be, 'How come you were in a ghetto under the Germans, in the occupied territory – how come you – a Jewish girl – stayed alive?' It was all a secret. (Liza Feb 22, 2008 telephone, 22-36)

According to many survivors, disclosing their past could make them vulnerable, or threaten their freedom and future (Dodik, 2004b; Kandel, 2007).

The absence of a frame of reference. The children's environment provided many hints that made them acutely aware of the undiscussability of the facts which they carried in their memory. The history of the Holocaust seemed to have ceased to exist in the public discourse, erased from all information in the media, literature, and children's school textbooks. Within public knowledge, there was no frame of reference for the survivors' memories. Jewish child survivors' public world was saturated with the proud victorious war narratives, but there was no space within these narratives for their own stories. The silent knowledge they carried inside felt uncommon and awkward, and so felt the children among their non-Jewish peers.

Many survivors remember that they craved validation so much that any random sign or public mention of the familiar facts felt precious to them. They searched for these scarce signs, scanning through the censored Soviet publications:

> Oh! [you ask] if I wanted to read! I was interested in anything that was written about the war and about the Jews – I read everything that came my way. ... Yes! I wanted it very much – but there was not much written about what we went through. (Fira September 7, 2007 814-817, 858-863)

Searching for familiar facts or names in the legitimate discourse was an expression of the children's desire for validation, which was vital to their adjustment.

The oppressive power of language: Doublespeak. In their struggle to make sense of their experiences, the children often did not have words or conceptual constructs available to describe the facts of their past suffering and present oppression. The words *Holocaust*, or *katastropha* in Russian, did not appear in the public language until the late 1980s (Altman, 2005; Gitelman, 1999).

The Soviet mainstream ethnicity discourse and the corresponding language did not allow for public expression of one's Jewish identity, or even for verbally defining the oppression itself. The word *Jew* was virtually absent from the everyday language. Within the dominant picture of the ideal Soviet society, there was no place for racism, therefore no relevant words were pronounced, and no references to existing anti-Semitism could be made within the legitimate vocabulary. Political campaigns routinely used the words *rootless cosmopolitan* as Soviet doublespeak for *Jew.* The facts of oppression could not be named unless the word was explicitly pronounced by the oppressor, and the Jews felt powerless against the abuse,

> In general, as it is related to ethnicity, in the Soviet country, you probably know, there was only one idea – a ‘Soviet man’. A Soviet man: it was considered unseemly to even talk about different ethnicities, and we were usually brought up in this key. So I used to think about my Jewish identity only when they told me, well, that Jews are bad, and then I used to say, you fool, you don’t understand anything; let’s compare what is a Jew and what is a non-Jew. (Leib October 21, 2005 part 1, 164-176)

The myth of the Soviet people as an ethnically faceless entity eliminated the language that could support any reference to the Jewish condition, thus making all related knowledge socially “unseemly” – undiscussable. Many events recalled by child survivors were stunningly similar to each other: the rejection of a university application, the withdrawal of a gold medal upon school graduation (in Vera’s story, she was simply told, “You know why”), or discrimination without an open reason. This was an unspoken persecution, for which there was no legitimate name.

Everyday language limited the survivors’ ability to recount the events and feelings for which no words existed, or for which the words were perceived as awkward, shameful, or uncommon. Brodsky’s (1986) story is illustrative:

> The real history of consciousness starts with one's first lie. I happen to remember mine. It was in a school library when I had to fill out an application for membership. The fifth blank was of course "nationality." I was seven years old and knew very well that I was a Jew, but I told the attendant that I didn't know. ... I was ashamed of the word "Jew" itself – in Russian, "*yevrei*" – regardless of its connotations.
> A word's fate depends on the variety of its contexts, on the frequency of its usage. In printed Russian "*yevrei*" appears nearly as seldom as, say, "mediastinum" or "gennel" in American English. In fact, it also has something like the status of a four-letter word or like a name for VD. When one is seven one's vocabulary proves sufficient to acknowledge this word's rarity, and it is utterly unpleasant to identify oneself with it; somehow it goes against one's sense of prosody. (p. 7-8)

Language is shaped by collective consciousness, and through language, the collective consciousness influences the way individuals can think about their identity and history (Freedman & Combs, 1996). The environment of forced silence, together with the dominance of Soviet totalitarian discourses that enforced the inferior status of Jews and Jewish culture, strongly impacted the lives of Jewish child survivors.

However, the analysis of survivors' narratives also revealed the evidence of resistance against oppressive discourses. The resistance expressed itself in the individual and communal ability to create, preserve, and secretly share narratives of collective memories. These alternative stories were indestructible within Jewish groups, and their persistence alleviated the harmful effects of ideological suppression on the wellbeing and posttraumatic healing of individual survivors. Belonging to the Jewish communal unity became a powerful salutary factor that supported the posttraumatic recovery of young Jewish survivors of the Holocaust.

Collective Narratives of Resilience

One of the most salutary factors of the children's post-Holocaust experiences was their ability to voice their narratives of trauma that had been deemed socially "illegitimate" and silenced. Endorsed by their fragmented communities, the children found safe refuge from the dominant silence. In this space, the hidden parts of their personal stories were validated through the hidden collective narratives, as if underground. This collective *underground acknowledgement* created a protective environment for the children's recovery, development, and personal fulfillment.

It is important that there was much more to the world of Jewish collective narratives than the stories related to the trauma of the Holocaust. Along with the validation of the children's memories of suffering and loss, the communal acknowledgement also validated their stories of resilience, the undercurrent stories that pertained to their personal anchor scripts. These were the stories related to the children's pre-war memories, significant events of their childhood, their parents' teachings, beliefs, hopes, and communal values that they held dear. These *salutary collective narratives* of Soviet Jewish communities spoke of traditional beliefs, scripts of dignity and power, and the pride of age-old collective historical memory.

Thus, there were two streams of meaning within the undercurrent Jewish narratives of the post-war period. First, collective narratives allowed for the validation of trauma and loss. Second, child survivors could draw support for their personal anchor scripts from the communal pool of traditional values, solidarity, and traditional narratives. The children's access to this collective pool of essential scripts created favourable conditions for the development of their anchor scripts of resilience.

Collective Narratives of Underground Acknowledgement: Validating Trauma

Sharing memories about tragic events of the Holocaust with their fragmented Jewish communities presented a vital salutary factor for the children's posttraumatic healing. There was an environment available for child survivors, in which their voices could be expressed and heard by people with similar experiences. This was the circle of most significant listeners – people of their own kin. Because virtually all Soviet Jews had suffered the atrocities of the Holocaust, Jewish children did not experience rejection by other Jews. The imposed Soviet silence did not matter that much, as long as the environment of communal acknowledgement was available for the children.

The acknowledgement of traumatic memories most often was shaped as storytelling. The rituals of traditional collective mourning or, where possible, acts of building memorials also completed the function of collective validation. Because of the Soviet imposed taboo, these activities often had to remain undercurrent (e.g., the meaning of the memorials was well known to community members, despite the absence of visible Jewish signs because of the prohibition). This validation provided a frame of reference that was denied to the survivors by the dominant discourse.

The sharing did not necessarily involve explicit verbalization of the memories. Jewish communal groups provided child survivors not only with fellow listeners to their open recounting, but also with the understanding healers to their silent suffering, akin to Liza's mother-in-law in the story of their first meeting. The children had opportunities for sharing their feelings and expressing their mourning.

Beyond social silencing, there were many universal psychological barriers to open recounting of traumatic experiences. Many survivors recall that it was too painful for them to voice their memories. Others note that they were "too busy" to think about it. The support of communal acknowledgement was essential for the children even in cases of their individual choice of silence. When the children were unable to verbalize their memories, their internal knowledge intertwined with the stories that they were hearing from the others, thus providing them with acknowledgement. Solidarity was often expressed through simple acts of support, love, or mere presence:

> It was all a secret ... Of course my husband knew and his parents knew and all those who survived in the ghetto knew too. We never talked about it ... But we used to – you know – kind of on the sly, on the sly... My family was better off than the family that took me in [in the ghetto, after my parents were killed]. We helped them always, all my life. (Liza Feb 22, 2008 telephone, 22-56)

The accounts of the children's individual memories had to remain undercurrent within the mainstream war stories. However, the children almost always found a niche of warm acceptance and validation. Children's stories could seamlessly fit into the powerful collective "in-brains-and-bones" narratives. The opportunity of acknowledgement and Jewish communal protection defined the children's identities and helped them make sense of their experiences.

Salutary Collective Narratives

Jewish collective narratives pertained to the expression of Jewish culture, tradition, collective memory, and child survivors' kinship roots. These narratives and values could not be voiced in the dominant Soviet world. They comprised the undercurrent communal pool of meanings, from which Jewish child survivors could draw validation for their self narratives of resilience. Child survivors could maintain and richly develop their anchor scripts only with the support of the living undercurrent narratives of their communities.

In this subsection I review the content of some common collective scripts of Soviet Jewry, as they emerged from the stories of this study's participants. Because the conceptualization of these scripts emerged from the individual stories, the reader can also follow the connection between the collective and personal scripts.

Script of indestructible knowledge: Communal "omnia mea." The Latin proverb, "Omnia mea mecum porto" ("All that is mine, I carry with me") can be related not only to individual indestructible values, but also to communal, jointly owned knowledge and meanings. The communal "omnia mea" knowledge is shared between people who belong to the same culture and community, passed through generations, and between groups. Despite the oppression, ideological indoctrination, persecution, or even loss of lives, this shared collective knowledge is indestructible – it cannot be taken away from the communal narrative pool.

The jointly owned collective knowledge can penetrate into individual life stories by giving these stories common justification, or explanatory meaning. The survivors' stories often referred to their reliance on indestructible collective knowledge that cannot be taken away. They felt securely connected to this communally owned wealth of meanings ("Your roots have already grown – it's impossible to cut them out”). The survivors’ universal personal scripts, for example, the scripts of valuing knowledge, acting as “salt of the earth,” and selfless work, were rooted in the narrative connotations of Jewish culture and values.

It is remarkable that most significant underlying scripts of Soviet survivors echo each other despite the broad diversity of their individual life stories. The Soviet Jewish communal pool of meaning is shared by people who belong to geographically separated, rarely communicating social groups, for example, the Moscow elite community of Jewish intelligentsia and the traditional Jewish communities in Moldova or Ukraine. I heard similar stories and references to the same images from people from disparate ways of life, whose paths had never intersected.

Script of the chosen. The chosen is the name that Lydia gave to the widespread collective Soviet Jewish script of unconditional mutual support and the protective power of communal unity. The concept of the chosen speaks to the sense of belonging to the exclusive community of the oppressed but righteous. In Lydia’s interpretation, which is similar to the reasoning of many other survivors, the meaning of being the chosen is separated from the belief in being the best, privileged, or exceptional (“It is clear: there is nothing in the Bible about God’s choosing the Jews as people who are better than others. It’s not written anywhere”). The script of being the chosen, construed as the script of belonging to the exclusive, supportive unity of the innocently oppressed, is one of the major undercurrent scripts of power and agency that is shared within Jewish groups, overarching many other scripts discussed in this study.

The belief in the exceptionality of defiant communal knowledge presented a significant factor of communal resilience that enhanced posttraumatic healing in the victims of Nazi persecution and Soviet totalitarian abuse.

Script of victimhood and survival. The events of the Russian revolution, civil war, and its aftermath (see Chapter Two) greatly impacted the lives of Soviet Jewish families and entire communities. The individual and family psychological aftermath of trauma was but one dimension of the impact of early historical events.

The larger-scale, social dimension of trauma stories was expressed in the shaping of the collective memory of victimhood and survival of Soviet Jewry. Among various narratives of the survivors' pre-war childhood, many stories spell out the universal collective scripts of love, protection, generosity, and most importantly, the script of exclusive communal mutual trust and solidarity in the face of everlasting hostility of the outside world. Along with other atrocities of world Jewish history, the atrocities of the early 20th century in Russia and Ukraine long preceded the events of the Holocaust in feeding and maintaining the Jewish collective narratives of innocent suffering, resilient revival, and communal unity in the face of tragedy.

The age-old scripts of Jewish victimhood and survival constituted a significant part of Soviet Jewish people's pre-Holocaust collective narratives. In these narratives, the pain of trauma and anger intertwined with the pride of resilience, collective destiny, and maintaining cultural and national identity despite persecution (Kandel, 2007). These scripts of Soviet Jews echoed and corresponded with the universal, global Jewish scripts (Arendt, 1978; Derrida, 1986/2003; see also Caruth's (2003) reference to Freud comparing Jewish history to the structure of trauma).

The global sentiments of world Jewish historical narratives resonated strongly with the stories of the Jews in the pre-war Soviet Union, where the families' disturbing memories of violence were still fresh, and the substantive feeling of danger was either very recent or still present under the Soviet totalitarian regime. These essential elements of the age-old Jewish collective memory were absorbed by the generation of child survivors in their pre-Holocaust childhood.

Shibboleth: Dual script of stigma and protection. Undercurrent, communally owned knowledge can both protect and stigmatize. On the one hand, collective narratives hold the members together, give a validated meaning to their experiences, and provide protection against oppression. On the other hand, self-identification with the marginalized world can mean stigma and insecurity in everyday life.

Soviet Jewish children were used to cherishing and hiding their communal narratives from the outside world. They kept them untold, unpronounced. However, despite being untold and eliminated from the language, as was the very word *Jew,* the stories of their inner world were visible signifiers of otherness in a hostile world.

The dual script of *stigma and protection* by their Jewish identity appears as a major leitmotif in many narratives of this study's participants. Despite stigma, the survivors related to their identity as a source of pride and strength. Living by this script involves the courage to accept being Jewish as part of one's identity, regardless of any external oppression that comes with this identity. This courage is evident in Hanna's self narratives ("My strength is that I am a Jew and I am not afraid") and Abram's stories ("I am a son of the Jewish people"). Leib, too, told about protecting his right to be Jewish by proudly carrying the label ("I had no doubts about it, and I did not seek any answers").

The words of Jacques Derrida (1986/2003) spell out the metaphoric explanation of the paradoxical duality of undercurrent, "unpronounceable" communal narratives:

> The Jew's 'unpronounceable name' says so many things: it says *Shibboleth,* the word – the word which is unpronounceable – which *can* not be pronounced – by one who does not partake of the covenant or alliance; it says the name of God which *must* not be pronounced; and it says also the name of the Jew which the non-Jew has *trouble* pronouncing and which he scorns or destroys for that

> very reason . . . Its unpronounceability keeps and destroys the name; it keeps it, like the name of God, or dooms it to annihilation. And these two possibilities are not simply different or contradictory. (Derrida, 1986/2003, p. 309)

The prevalence of either of the two parts of the dual script – stigma or protection – as a part of personal scripts, varied widely in the narratives of the survivors. Acceptance of their Jewish identity was natural for them, but at times, their association with the narratives of their communities felt undesirable and occurred against their wishes. The pain attached to the narratives of stigma often accompanied the survivors' self narratives and made them feel exposed.

Following the script of stigma, some children adopted Soviet lifestyles and communist rhetoric to a greater degree than others. For example, in many pre-war Soviet families children did not speak Yiddish, which was the basic language of their parents, and knew little about religious traditions. The parents often protected their children by not passing the religious tradition to them. In other families children participated in their parents' traditional scripts of the proud Jewish identity to a greater degree. For example, children were involved in religious practices, knew about their relatives abroad, and routinely overheard open conversations criticizing Soviet authorities.

The contested scripts of stigma and protection in Soviet child survivors' narratives had different significance at different stages of their lives. The significance of Jewish identity, in some stories, seemingly faded away for some periods of time because of the stigma attached. At these times, the narrators felt at one with their Soviet environment. However, the script of protection and Jewish collective resilience never disappeared completely, and surfaced again in other storylines.

Script of communal kinship. Many participants in this study equated Jewish identity with a special, emotionally warm and selfless kind of universal kinship – the affinity of all Jews to each other (some also stressed this essential peculiarity in Soviet Jews, among many other Jewish groups). For example, in Lydia's narratives, storylines based on the anchor script of Jewish communal unity were seamlessly intertwined with her universal individual scripts of altruism, knowledge, and keen devotion to serving humanity. Here is Lydia's almost evolutional theory of connection between Jewish communal kinship and personal altruism:

> For thousands of years, these people supported each other [in close emotional kinship], because it was necessary for survival, and it has remained, it remained – and more than just remained among them, as they relate to each other, but also spread towards others, to the whole world, and that's why... Of course, it is [a generalization], there are also Jews who are mean or stupid, but as a whole, in general, the Jews are kind people, good people, emotionally warm, happy, and resilient. (Lydia November, 2006 Part 2, 101-123)

Perhaps, the notion of emotional and spiritual kinship speaks of the sharing of the common collective salutary narrative scripts. In many narratives, it was the knowledge of this shared, storied entity of communal values that created the feeling of emotional connection with other members of the group (in Vera's words, feeling "tuned to the same radio wave"). The collective script of communal kinship was one of the major motifs in the participants' self narratives.

Humour in collective narratives. The narratives of this study's participants often referred to the importance of specific Jewish humour. Humour played a significant role as one of the paths of sharing the defiant and hidden narratives (Soviet authorities severely persecuted people for using humour; one could be arrested and sentenced for simply telling a joke). A simple but powerful illustration is the widespread joke of Soviet Jews that names their ethnic identity "a disability by the fifth item" (in the Soviet passports, the record of "nationality" was the fifth item after the name and other demographic information). Secretly sharing jokes provided the participants of such exchanges with an instant sense of mutual validation. Sharing these condensed and symbolic narratives signified their intrinsic mutual understanding. Some participants mentioned humour as one of their key resilience strategies.

In this study, the participants shared many jokes with me, because they knew about my familiarity with their culture. Soviet Jewish jokes are no simple amusement. They are sharp, multilayered, often bitter, angry, and steeped in the absurdity of injustice. At times, such jokes were offered in our interviews as an alternative to wordy explanations. They symbolically conveyed the desired message, which was accompanied by the sense of emotional connection and mutual validation.

Summary

The collective narratives of Soviet Jewry provided child survivors with an environment of protection and validation that was essential for their posttraumatic healing. For the members of small and scattered Soviet Jewish communities these powerful alternative scripts were always available because they were shared by other people of their kin. They could draw the security of their personal identity and individual meanings from the source of shared collective narratives. Together with the other members of their communities, child survivors were also the keepers, active participants, and creators of this communal pool of meanings, as they supported and acknowledged others' stories through sharing collective knowledge.

Having analyzed the undercurrent personal and collective narratives in the post-war context, I proceed here to explore these narratives across the survivors' life span. Soviet survivors' participation in the collective narratives of their communities began at an early age and continued to support them throughout their lives. In the next two sections I outline the relevant factors involved in two major periods of the survivors' lives: their pre-war childhood and later life (see Figure 2).

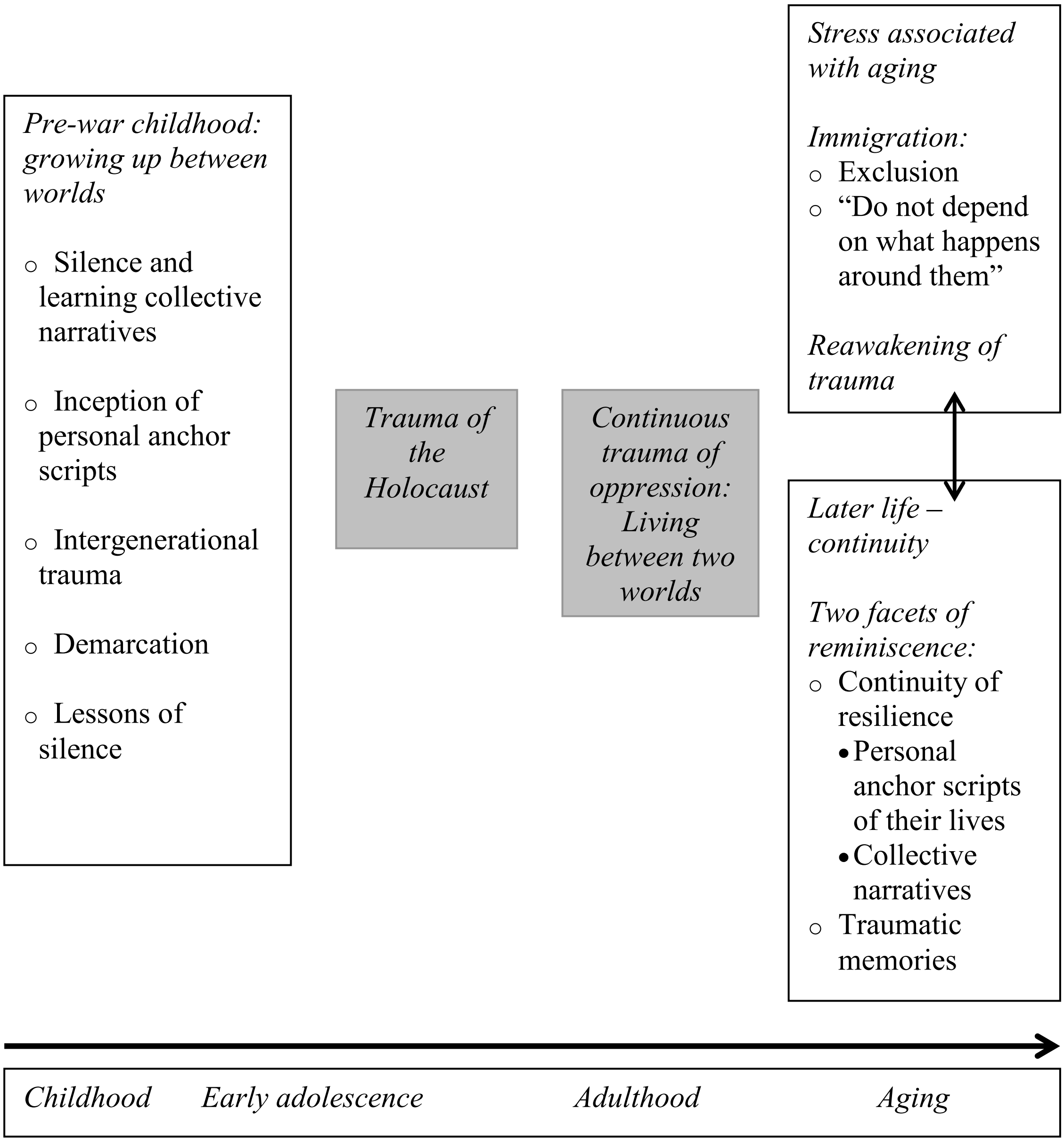
Pre-war childhood: growing up between worlds
Silence and learning collective narratives
Inception of personal anchor scripts
Intergenerational trauma
Demarcation
Lessons of silence
Trauma of the Holocaust
Continuous trauma of oppression: Living between two worlds
Stress associated with aging
Immigration:
Exclusion
"Do not depend on what happens around them"
Reawakening of trauma
Later life – continuity
Two facets of reminiscence:
Continuity of resilience
Personal anchor scripts of their lives
Collective narratives
Traumatic memories
Childhood
Early adolescence
Adulthood
Aging

Figure 2. Paths of Resilience across Life Span.

Paths of Resilience across Life Span: Pre-war Childhood

Jewish children who were to face the atrocities of the Holocaust were initiated into the collective narratives of their communities as they were growing up in the pre-war Soviet Union. In this study, the idea of a shared, storied entity of communal meanings initially emerged from the participants' narratives about silences in their families.

Growing up with Silence: Learning Collective Narratives

Soviet child survivors' first personal contacts with the undercurrent collective narratives began in their early pre-war childhood. Because of the marginalization of Jewish culture and religion, children growing up in Soviet Jewish families were enveloped in silence related to their roots and traditions. Such silenced topics included extremely significant subjects, for example, the meaning of Jewish identity, religious stories, life stories of parents and grandparents, and the impact of anti-Semitism. At an early age, the children learned how to cope with silence and maintain secrets.

Some subjects were surrounded by silence even within the families. Many survivors do not recall openly speaking with their parents about the meaning of their Jewish roots or the history of their families. Many participants recall that they accepted the silences as a natural part of their lives. As they analyze the situation now, they say that their parents tried to protect their children by limiting their knowledge. Others say that these subjects were silenced because the parents were "too busy to talk," because the children and parents always had "different interests," or because it was too painful to discuss them. Child survivors acknowledge the awareness about these subjects, despite the missing recollection of open sharing.

Other subjects were openly shared among family members and close friends, but kept secret from the outside world. Children knew that sharing this information with strangers could be dangerous or simply awkward, and it had to be kept secret.

The children became masters of the secrecy that enveloped their home knowledge. They also became the participants and owners of the collective scripts that later became the foundation of their resilience. Before the Holocaust, the children were immersed in such collective scripts as the global Jewish script of victimhood and survival, the belief in being the chosen, and the trust in the universal Jewish communal kinship. They learned these collective narratives through engaging in the patterns of silence, overcoming stigma, and tenacious communal sharing.

Intergenerational Effects of Trauma: The Unknown Second Generation

In many pre-war Soviet Jewish families, parents and grandparents had been severely traumatized by the Jewish pogroms and other events of the Russian revolution and civil war. Their parents' histories represented significant narratives that impacted the children's lives. In effect, they were the unknown *second generation* of their parents' trauma. The memory and consequences of this trauma often affected the family and parent-child interactions. For example, Vera recalled, "My mother was my great friend, but she was a weak person, she was scared of everything, perhaps because of what she went through. I had to become the strong one for my family." Child survivors often explain their life scripts through the impact of their families' collective narratives of their childhood (e.g., "I had to always fend for myself and my family, and this made me a fighter," or, "Because I knew from my mother about all the atrocities, I could never believe in the Soviet lies. I always spoke out and wanted to make a difference"). These narratives of intergenerational trauma became a significant part of child survivors' personal scripts.

Awareness of Demarcation

The jointly owned collective narratives of Soviet Jews were enveloped in silence and often shared only symbolically even among those who belonged to the group. Silence signified isolation and *demarcation* of the silenced reality from the openly shared knowledge. The items that were silenced were clearly marked as different, separate from the other subjects. This was the way the children *learned* the clear divide between the undercurrent narratives and the outer world's discourse.

Learning about the demarcation often came to the children through painful experiences, when their essential individual stories were stigmatized. For example, a child's early realization that her Jewish name sounded awkward, or the first experiences of being unable to freely express themselves at school, provided the children with traumatic lessons. At times, the burden of secret knowledge was too heavy, so that children tried to escape their fate, for example, by changing their names or rejecting the language. However, most often children learned their painful lessons of rejection and took the secrets for granted, carrying the burden without complaints.

Lessons of Silence

Jewish child survivors in the Soviet Union, often since their early childhood years, carried inside them the intrinsic and essential knowledge that was deeply rooted in their identity and inseparable from their self, although often invisible on the outside.

Jewish children's early learning about the silence and demarcation might have become an asset in their post-Holocaust adjustment. Lessons of silence provided the basis for their filtering strategies of adjustment between two worlds in the post-war Soviet Union. They learned how to observe a clear demarcation between their adopted working stories and undercurrent internal knowledge. Even those survivors who accepted the Soviet communist beliefs to a greater degree than others seemed to be always aware of the demarcation between these beliefs and the unacceptable narratives of oppressive ideological lies. Their sense of demarcation protected them from siding with the oppressors.

The children's awareness of the clear division between their undercurrent communal values and the foreign values of the dominant world prepared them to withstand the depth of the Soviet ideological indoctrination. Perhaps, the lessons of demarcation also prepared child survivors for withstanding the future "second wound" of silencing their Holocaust experiences by the dominant Soviet society.

Soviet Jewish children learned to live between worlds and carry the mark of their identity before the war. The patterns of sharing and validation of silenced, undercurrent stories were familiar to child survivors from their pre-war childhood. Therefore, the post-war division of the worlds was not new to them. They also had acquired the foundations of their evolving personal anchor scripts of resilience. After the war, the children's early learned patterns of participation in the collective narratives of their communities served as a protective factor in their posttraumatic healing and working through their war experiences.

Paths of Resilience across Life Span: Later Life Continuity

Aging Soviet survivors recounted their returning memories from the perspective of their current knowledge – their present interpretation of their past life events. Along with the depicting and interpreting of their past, the participants reflected on their present struggles and the strategies they used to overcome them. To my questions about the source of their present resilience, the participants often offered clearly articulated explanations, mostly shaped as stories about recent events. Their strategies of resilience suggested the strong continuity of the survivors' personal anchor scripts and their connection to the significant collective narratives.

There are two clusters of stressful factors that aging survivors often encounter. Factors of the first cluster are associated with aging and immigration. The second category of stressors is associated with the survivors' early trauma. They often experience a painful reawakening of their traumatic memories.

Stress Associated with Aging: Staying in Control

Aging child survivors experience many new challenges as they age. Many of them have recently retired from their satisfying life-long careers, and some have to cope with serious health concerns and low income; some of the seniors have recently lost their spouses. Despite the challenges of transition, stress, and often considerable emotional strain, the participants in this study did not report any severe mental health concerns. Their emotional experiences may be strong and painful at the times of the most stressful impact of negative life events, but the seniors remain in control of their lives. They stay independent, help their families, try to educate their grandchildren, often continue to work, and maintain the ability to find meaning in their lives. Their sense of humour and the ability to love, learn, and discover new joys in life have never left them. The people whom I interviewed continue to be resilient in their later life.

Immigration Experiences

In this study, the participants' group included two subgroups: recent immigrants to Canada and residents of Russia. There were many differences between the two subgroups, as the seniors reflected on their current stresses, environments, and exposure to new social discourses. However, these differences were not relevant to the survivors' psychological wellbeing, resilience, or patterns of their reminiscence.

The theory of narratives of resilience is explanatory of this lack of difference. Having immigrated and settled in Canada, Soviet survivors often continue living between worlds, both in their memory and on the outside. There has been little change in their interaction with the outside world. These people have ample experience of feeling different. Once again, they are prepared by their history to face the stress of change. Most of them accept their new country with gratitude: “This is a golden country”; “I am at home”; “This is a free country.” However, their current environment is foreign to them, and they often feel isolated: “I live like on an island.”

It is especially painful for the aging newcomers to feel that their voices are neglected by people of their own kin – Canadian Jews: “They do not care about us”; “They are not interested.” Aging Soviet émigrés discover the gap of misunderstanding between them and their host Jewish community: “We are totally different, we have nothing in common.” Soviet survivors are still enveloped in silence and almost never asked about their experiences. As Fira noted in one of our later conversations, “I think they don’t even know in the synagogue that I was in the ghetto. I don’t impose my stories on the others; I can tell them if they ask.” Their narratives remain unknown, undercurrent in the midst of Western Jewish discourse. Maintaining their undercurrent narratives remains an adaptive strategy, as they “do not depend that much on what happens around them” (Lydia).

Factors of Memory Reawakening

Many participants mentioned that they perceived their life events in a way that was different from their earlier perceptions. Their returning memories demanded their deeper reflection. Their narratives revealed intense mental work, in which the survivors were revising their past and making sense of its connection with the present.

The survivors explained the returning of memories by various factors in their later life. Among other explanations, they referred to their retirement (they have time to think now) and a better ability to comprehend the meaning of the events. As Fira said, “I saw it all when I was young, but only now can I really understand it.” They related to their current stage of life, in which they are “already reviewing their life.” Other triggers mentioned by the participants included being increasingly exposed to historical information in the media and being asked to retell their stories. The latter was mentioned as a positive factor. According to the survivors, their need to retell was greater than the need to avoid the returning pain. There was no direct indication in the survivors’ responses that their recent signs of memory reawakening were associated with the stresses of aging or immigration.

Two Facets of Reminiscence

The survivors’ later life reminiscence reflected on stories of self integrity and continuity of resilience. The continuity was rooted in the salutary scripts of their personal and collective narratives. However, their memory work in constructing continuity was inevitably associated with the surfacing of traumatic memories, because the essential stories of their past were too closely interwoven with painful images of loss. These two facets of their memory surfaced together.

The survivors’ past was saturated with tragic events, and in their early memories, the stories of love, tradition, and fulfillment were inseparable from the stories of suffering and loss. The aging child survivors’ natural work of reminiscence had to be accomplished in parallel with the revival of painful memories that they had always carried within – the memories that “live with them.”

Continuity of Resilience

Personal anchor scripts. The survivors' present recounting was a look "from the top of the hill" (in Leib's words). From the top of their present need and ability to reflect, all the powerful stories of resilience that they recounted about their past, in effect, also spelled out the scripts of their present strategies of making meaning of their traumatic memories. As aging survivors recounted their stories, past and present storylines were often seamlessly parallel to each other and followed the same scripts. For example, the universal script of finding meaning in helping others still worked for many survivors. They continued to reenact this anchor script in their current interactions with their families and friends. Their multiple stories about recent events were plotted along these scripts. Another universal script of learning and seeking intellectual challenge also continues to be salutary for many aging survivors.

The survivors' richly developed anchor scripts are both the outcome of their life work of resilience and their current resource, from which they can draw strategies for overcoming the challenges of aging. The seniors' ability to reconstruct and reenact their anchor scripts in the present has become the asset that belongs to their personal identity and cannot be taken away. Child survivors consistently refer to the anchor scripts that they have constructed and lived throughout their lives.

Collective narratives. Many survivors recently turned to revising and analyzing their family's stories, histories of their parents, or researching their genealogical roots. By returning to the collective narratives and developing them through storytelling, they actively searched for those storylines that spoke to their individual life scripts (for example, "We are not rootless cosmopolitans," as Vera summarizes the many stories of her bright and famous relatives she was finding). In search for familiar collective narratives, many survivors engage in keen reading about

Jewish history (becoming “a Jew-searcher,” “addicted” to books) or exploring Jewish religious literature (often without being religious, as Leib and Maya).

In our conversations, survivors often theorized about historical patterns of Jewish people’s role in the world, reflected on the fates of Soviet Jewry and other subjects that resonated with their memories. Aging survivors are aware of their increasing affinity to traditional and collective narratives. Perhaps, survivors turn to collective narratives in search for validation of the salutary meanings of their life stories, which are now surfacing in their memory. They often retell their related personal storylines along the familiar scripts grounded in these collective stories. For example, Leib’s methodical inquiry into the meaning of Jewish historical and religious stories was echoed in his personal narratives about fighting injustices, with relevant storylines both in the past and in the present.

Their craving for these stories is often vital (“Books are my bread”). Survivors display an unerring “intuition” (in Vera’s expression) when they look for sources of stories they crave. These are the stories that provide a connection between their personal life events and collective historical tragedies, virtues, and victories.

In their returning to collective narratives, some survivors face a painful feeling of an empty space in their past, because they know little about their family roots. In Soviet Jewish families, parents often concealed the dangerous facts of their family’s history from the children. Leib speaks about his missing memories with intense regret:

> No, no, no, and we idiots, we asked them very little. It’s only recently, before my father’s death it suddenly hit me that I must ask at least what kind of people were my parents! (with emphasis) It weighs on me until now ... I mean, I know I am a sinner, I have a thousand sins, and none of them upsets me too much now, but the fact that I haven’t asked my parents to tell me [about their lives] ... this is what weighs on me the most, right now, now in the midst of my, well, mostly happy existence. (Leib September 23, 2005 part 1, 77-96)

The survivors’ returning to their remembered collective narratives, as a present source of resilience, might be an expression of their search for meanings that are protective in the face of the intruding memories of pain and loss. Aging Soviet child survivors continue to draw the security of validation from the source that fed their resilience throughout their lives – the shared communal pool of storied meanings.

“But Something Does Remain”: Impact of Trauma

Most participants evaluated their lives as successful, fulfilled, and rich with meaning. However, in our conversations the participants mentioned that “something does remain” (Lydia) from their traumatic experiences of the past.

Soviet survivors rarely say the word *trauma.* They are not used to discussing this theme, in particular to being asked about it. The signs of pain that they experience and describe in their narratives have never been explicitly interpreted or clinically labelled as the consequences of trauma.

The participants considered these experiences as important components of their life stories. Therefore, it is relevant to briefly conceptualize the signs of trauma that they reported. A comprehensive clinical interpretation of the participants’ symptoms is beyond this study. Psychological terminology is unfamiliar to the survivors, with the exception of those who happen to be medical professionals. However, the most explicit language available to me in this area is clinical language, and for the purposes of this analysis I use clinical terms.

At least two survivors remember brief acute conditions shortly after the traumatic events, which I can only speculatively interpret as an acute stress disorder. All but two participants reported that they experienced emotional disturbances both immediately after the war and later in their lives, for example, intrusive thoughts, flashbacks, startle response, anxiety, sleep disturbances, intrusive vivid dreams and nightmares, and somatic symptoms that the participants explicitly associated with their trauma. Some less frequent individual experiences included panic attacks, symptoms of depression, and persistent irrational fears.

The participants reported that these experiences disappeared for long periods of time and did not interfere with their everyday life. Sometimes the symptoms re-appeared, triggered by post-war stresses and hardships. From a clinical perspective, these phenomena could be interpreted as signs of posttraumatic stress. However, in most cases these were isolated symptoms, and they cannot be clearly defined now, in the survivors' incomplete and retrospective description.

Some of the survivors reported that as they age, some of their symptoms have returned after a long absence or deteriorated, so that coping with them was more difficult than it was before. In some cases, new symptoms appeared, such as intrusive feelings of grief and guilt, increased tearfulness, insomnia, or depression. Intrusive, vivid memories are among most frequent experiences. It is noteworthy that three participants presented the same metaphor as they referred to their reawakened memories: The images from the past were "replayed" in front of them, as if by some internal mechanism that suddenly had turned on in their minds. These images came back, like a film or a series of "snapshots," which looked graphic and intense. The survivors' descriptions of their lifelike dreams were often similar to this experience.

When the survivors were young, they used to interpret their feelings as a natural emotional component of their lives. Now that they have grown older, they continue to manage on their own. Only one of the participants reported that she had recently used professional treatment for her most disturbing symptoms. She referred to this treatment as helpful but temporary.

Soviet survivors are aware of their signs of posttraumatic pain and can explicitly describe them. They also speak unambiguously about the source of their painful experiences. The seniors attribute them to their past suffering and loss, and to their current grief. They explain their experiences as a normal emotional reaction to their past, and thus speak openly and naturally about them.

Soviet survivors are often articulate in their description of their feelings, so that a clinician can recognize the properties that correspond with the familiar clinical concepts. However, Soviet survivors are not used to the language of psychiatry, and often are unaware of its possible application to their feelings. An aversion to being labeled or stigmatized through psychiatric interpretations was not present in our interviews. Psychiatric discourse has never been an interfering, demeaning, or threatening component of these survivors' realities.

In the context of Soviet history, the questions about the survivors' awareness or denial of their mental health issues, or about their use of treatment, are irrelevant. It is difficult to understand why Soviet survivors never sought treatment or why psychiatric labels were never attached to their experiences. Perhaps, the survivors possessed a strong ability to cope and did not complain. Conceivably, they had no support because of the absence of professional help in the Soviet Union. Both clinical and social concepts of trauma, as they are seen in the Western discourse, were simply outside of the survivors' social reality. They speak about their posttraumatic suffering as painful, but ordinary part of their life stories.

Summary: Narratives of Resilience

The patterns of silencing the victims in the Soviet Union were reminiscent of similar strategies employed by perpetrators of many other forms of abuse. The voiceless state of a victim is particularly harmful for individual processes of healing, as described by Herman (1992),

> When the victim is ... devalued (a woman, a child), she may find that the most traumatic events of her life take place outside the realm of socially validated reality. Her experience becomes unspeakable. The study of psychological trauma must constantly contend with this tendency to discredit the victim or to render her invisible. (p. 8)

In the Soviet Union, the study of psychological trauma was never represented in academic or public discourses on such a scale that it could contribute to the contending action advocated by Herman. Professional treatment was never available to the survivors. Neither could any other legitimized discourses or institutionalized social powers provide protection or give a voice to Jewish child survivors of the Holocaust.

Instead, the strategies of resilient healing were developed informally within Jewish groups, evolving from the age-old practices of maintaining communal unity. In the absence of formal liberating support groups or outspoken grassroots social movements, Soviet Jewry formed hidden but powerful protective environments. In these environments, the victims of persecution provided each other with a healing shield of communally constructed “realm of socially validated reality,” the lack of which Herman considered profoundly damaging for a person recovering from trauma.

My hypothesis suggests that following severe trauma, and in the context of oppression and forced silence in the Soviet Union, Jewish child survivors’ immersion into the positive meanings of their communities’ undercurrent collective narratives created conditions for their posttraumatic healing and life-long fulfillment. Underground acknowledgement, as a pattern of sharing and validating individual narratives within the salutary collective scripts, might have become the mechanism of building a distinct collective storied identity, which provided people with a sense of power and a source of resilience. Jewish communities in the Soviet Union, possibly due to remaining “at home” and sharing the same histories, were able to provide their members with alternative ways of coping with trauma in the midst of an oppressive society. Through their life-long participation in the age-old patterns of maintaining and sharing undercurrent collective narratives, Jewish child survivors were able to draw from the collective pool of salutary meanings and construct their personal anchor scripts of resilience.

CHAPTER SEVEN

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the history of trauma and resilience of Soviet child survivors of the Holocaust, and to examine the implications of trauma and resilience as the survivors age. In addition, my purpose as a researcher and a community member was to convey the authentic stories of aging recent newcomers from the FSU to their host communities and bridge the gap between the two sets of discourses. In this chapter I outline the possible implications of this study for theory, methodology, and interdisciplinary community practice. I also outline the limitations of this study and the emerging areas for future research.

Theoretical Implications

Relevance and Generalization Perspectives

This study of Soviet survivors' life stories resulted in the emergence of an explanatory theory of narratives of resilience. The salutary, undercurrent personal and collective narratives were conceptualized as a part of the core individual and communal strategies of resilience in the face of early and cumulative collective trauma. The resulting theory was grounded in the analysis of one particular substantive area, namely the experiences of Soviet child survivors of the Holocaust. The relevance of my theory to this area was confirmed by the participants in this study and some of my colleagues, who had an opportunity to read the Russian-language version of the theory. I talked to each participant separately after they read my summary, and their feedback was positive. In response, the participants offered a number of examples and additional stories that were triggered by the reading, and thus confirmed (or stressed the importance of) the particular ideas of my theory. An additional comment was that the participants “enjoyed the reading.” These responses clearly evoked a notion of a “grab” and reassured me that the hypothesis worked for the participants and explained many of their experiences.

The scope of the emergent theory is limited to the area in which it was grounded. However, with additional research and possible modification, the theory might be generalized towards other relevant areas. I suggest that the concept of undercurrent narratives of resilience be explored, as it might concern seniors in other immigrant communities, in particular, newcomers who had traumatic experiences in their home countries. The studies of consequences of early and cumulative trauma in later life, in a variety of cultural contexts, might benefit from considering this theory as a source of sensitizing concepts.

The theory that emerged in this study might also present interest to the researchers who explore the experiences of trauma and resilience in marginalized and oppressed groups in various contexts. For example, it might be relevant in the contexts of disability, mental illness, aging, and immigrant families facing the challenges of disability and aging. The theory of narratives of resilience might be also considered in the studies related to individual involvement in social movements, such as various grassroots disability groups. In general, the social and communal strategies of resilience discovered in this study might be relevant to a variety of contexts, in which individuals who belong to marginalized, isolated, and oppressed communities struggle to remain resilient in the face of life atrocities and collective trauma.

Theoretical Implications

The substantive level of this study limits its instant broad generalization; however, the emergent hypothesis can have some implications for existing general theories. I suggest that the substantive knowledge generated in this study can inform the following interdisciplinary theoretical debates.

Cultural sensitivity of the theory of trauma. Marsella, Friedman, and Spain (1996) warned that applying the Western Euro-American traditional knowledge to members of other ethno-cultural traditions may create a problem of ethnocentric bias, when "concepts and methods of measurement of PTSD may have only limited cross-cultural relevancy and usefulness" (p. 116). Most authors addressed the categories of "visible minorities" such as Black, Hispanic, Native, and Asian groups when challenging the western-centric ideas (Westermeyer, 1989). This study explored how cultural identity informs the impact of childhood trauma and life-long stress in aging members of a "non-visible" but culturally distinct minority.

Findings in this study corresponded with the theories that stressed the significance of such factors as memory, identity, collective memory, and suppressed recollection in trauma sequelae (Herman, 1992; J. Kestenberg, 1998). My hypothesis suggests high significance of culturally specific communal strategies and resources of resilience for individual coping and outcomes in the context of trauma (see also deVries, 1996). This idea can be particularly relevant in the situations of prolonged and cumulative trauma with collective historical impact. One of the general conclusions that emerged in this study suggests that cross-cultural diversity can be expressed not only in the differences of posttraumatic pathology, but also in the specifics of mediating trauma, resilience, and cultural discourses related to trauma.

The paradoxical relationships between the seemingly high vulnerability of Soviet child survivors and their documented resilience in the situation of collective trauma can be explained by the existence of both personal and collective mechanisms of resilience. My hypothesis suggests that the meaningful identification with a social group can be one of the core factors of individual resilience. This salutary identification is expressed in the participation of an individual in the collective narratives of the group – the active engagement in the intertwining between the individual and collective stories.

The theory that emerged in this study might be applicable to many cultural groups. However, possible attempts at theory application to other cultural groups would require careful comparative research and sensitivity to specific cultures, histories, and established patterns of recollection and sharing the storied knowledge. Perhaps, the theory of undercurrent narratives of resilience can be enriched and modified by its consideration in diverse contexts.

The relevancy of the evaluation and promotion of resilience. Theoretical attempts at definitive evaluation of trauma outcomes and resilience in Holocaust survivors have caused caution of both experts and survivors (Bluglass, 2001; Moskovitz, 1983; Valent 1998c). My hypothesis conforms to this caution and suggests that neither pathologizing nor over-normalization of the survivors' experiences can be productive. My conclusions also conform to the "descriptive-experiential model" (Valent, 1998b, p. 5), which is rooted in extracting the meaning of human experiences of trauma and recovery. This model presumes using psychiatric and psychosocial knowledge as essential but subordinate to individual and communal expertise. The substantive theory that emerged in this study also corresponds with the general theories that emphasize the connection between resilience and meaning making (Antonovsky, 1979, 1987; Frankl, 1966).

The innovative insight offered by the theory of narratives of resilience relates to the communal component of meaning making and recovery within trauma and resilience context, under the conditions of prolonged oppression. The emergent idea of pivotal significance of individual and communal expertise also suggests an additional implication of my hypothesis, which is relevant to the notion of assessing and “promoting resilience” (Greene, 2002, p. 15) in the professional context. In the light of my hypothesis, any attempts at supporting resilience primarily require the learning of the existing, particular individual and group processes involved in transcending the adversity of trauma. Intervening professionals might consider relying on the discovered existing mechanisms in each particular case, rather than “promoting” the theoretically imposed general interventions.

Narrative theory and trauma. The understanding of individual and communal strategies of resilience that emerged from this study corresponds with the theories that suggest narrative approaches to the interpretation and treatment of trauma consequences (e.g., Herman, 1992; Freedman & Combs, 1996; White, 2005). The possible contribution of my hypothesis in this area is twofold. First, my hypothesis demonstrated that the healing strategies proposed by the proponents of narrative theory can emerge spontaneously and naturally in social groups formed by survivors of severe trauma, with no access to professional intervention. The self-constructed strategies of resilience discovered in this study were stunningly consistent with the classical narrative interventions (see, for example, the idea of subordinate storylines developed by White, and the recovery strategies used by Herman). Hence, the discovered self-constructed strategies of overcoming trauma confirm the relevance of narrative interventions proposed by other theorists.

Second, my hypothesis suggests the collective nature of the survivors’ construction of narratives of resilience. Soviet child survivors’ personal anchor scripts were richly developed through their inherent connection with the collective narratives. These strategies of resilience in the face of trauma were rooted in the age-old mechanisms of collective narrative creation and communal support. This phenomenon is consistent with the theories related to the healing power of social movements of oppressed groups (Herman, 1992). The case of Soviet survivors involves the distinct social and historical context, and thus has a potential to confirm the general narrative theories of posttraumatic recovery and extend their scope to diverse groups.

Trauma, aging, and PTSD: Clinical and diagnostic concept. The theory that emerged in this study provides a lens for looking into the current debates around the diagnostic classification of PTSD in older adults as a complex and heterogeneous clinical construct. This study was based on responses of people who had never been exposed to the Western psychiatric discourse related to trauma. My findings demonstrated that the nature and expression of symptoms and signs of posttraumatic stress in these survivors could be described as universal, because they often conformed to the established diagnostic criteria. However, the individual interpretation of these symptoms, as well as the adopted strategies and behaviour aimed at coping with them, largely depended on the adopted local social discourses and collective perceptions common in the particular cultural group. Among Soviet child survivors of the Holocaust, the notions of pathology and treatment seeking behavior were uncommon, whereas personal, naturally constructed resilience strategies were markedly strongly developed.

Graziano (2003) identified seniors with past traumatic experiences as a group of risk for PTSD. Indeed, in these seniors, in particular in those who are also recent immigrants, protective factors seem to be severely impaired. However, this study documented strong resilience resources and specific protective mechanisms that prevented the relapse of PTSD in senior émigrés. My findings confirmed the common rejection of the “deficiency model” of trauma and aging (Aarts & Op den Velde, 1996), and partially corresponded with the developmental models based on Erikson’s theory (Krystal, 1981). The correspondence is only partial because of the discovered irrelevance of the notions of full integration and mastering of traumatic memories in trauma recovery. The hypothesis of narratives of resilience could be explanatory of the incomplete integration coexistent with strong resilience in aging survivors (see also the concept of *aintegration* suggested by Lomranz, 1998a). My hypothesis also suggests that the sensitivity to social contexts is paramount for applying the general developmental concepts to diverse groups of older adults, because of the peculiarities of the historically established social mechanisms of overcoming trauma.

Methodological Contribution of the Study

This study employed a combination of two qualitative research approaches: narrative analysis and the classical grounded theory method. The study also involved the accommodation of several complex conditions of the research situation: the choice of a largely unexplored area of inquiry, the interdisciplinary area of research, the implications of cross-language and cross-cultural analysis, and the ethical considerations. Through the development of strategies that mediated these conditions, this study presented a number of methodological contributions related to combining methods and conducting cross-language research. Both areas of contribution are particularly relevant to reaching out to aging immigrants.

Combination of Methods

Conventional methods of research and English-language investigation tools often have limited applicability to the older newcomers’ situation (Borson et al., 2000; Dunckley et al., 2003). There is a need for broadening the search for mitigating strategies to reach out to these groups. Life histories and cultural knowledge of senior immigrants often do not fit under the established theoretical models and pre-constructed surveys and scales that are used in conventional research. Correspondingly, the established and generally effective service models and community programs often fail to meet the needs and expectations of senior newcomers. This study demonstrated that the combination of the narrative approach and grounded theory epistemology can provide a sound methodological basis for reaching out to aging newcomers to Canada.

There are two disparate contexts between which I mediated in this research: the historical and cultural context of my participants' stories, and the current local context in which my Canadian audience could perceive these stories. Bridging the contexts was an essential element of reaching out to the aging Holocaust survivors. In order for the participants' voices to be heard, their stories had to be told in the language of the Canadian audience. The authenticity of the seniors' cultural contexts had to be represented in research in such a way that the Western audience could both comprehend their uniqueness and learn their general, universal intercultural significance. This study demonstrated that the narrative approach can match this challenge, because of this method's sensitivity to the concrete contexts, on the one hand, and the universality of narrative expression, on the other.

The grounded theory method proved effective in this study for the discovery of abstract conceptual categories that signify the general implications of the seniors' experiences. This method, in combination with the narrative approach, provided the appropriate tools for avoiding the preconceived expectations and conveying the undistorted self-representation of newcomer seniors.

Cross-Cultural and Cross-Language Research

The purpose of this study included conveying the authentic stories and meanings of the senior immigrants, bridging the gap between the two sets of cultural discourses, and remaining sensitive to the seniors' self-representation. These objectives are inherent to cross-cultural research.

The methodological contribution of this study consisted of exploring the cross-language research techniques and developing effective strategies of language translation within the narrative approach and grounded theory. These strategies are outlined in the Method Chapter (see also Shklarov, 2009).

An additional level of analysis was implied in this study because of my close familiarity with the historical and social context of my participants' stories. Although I belong to a younger generation, I was practically an insider to the context of my research participants. Their stories caused corresponding images in my mind, and I could vividly recall the episodes from my life that echoed the participants' recollections. The seniors often used a subtle "you know" remark, when they assumed that there was no need to explain to me the entire situation, because I could imagine it. They also acknowledge my resonating responses through jokes or body language. I was immersed into the authentic context of the participants' stories.

This study proved that the contextual immersion of the researcher, with the appropriate reflection and analysis, can be one of the most important components of reaching out to aging immigrants. In the cross-cultural research situation, the researcher must admit the responsibility for translating the participants' accounts in more than a simple linguistic sense. The translation in research includes the bridging between the self-representation of the participants and the perceptions of the target Canadian audience. The methodological processes involved in this study are illustrative of how the narrative method, augmented by grounded theory approach and the techniques of cross-language analysis, can ensure sensitivity to the particularities of historical context, diverse social constructs, and the authenticity of cross-cultural self-representation of seniors.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study were associated primarily with the properties of the sample, the study's disciplinary focus, and some issues related to its implementation into practice.

The sample group included participants with diverse experiences (I assume that the focus on a particular, narrowly chosen substantive area of study was initially intended and cannot be considered a limitation). The group included people from various areas of the Soviet Union (including places of their childhood and adult life), with dissimilar individual histories and current situations. With respect to individual psychological consequences of trauma, the participants also reported a wide range of experiences, from no symptoms to significant painful exacerbations of various posttraumatic signs, at different life stages. However, this study did not include survivors who experienced symptoms of PTSD that seriously interfered with their everyday life and function. All participants in this study defined themselves as resilient, and I did not have an opportunity to reach out to seniors with serious posttraumatic mental health concerns. Three potential participants rejected my invitation to participate in the study, saying that they were not ready to talk about their past. It is possible that these seniors' assertive choice was an indication of their resilience strategies, but this remains to be explored further. The exclusion of survivors who have serious concerns or feel unable to talk was an inevitable implication of the ethics of recruitment in this study. Exploring the experiences of these seniors is a potential area for future research.

The scope of the explanatory power of the emergent theory could have been limited by the range of the study's disciplinary focus. Although this research embraced the perspectives of a variety of disciplines, the emerging materials might also present immense interest for deeper exploration from the perspective of such disciplines as sociology, social psychology, history, Holocaust studies, and political studies, which were beyond the scope of this research project.

The opportunities for knowledge translation and practical implementation of the results were somewhat limited by the short time of the project. One of the purposes of this study was to contribute to breaking the silence between Soviet Jewish émigrés and their Canadian communities by opening an opportunity for the survivors to voice their experiences. Although this research can be credited for some changes in the local community practice, these changes were limited to one agency that worked within one small community. This exploratory study has a potential for a broader practical impact in the future.

Recommendations for Future Research

The given area of study, namely the situation of Soviet Holocaust survivors, represents a broad potential for further exploration, which was not part of this research project. In addition, the substantive theory that emerged from the study of this narrow group could be considered for further exploration in other, broader areas. Hence, future research might consider, first, the deepening of exploration in the given research area, and second, the broadening of the area of research toward the study of trauma and resilience in other contexts and broader, diverse groups.

With respect to further studying of the experiences of the given group – Soviet Jewish survivors of the Holocaust – it might be relevant to continue the inquiry into a variety of their experiences that were not included in this study, for example, the clinical issues of later life consequences of trauma or the impact of the age in which trauma occurred. Future research might consider the development of culturally sensitive therapeutic and community interventions, including the possibilities for the practical application of the theory that emerged in this study.

The emerging findings in this study indicated the need for broader interdisciplinary research based on the experiences of Soviet survivors of the Holocaust. This group remains silent in Western communities, both in research and in their communities' social life. Research and practical changes in this area have to occur soon, because time is an issue for the involvement of this generation of aging survivors.

In the context of Soviet history during the war and the Holocaust, because of the isolation of Soviet communities from the West, many areas of knowledge are under-analyzed, whereas they present a unique potential for research in the intersection of various disciplines. For example, in this study I did not have an opportunity to deepen the exploration of such concepts as individual and group identity in the context of oppressive societies. This study did not focus on historical and political implications of collective trauma, recovery of historical awareness after the fall of totalitarian regimes, or the complex area of Jewish identity and the individual self-identification of Soviet Jewish immigrants in the West. The latter issue has been broadly discussed in the context of Jewish studies, but the situation and identity of Soviet Jews have never been sufficiently explored (Gitelman, 2001b; Glicksman & Van Haitsma, 2002).

With respect to the possible broadening of future research to other contexts and diverse groups, this study implies that there is a potential for exploring individual and collective strategies of resilience within diverse groups of seniors, whose experiences remain insufficiently explored. Holocaust survivors from the FSU represent one of the many silent groups of senior newcomers in Canada. Immigrant seniors of many diverse ethnic backgrounds tend to remain isolated and encapsulated within their own communities (Nikolsky, 1996; Solomon, 1996). One consequence of such isolation is that these seniors remain silent in mainstream research, similarly to other non-English speaking populations (Bowen, 2001). This study demonstrated that immigrant seniors can provide valuable sources of knowledge in many areas, including trauma studies and studies of resilience. This potential implies the recommendation for further exploratory studies related to the experiences of aging immigrants with diverse backgrounds.

Future inquiries into the experiences of aging Soviet Holocaust survivors, and possibly, also the inquiries with other groups of aging immigrants, would benefit from using narrative and participatory action methods. Immigrant groups, especially the seniors, are isolated and silenced in the mainstream social and academic discourses. Voicing the experiences of older adults in participatory action studies might promote both their inclusion and the mainstream society's knowledge development.

Implications for Community Practice

The possible practical implications of this research primarily relate to interdisciplinary community work within the given area of study, namely in resolving the current issues of community inclusion and meeting the needs of Soviet Jewish seniors who are recent émigrés in Canada. It is also possible that this study could have more general practical implications in areas other than working for Soviet émigrés.

Senior Newcomers from the FSU: Community Practices

In the last two decades, the arrival of large numbers of Russian-speaking survivors from the FSU has presented new challenges to North American Jewish communities. Russian-speaking Holocaust survivors present specific needs rooted in their life histories and collective memories, which largely differ from those common in North America, and thus are poorly understood.

Working with Soviet survivors reveals many barriers that interfere with their inclusion into the Western social fabric. These barriers present challenges to social services, community organizations, and health care. Language is the most obvious barrier; however, the traditional focus on resolving language difficulties is becoming increasingly insufficient for bridging the gaps of isolation and exclusion. In addition to language, there are substantial differences between disparate interpretations of the past; there is also a disconnection between the established mutual expectations and stereotypes.

Knowing the background and causes of the obstacles can help resolve the resulting difficulties. It is also essential to understand the strengths of the newcomers and the particular value of their knowledge and expertise for their host communities. This knowledge is lacking in North American Jewish communities. My theoretical conclusions in this study can be particularly valuable for increasing this knowledge and guiding the relevant change in community practices (Shklarov, 2008).

Soviet survivors – recent émigrés – face great needs as they struggle with transitions of immigration and aging, poverty, isolation, and poor health. However, this study demonstrated their great strengths and social value as witness bearers, culture transmitters, and carriers of historical knowledge. This social value remains unrecognized. The broad recognition of great needs of these survivors in their host communities, in isolation from the knowledge about their past, tends to be reflected in preconceived, accentuated images of community burden, which overpower the understanding of their authentic identity as survivors of the Holocaust. North American established communities tend to see only the images of need and burden, while the images of personal and communal strength, historical witness, and resilience remain overshadowed.

The findings in this study can be used to advocate for a shift in community attitudes towards Soviet newcomers. Such shift could be accomplished by changing the fundamental questions we ask ourselves. The conventional questions are: How can we meet their needs of aging Soviet émigrés and solve their problems? How can we educate them in our ways of living? Conversely, the following questions might set an example of exploring alternative paths: Who are they, what is their story? What can we learn from their history? What can be done to give these people power of sharing their knowledge with the communities where they live? What can be done to open our resources to help aging survivors from the FSU, not only because we recognize their high needs, but also because we value them as unique and welcome members of our Jewish communities?

Based on these questions that arose from my study, I suggest that the community practice aimed at the inclusion of Soviet Jewish seniors be enriched by active listening to these people, learning from their experiences, and tailoring community programs and policies to their specific patterns of natural resilience. Many current inclusion practices are aimed at “educating” the newcomers and integrating them in their host community’s ways of life. Accordingly, most intervention strategies involve implementing existing programs that work for local seniors. I suggest that the intent should be not to change or educate these survivors (changing should be their choice), but rather to accept and celebrate their distinctiveness.

In the framework of social services to seniors in our community, I have purposefully worked towards shifting the attitudes in our community toward Russian-speaking Holocaust survivors. Our community has so far paid very little attention to these people’s history. However, the recent initiatives signify the changing of these attitudes. The first of these initiatives began when the Calgary Jewish Community Council, together with Mount Royal College, included a few Russian-speaking Holocaust survivors in their video testimony collection project titled “Calgary Voices of the Holocaust.” This project never used to include recent Soviet newcomers before. The second initiative involved the inclusion of a Soviet child survivor, for the first time in our community, in the Holocaust Symposium, which is an annual event that has been offered to Calgary public schools by Jewish Community Council for the last twenty five years. In this event, survivors speak to large groups of public schools’ students to promote the awareness about Holocaust history and other genocides.

The third program has been started, with my initiative and planning, by Jewish Family Service Calgary. This small project is titled “I Have to Tell” (after a book written by a Soviet Holocaust survivor in the 1960s) and involves recording the stories of Russian-speaking survivors, with the intent to publish this collection of life stories in our community. This local project will give a voice to these survivors and enhance our community’s knowledge about their history, strengths, and resilience.

General Practical Implications

The theory of narratives of resilience suggests the significance of the communal sources of resilience as a potent antidote against the individual consequences of trauma. This general conclusion might be considered in community practices in various settings. The underlying general idea that emerged from this study suggests the value of exploring, understanding, and relying on individual and communal expertise.

In the context of interdisciplinary professional practice, the general strategies of inclusion that I suggested for newcomers in Jewish communities might be extended to other settings. The particular characteristics of Jewish and Soviet contexts are irrelevant for such generalization. I suggest implementing the general idea, namely practicing the learning from the salutary patterns of particular individual and group processes involved in transcending the adversities of trauma. Intervening professionals might consider relying on the discovered existing communal patterns in each particular case, rather than promoting the theoretically imposed, standard interventions. Supportive community practice can focus on creating favourable social conditions for the maintenance and development of established, traditional patterns of mediating trauma and adversities in each individual community. Social policies might consider tailoring community and professional service programs to the discovered naturally occurring processes in each given group. Community practitioners might also work towards contributing to each individual’s inclusion in the communal patterns of resilience.

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APPENDIX A

SUMMARIES OF THE PARTICIPANTS' BIOGRAPHIES

Liza

Liza was born in December 1926, in the town of Kremenchug, in the Ukraine. Her two brothers were much older: she was the youngest child, the most desired and beloved daughter. Her father was a furrier, highly skilled in his trade and well known for his profession. The father's family had a long history of tragic events. In 1909 they suffered extensively from pogroms. Shortly after, the families of four brothers of her father set out for America, leaving four orphaned young children in the care of Liza's family, with the expectation that they would join their relatives in America shortly, bringing the children along. However, after the revolution of 1917, the Jews in the Ukraine received new freedoms and had great hopes for the future in this country. Liza's father said, "If there is going to be heaven for the Jews somewhere, it is going to be the Soviet Union." He decided not to emigrate. Instead, he traveled to New York to take his orphaned nephews to his brothers, as he had promised, and returned to Kremenchug. At the same time, the mother's brother immigrated to France. Thus, the parents had many close relatives abroad, but soon after the Soviet power was established, contacting them became dangerous, and joining them – impossible.

In the early 1930s, during the famine in the Ukraine, the family barely survived. They were starving; Liza was so weak she could not walk, "By then I was not getting up any more." In desperation, Liza's mother wrote to her brother in France, and he sent over some money which saved their lives. However, having contacted the relative abroad put the family at great risk. Because everyone knew about it in the small community, Liza's parents could be arrested any moment, as "enemies of the people." The father made a decision to leave their home town, and the family moved to a small town of Rybnitza in Moldova, on the border with Romania, where nobody knew them. The father's trade enabled him to start a new life and make a good living in the new place.

The beginning of the war in 1941 caught Liza's family in Rybnitza; Liza was 14. One of her brothers, 18 years older then Liza, had moved away by that time. He had his own family, and worked as a lawyer in the Far East of Russia. Another brother still lived with the parents, but at that time he was working in a kolkhoz across the river. He could not get back home because the bridge across the river was destroyed. The family had a chance to flee from the Nazi occupied area, but the parents could not abandon their son, and they waited for him to return until it was too late to leave. They remained in Rybnitza and were taken to a ghetto, together with all the other Jews. Eventually they learned that the son had been conscripted into the Soviet Army and could not contact them.

The area was controlled by the Romanian authorities collaborating with the Nazis. Conditions in the ghetto were extremely poor, and mass killings began. Liza and her parents were deported to a ghetto in Balta when a typhus epidemic broke out in Rybnitza. Liza believes that they managed to survive only due to her father's professional skills, because his work was in demand. She felt protected by her parents, shielded from the everyday threats.

In April 1943 the Nazis massacred great numbers of Jews in Balta ghetto in response to the death of a Nazi officer, which was blamed on Jews and communists. Liza's parents were killed. On that day, Liza was away from the ghetto, at work in the fields together with other young people. Then 16, she found herself alone in the entire world, the "lost soul" in the ghetto. She was absolutely destroyed, unable to fend for herself, and survived only thanks to love and support of a Jewish family with four children of their own, who used to know her parents. They took her under their protection, "as their own kin." She stayed with them for a year. In April 1944, the surviving Jews in the ghetto were liberated by the Soviet Army.

After the liberation, Liza's only hope was to find her brother in the Far East. She did not know his address, but remembered that he lived in a place called Svobodny (which means "free"). Liza's brother was also searching for her, and he wrote a letter to Rybnitza. He sent Liza some money, so she could travel to the Far East and join him. Liza's friends helped her with the preparations, "I was in a terrible condition … I could not speak … I was afraid to approach people."

When Liza was reunited with her brother, after all the stories and tears were shared, the brother told her to "stop thinking and stop crying, but start working and studying, and help other people." Upon arrival, Liza immediately started working and went back to school to finish her education. Liza is grateful for her brother's harsh "knack" of protecting her by not pitying, but rather expecting her to assume all the responsibilities of everyday hard life. She believes it saved her spirits, so she did not "withdraw into her grief." She says that her older brother became "like a father" to her. Liza's other brother had been in the Army during the war years, was badly wounded, but survived and returned home.

Liza met her future husband Yakov when he happened to pass by in a forest, where Liza with other girls was gathering berries for the local hospital. Liza says, "I found him by chance, in taiga." The serendipity of this encounter was stunning, because Yakov grew up and lived in the same place where Liza was in the ghetto, but they had never met before. He was in the Army during the war. Yakov happened to come to Liza's town for work, and left shortly after they briefly met in the forest. Later Yakov started searching for Liza, knowing nothing but her first name, and eventually found her again, in about a year. As he told Liza later, "Your eyes stood before me, all that time."

Both Liza's brother and husband were lawyers; their "dream was to advocate for people." Soon after the war they found it impossible to follow this dream within the Soviet justice system, and changed their profession. Liza's husband took a degree in economy. Liza had dreamt of becoming a doctor, and that had also been her parents' wish for her. However, "the war turned everything the other way." She started working as a bookkeeper, and later was trained as an accountant. It was very important for Liza to have a steady profession and good education. Liza and Yakov worked all their lives together, in the construction and maintenance of large hydroelectric power stations in the Ukraine.

Liza and Yakov witnessed injustice, repressions, anti-Semitism, extreme poverty, and mass arrests during the years of Stalin's regime. However, they were not repressed, and although they were well aware of the anti-Semitism, it was not a personal concern for them, as Liza believes, "Because they could not do without us," and because their professional skills were valued very highly. They always had courage to help the others. For example, when Yakov was still practicing law and had access to secret information, he managed to warn some people about their planned arrests, so they could escape. Liza says they were just "lucky" to have avoided persecution and arrests. Liza believes their personal qualities also protected them: they used to always help and inspire other people, were open, generous, and loved by everyone. They never valued material wealth, and did not expect much from the system in exchange for their hard, highly qualified work.

Liza grew up in a non-religious family, and never observed or even knew any Jewish traditions, until she left the Soviet Union and moved to Canada. The only part of Jewish culture that was of a "number one" importance to her family was music. Liza's father was a talented musician and played in Jewish weddings and celebrations. Liza's husband used to play the violin, and when he played Jewish music, "all the grandmothers were crying."

Liza came to Canada in 1985. She left the Soviet Union together with her husband and son, to join her other son who immigrated earlier. They had visited Canada before and fallen in love with this country; therefore they looked forward to living in Canada, "as if we were going to a holiday celebration." On the way from Europe, in Vienna, Liza's husband had a stroke and died within two days. Liza arrived in Canada as a widow, in a great grief. All her hopes had been destroyed. Despite her son's offer of full support, she insisted that she take upon a job, and worked long hours to keep herself busy. She believes that her best means of coping and survival were hard work, generously helping other people, never complaining, and being grateful for everything she had in her life. Liza is retired now, lives in her own apartment, and is very proud of her two sons and five grandchildren. She is active, travels often, always helps others, and says that she feels absolutely "at home" in Canada.

Fira

Fira (Frima) was born in 1930 in Zguritza, Moldova (a Jewish town with the population of about 2,540 before the war). Her father was a cantor in a synagogue, but he could not work as a cantor after the Soviets came to Moldova. The synagogue was closed, religious services were forbidden, and he had to make his living as a peddler. Religious services quietly continued at people's homes, but there was no synagogue service any more. Fira's mother was an educated, well-read and liberated woman, but she did not work outside the house, because it was uncommon in traditional Jewish families. She had seven children, but only four daughters survived. Fira was the youngest among the four daughters in the family. Her older sisters were Tuba, Molka, and Paya.

The family spoke Yiddish, but everyone could also speak and read Moldavian and Romanian. They used to read, together with the children, books in Yiddish and

Romanian. As a family, they often discussed books, politics, religion, history, and current events. For example, Fira remembers hot discussions and her father's explanations about the "Beilis Affair" – the notorious trial of a Jewish person wrongly accused of a ritual murder in 1913. The children were very involved in all these discussions. Fira's father taught her some Hebrew and the Torah; she remembers his teachings and interpretations. The parents supported theatre and highly valued culture, education, and freedom. The mother had a very strong voice in the family. The older daughters went to study in the Jewish gymnasium, before the war started.

Fira was 11 when the war broke out in Moldova. The Romanian troops collaborating with the Germans entered Zguritza on July 7, 1941. Before the invasion, people in Zguritza heard the sound of bombing and saw the flames on the horizon when the Germans burnt to the ground the *shtetl* of Beltsy. There were many refugees in Zguritza. Jewish refugees were coming from Beltsy and other occupied and ruined towns. Many people also came from the surrounding small villages, because they felt safer in a larger place.

On the very first day of the invasion, on July 7, nobody knew what to expect. People tried to stay at home, waiting. They did not know that Romanian soldiers, together with the local Moldavian peasants, had already surrounded the shtetl, awaiting the order to begin the looting. As the order arrived, the soldiers and local peasants entered Jewish homes and took everything they wanted, from furniture to clothes (for example, a local peasant's wife liked the dress that Fira's sister was wearing, and ordered her to take it off). Fira remembers that her family sat quietly in the kitchen, and later in the basement, letting go of all their belongings without fight, hoping that they would be left alone, once there is nothing else to take. Later they learned that 200 people were killed on that day, in other homes and in the street.

After the looting was over, at noon on the second day, everyone was ordered outside and taken to the river. Everyone knew that they were taken to their death; they saw the soldiers and the weapons ready to shoot. Fira's mother said that if they were to die, they would die all together. She held Fira, her youngest, by the hand. Even now, after all these years, Fira often has nightmares about this moment. The family stayed together, but they were not allowed to take their 92-year old grandmother, and she was ordered to stay in the house.

The killing did not happen. The group of Zguritza Jews spent a few days by the river, awaiting their death, but the order to shoot did not arrive. Later they learned that other groups were less fortunate – hundreds of people were killed at the river. Fira does not know why this decision was made; there was no explanation.

People were kept at some distance from the river banks, so water was not accessible. Fira and her family, along the other Jews (she believes there were thousands of people), remained by the river with no food or water, for a few days. Fira witnessed death, pain, torture and violence, although her parents tried to protect her from seeing any of the horrible events. She remembers excruciating, constant thirst, hunger and fear. Fira's father and older sister managed to bring the grandmother from the house, and she was reunited with the family.

At that time, they were taken to a long, meaningless and exhausting journey. The Jews were marched from one place to another for almost 4 months, with no food, water, or basic necessities, losing hundreds of people to hunger, suicide, disease, and killings. All the older people and the disabled who could not walk were killed in the first few days. Desperate mothers were leaving their children on the road, in a hope that someone would pity and save them. In Fira's family, everyone survived the journey, except the 92-year-old grandmother. They also lost aunts, uncles, and cousins – some were "selected" and taken "to work" or on other routes, and Fira never saw them again.

> "What a hell we went through! I think it was an experiment, [in order to see] how long people can stand this, without eating, without drinking, under the burning sun, with no sleep..."

Finally, they arrived to Bershad' ghetto where they spent almost three years. In their first winter in Bershad' a typhus epidemic broke out and took the lives of over 16,000. Fira told me many horrible stories, but it was only a tiny portion of what her memory holds: "If I retell one first day in detail, it will make your hair stand on end. What I am telling you is only one little minute from what we went through."

Fira believes that it was a miracle that her entire family survived. They kept all together, at all times, and shared everything. Fira's father used to say, "It's only because God helped us... We survived to tell the others what we went through."

The ghetto was liberated by the Russian troops in March 1944, on Purim (Fira's father used to say that it was another miracle of Jewish liberation). After the liberation the family returned to Zguritza, but did not stay there long: it was too painful. The shtetl was burnt to the ground. They moved to Soroki where Fira's parents had some surviving relatives. In Soroki Fira went to school again.

Life was extremely difficult after the war. For a long time they still suffered from severe hunger and poverty. Fira's family left the ghetto in Bershad' with nothing at all, except the rags on their backs. Children were malnourished and many were sick. Fira had painful blisters on her feet and legs that began in the ghetto, following the typhus that she encountered just before the liberation. The blisters did not heal for a long time, but she went to school every day, in spite of the severe pain. It was winter, and the family had no medical supplies or warm clothes ("We had hot water … and some herbs that grew close by, and it was everything we had"). Fira never complained to her mother, never said "I am hungry" ("Now I understand how painful it was for my mother – to see all that, and be unable to help"). When Fira went to school, she had no footwear and almost no clothes; the school "dressed her." There were some donations available (Fira believes the donations came from some American Jewish organizations), and the school gave Fira some shoes and a simple dress.

As sick, hungry and cold as Fira was after the liberation, she was eager to go to school. She was not prepared for school, having missed three years, similar to many other Jewish children who went through the same horrors. There was a Jewish teacher who tutored a small group of these children, free of charge, so that they were able to go to school together with the others. Fira was an excellent student and skipped two grades: instead of grade 6, she went to grade 8. She always loved mathematics. Her teacher used to leave her alone with her class with a task to teach the current material to the rest of the children.

After the liberation, at the age 14, Fira could fluently speak three languages: Yiddish (her mother tongue), Moldavian, and Romanian. She could also understand some Hebrew, because her father used to teach her before the war. When she first went to school after the war, the official language in schools was Russian, and in addition to all the other challenges, she had to learn a new language to be able to study. She was a brilliant student, and there was only one subject in which her mark was lower than excellent – the Russian language. She graduated from school with honours.

Fira's favourite teacher at school (also Jewish) used to predict that she would become a teacher, and she appeared to be right. After the graduation, Fira dreamt of becoming a doctor. However, in the wave of the state anti-Semitism of the post-war Stalinist years, for a Jewish girl there was no hope to be accepted to a medical school in her town. Therefore she chose to become a teacher. Fira studied in the Ukraine, and the official language at her university was Ukrainian. She had to learn yet another language to be able to study. Fira got married and settled in Makeevka, Ukraine. Her husband Alexander was an engineer.

After the war, Fira's parents were searching for their relatives, but found out that only a few survived. Many other Jewish people came to Fira's parents in search for information about their relatives and friends, hoping to find them, and Fira's father used to meet with everyone who was seeking help. Such gatherings were very common among the Jews after the war, and thus Fira overheard many stories. Fira's father also always tried to speak to those Jewish people who were not in the ghetto and did not know what happened under the Nazi occupation, so that the history would not be forgotten.

When it became possible after Stalin's death and "the thaw" in the Soviet Union, Jewish communities managed to build some memorials in the places of mass murders. However, they always had to struggle to obtain the state permission to do so, and were not always allowed to build the memorials in a desired way, according to the Jewish traditions. Fira's parents were very involved in these activities, and Fira knows many stories of how memorials were established in her region. She also used to find books and other sources in which she could read about the history of the Jews and the Shoah, although finding such sources was always very difficult during the Soviet times. She loves to read ("it is like bread to me now").

Fira and Alexander have been together for 52 years, and are very proud of their two daughters and three grandchildren. Fira has always, even in the Soviet Ukraine, kept Jewish tradition at home (for example, kosher food, Shabbat candles). She has also tried to pass to her children and grandchildren as much knowledge of history and tradition as possible. She considers this knowledge very important.

Fira and Alexander immigrated in Canada in 1992, retired, and now live on their own. One of Fira's older sisters lives in Israel, but two others passed away. Fira is very happy to be in Canada: "Canada gives us so much; we never lived as well as we live here – though we always worked hard in Russia." She managed to learn English, her

7th language, so she can read and speak almost fluently. She attends the synagogue and Jewish community events, and has a few good friends.

Fira told her story publicly when she lived in Edmonton, where a Russian-language writer recorded and published some of her stories. She also records her memoirs, writes some stories, and has volunteered to speak to school students in Calgary.

> “On the one hand I become upset [when I speak about it], but on the other, I retell with pleasure – it will be all gone with me … There are many interesting stories – [not] interesting – rather horrible – but interesting for those who live now. I want my children to know, my grandchildren to know … [because] in fact, what is happening with our Jews? Our generation will be gone, and they do not even believe that these things could happen.”

Lydia

Lydia is an experienced, highly respected psychiatrist in Moscow. For a long time since I met Lydia I did not know that she was a Holocaust survivor. She never identified herself as a survivor, until a few years ago German financial restitution programs became available for survivors in Russia, and she was encouraged to apply for a pension. At that time, Lydia also became a member of a survivors’ group, met other survivors, and now continues to attend their meetings from time to time. When I accidentally learned about Lydia’s story of surviving under false identity during the Nazi occupation, I asked her to participate in my study. We met for a few interviews in Moscow between 2005 and 2008.

Lydia was born in 1930 in Odessa, Ukraine (then USSR). Her mother was a physician. Her parents divorced when she was very young, and she lived with her mother; she was an only child. As a young girl, Lydia “knew everything” about the repressions of the Soviet regime in the 30s, and these events were not concealed from her, but rather openly discussed in her family. Lydia’s nanny of many years had been the only survivor of a Ukrainian village, where all the members of her peasant family were murdered or exiled to Siberia and starved to death (as a “kulaks” family). The nanny told Lydia many stories about these events. Lydia’s mother worked as a doctor in a Ukrainian village during the famine of the early 30s, and witnessed starvation deaths of entire families. As a physician, she was devastated but could not help much. In addition to her pain of a powerless witness of the disaster, she was under threat herself. In her medical documentation, she was forced to record infectious disease as a cause of death, to cover up for the state-induced famine and starvation. She knew the truth, and Lydia considers it a miracle that her mother managed to escape and leave the village without being arrested and killed, which happened to many others who knew too much about the causes of the famine.

Lydia grew up hearing open conversations about the injustice and terror of revolution and Stalin’s regime. In her own family, a grandfather was arrested, became sick in prison, and died shortly after he was released. Lydia does not understand how other people in the Soviet Union could have been fooled into believing in the virtues of Soviet communist state, and how they could later maintain that they knew nothing about the repressions.

When Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, Lydia lived in Odessa together with her mother and stepfather. She was almost 12 at that time. The stepfather was not Jewish and was instrumental in their rescue. He arranged for false documents to conceal the Jewish identities of Lydia and her mother. Together with him, they moved to a new place in Odessa where nobody knew them, and remained in town under the false identities. Lydia's little cousin also stayed with them, because she became separated from her parents and nobody knew what happened to them. The stepfather was a dentist and continued working. Lydia went to school with the false documents. Nobody knew she was Jewish.

Lydia and her mother realized that they lived under a tremendous risk. There were some neighbours who guessed about their Jewish identity, and on a few occasions they were reported and had to flee and relocate. At one moment, a new girl came to Lydia's class. Lydia recognized the girl: they had met before, and the girl knew that she was Jewish. Lydia was sure she was going to be reported and killed. However, the girl said nothing. There were a few other moments when she was close to being identified, for example, once a German officer stopped her in the street, called her a 'Jude', but then unexpectedly let her go. At that moment, she was prepared to die.

At regular registrations, in which Lydia and her mother had to show up and present their documents to the authorities, the mother always brought poison in her pocket, to use it in case they were identified. Lydia knew about the poison. During the Nazi occupation between 1941 and 1944, nearly 100,000 Odessa Jews were killed. Lydia believes that it was a miracle that she, her mother and the little cousin survived.

Odessa was liberated by the Soviet Army on April 10, 1944. At the liberation, Lydia was 14. After the war she graduated from school and went to the university to study medicine. Shortly after that she decided to move away from her family. All alone, she went to Moscow and enrolled in a Moscow medical school. She had no family in Moscow and had to manage on her own. After graduation, she went to live with her father in Tashkent (Uzbekistan), where she started working as a psychiatrist. She returned to Moscow for her PhD studies, got married, and lives in Moscow ever since.

Lydia and her husband had a very close spiritual connection and loving relationships, and lived a long happy life together. They had a son and three grandchildren. It was a hard blow to Lydia when her husband passed away four years ago.

Lydia experienced many symptoms that she now considers posttraumatic. Some of these symptoms were very intense shortly after the war, and although their intensity has subsided, they still disturb her now. However, she never wanted professional treatment and is coping on her own. She believes that trauma was far from the main factor that influenced her life.

When Lydia took her aging mother in to live together with her family, she had to take care of her mother's many severe sicknesses, some of which she now interprets as psychosomatic. That period of time was very difficult, because Lydia had to take care of both her sick mother and a young son. In addition, at that time Lydia had to struggle with poverty, extremely harsh conditions, and even brief episodes of homelessness, at which time her son was very young. Lydia lived through the turmoil of the Doctors' Plot, open pogroms in psychiatry when the brightest psychiatrists were exiled, fired, or imprisoned, and severe anti-Semitism of the 50s. She observed these events and at times was a victim of the oppression.

When Lydia's son grew up and went to the university, he suddenly became a devoted Catholic. Like his mother, he was not afraid to speak out and act, and started practicing his religion openly. At that time in the Soviet Union this was considered dissident behaviour and was extremely dangerous for his career and even personal safety. Lydia was scared for him, but the situation was beyond her control. Luckily, the times were changing, and nothing serious happened to the son, except some difficulties at school. He is now a well known author and speaker, highly respected in the Russian Catholic community, and teaches at the university.

Lydia lives in Moscow. Her son and his children live close, and she sees them every day. She has close relationships with her son. She loves her work as an adolescent psychiatrist, and is sincerely loved by her patients, coworkers, and students. She is now almost 80 and continues working and teaching.

Vera

Vera was born in 1928 in Kiev, the Ukraine. She was the only child in her family. Her father worked in a state bank, and her mother could not work outside the house because of her severe migraines. She worked at home, making clothes and embroideries, and taught Vera some of these skills. The mother had a classical education. She had graduated from a gymnasium, one of the elite schools, which used to provide fundamental quality education before the Russian revolution of 1917. Jews had limited access to the gymnasiums, therefore it was not common for a Jewish girl to be a gymnasium graduate. She was planning to study at the High Women's Law Courses, but never made it because of the turbulent years in the Ukraine and Russia, with pogroms and the civil war.

When in 1980 Vera started exploring her family history, she learned that many members of her grandmother's family left for Egypt or Palestine after the pogroms. Some of them were enthusiastic Zionists and had participated in the underground in Odessa (e.g., printing Zionist Yiddish newspapers). When the grandmother's family immigrated to Palestine in 1920, they wanted to take Vera's mother and grandmother along, but the latter refused to leave. ("Palestine's climate is so severe, it makes women age prematurely.") When Vera was young, her parents never told her about their family who lived abroad, because they did not want her to know. The very fact of having relatives abroad was dangerous in the Soviet times.

When the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, Vera was 12. In Kiev, the war was not announced immediately, but because of the bombing everyone knew that the war started. Shortly after June 22, refugees began arriving from the West. They came with the crowded freight trains that were returning from the front line (the trains were transporting horses and troops to the West and coming back with the refugees). Most of the newcomers were Jewish women, children, and older people who had fled from the advancing German forces. The refugees looked desperate and were telling horrible stories. It was summer time, and the refugees who had nowhere to stay flooded the botanical garden in the centre of Kiev, close to Vera's house. She remembers that her family and others in their neighbourhood used to bring milk and porridge to the botanical garden for the refugees and their children.

Vera's family fled (evacuated) to the East, to escape the Nazi occupation. The entire extended family, 14 people in total, with two grandmothers, aunts, and cousins with their children decided to travel together. Some family friends and Jewish neighbours stayed in Kiev. Most of them were older people who remembered the Germans they knew during the First World War, and did not believe in their cruelty. ("Where are you going? They are such cultured people; there is nothing to be afraid of.") Those who stayed in Kiev were murdered in Babi Yar.

Vera remembers how her family spent a night in the crowded train station trying to get on a train, in a throng of frightened people, mostly Jews desperate to flee. She felt very scared. The danger was immediate; she heard the sounds of bombing and felt the panic of the adults. No information was available. Vera's parents wanted to give Vera tools to survive in case she lost them, and made her memorize the address of their Moscow relatives, so she could find them if she stayed alone. This was a very scary moment; Vera remembers the address until now.

Eventually, all 14 of them managed to squeeze into a freight train, together with many other people, and left for the East. Vera says those were the days when "her childhood ended." The journey to the East was long and dangerous. The train was bombed, and the hunger was severe: food and water were available only sporadically. On their way, Vera's family stopped many times in small towns in search for a place to stay and work, but there was no work for them. Their journey across the entire country lasted all summer, until they settled in a small town of Takmak near Frunze, then the capital of Kyrgyzstan. Later, after Vera's father was conscripted, they moved to Frunze where they eventually spent all the war years. Their other family members settled in different places along the way. Vera with her mother and grandmother stayed alone to fend for themselves. Since then, Vera had to struggle to survive under the extreme danger and severe conditions, "Those years made me a fighter."

Vera started working. She was a grade 6 student and went to school during the day. She worked at nights. Workers received extra 200 grams of bread, in addition to the regular 400 grams per day; quite often this was their only food. It was extremely cold in winter, and they heated their tiny room by burning kizyaki (pressed horse dung used as fuel by poor families in Kyrgyzstan), which they had gathered and stored during the summer. There was no electricity or running water. Their room (which was rather a storage closet rented out to them as a room) was big enough only to hold two beds and a table. One bed, in which Vera and her mother slept together, was always wet from the leaking wall (Vera believes she contracted rheumatism at that time). They gave another, dry bed to the grandmother. Vera remembers that at night, lying in bed, she used to dream about potatoes and flour. They were constantly hungry and cold in winter, suffering from frostbites and lice.

After the war the family returned to Kiev, and found their small room in a communal apartment totally empty. Apparently, their neighbours had taken away all the furniture, and even removed window frames and wallpaper. There was no hope to get their belongings back. Only an old family mezuzah, a Hebrew parchment wrapped in plain paper, miraculously remained glued to the wall; Vera took it with her when she emigrated and keeps it until now. In addition to losing all their belongings, there was another, more serious and immediate problem: the family had to reclaim their right to live in their old room, which required a proof that Vera's father had fought in an eligible category of the Army troops. Only army fighters had a right to reclaim their evacuated families' pre-war residence spaces. Vera's father was still in the Army at that time. Vera was only16, but she was the only person in her family who had enough courage and energy to face the authorities, collect all the necessary papers, and defend their rights. She succeeded, and the family could stay in their old place.

Vera's father came back from the Army and started working in a bank again, but he was soon fired because of the strengthening anti-Semitism in Kiev. Shortly after, the father contracted cancer and died within two years, after five surgeries.

Immediately after their return from evacuation, Vera had to begin struggling for survival in every aspect of life. It was necessary to meet the basic needs of her family in the conditions of extreme post-war poverty. In addition, she was determined to finish her education. Vera managed to be an honours student at school while working to support her family. When she got married and had children, she continued to work hard and carry the burdens of winning all the family's struggles to improve their living conditions, because her husband had neither the energy nor will to support her in that.

When she was 33, she contracted multiple sclerosis. Because of her illness, she encountered many additional hardships, but could not afford leaving her job. Vera says that the habitual lack of emotional support from her husband was very traumatic for her.

One of the most traumatic obstacles in Vera's life was the pervasive impact of anti-Semitism. It was in Kiev, right after the war, that this problem first affected her. She never felt it in Frunze where she spent the war years as a child, because local people "had never seen any Jews before, and they did not know what it means." That place was a traditional destination for political exiles, and local residents were used to strangers from the West. Upon returning home, Vera felt deeply hurt by her first encounter with Soviet state anti-Semitism. She was a straight A-student at school, but when she was graduating, a gold medal was withheld from her. The director of Vera's school (who was also Jewish) told her confidentially that she might not be awarded the gold medal, and added, "You must know why."

After the war, Vera always felt discrimination because of her Jewish background. She felt it when she was a student, while searching for a job, and in many other situations. After graduating from the university, despite her honours diploma, she was rejected by 28 organizations before a small project firm hired her; she says, "The world isn't without kind people." When years later one of her non-Jewish friends asked her, "Vera, how do you tolerate all this?" she said, "But what can I do? I live as I can."

She was always acutely aware of her Jewish background. Her parents were not religious; Jewish schools had been closed in Kiev before Vera went to school. Her only source of knowledge about her Jewish roots and religious rituals was her grandmother. She observed some traditions, and used to tell Vera stories about their old Jewish family. Vera's mother and grandmother used to speak Yiddish between themselves when they did not want Vera to understand them, but Vera picked up the language by the age of 5, "and when they understood that I knew what they were talking about, they stopped [speaking Yiddish]."

Vera dreamt of becoming a doctor, but her options were very limited after the war, and she felt a pressure to quickly get a decent profession and start providing for her family. She entered an engineering school and graduated with honours. She became an electrical engineer, and worked in her professional field until her emigration to Israel in 1974.

The immigration adjustment in Israel was not smooth. She arrived together with her two sons and her mother, and was the only working person in her family. Vera's husband did not join her in emigration, because he was working in a military plant of a highly "secret" category. Vera had to officially divorce him and apply for emigration alone with the children, because there was a real risk that the entire family's application would be rejected because of the husband's work. In addition, he was afraid of serious complications at work, which he could be facing if he remained married to an émigré. The husband joined Vera 4 years later, after she moved to Canada, but when he arrived, they did not live together and divorced shortly.

Vera's sons have high education and successful careers; one has a Masters Degree and another has PhD. They are both married outside the Jewish faith; there are no grandchildren. Vera's sons leave far away, "one in the West, another in the East." They call her on the phone very often, and Vera says that their phone conversations are always very long.

Vera used to speak four languages in addition to Russian and Ukrainian, her first languages. She learned German during the war from a wonderful teacher who was an exiled German (from German communities assimilated in Russia). She understands some Yiddish since she was a little child, has learned English at the university, and Hebrew while living in Israel. She used to volunteer in the Calgary community as an interpreter for new immigrants, but cannot do it any more because of her health.

Leib

Leib (born in 1934) came to Canada in 2000 together with his wife, to join his two daughters and their families who immigrated earlier. Leib was born in a small town of Beliye Berega in South-Western Russia (in the province of Bryansk which borders with both Ukraine and Belarus), and lived in a close-by town of Bezhitza before the war. He had an older sister and a younger brother. His parents did not have high education, and worked in a local plant. The family was always very poor. As a child, Leib was close to his grandfather who was a tailor and a practicing Jew. The rest of Leib's family was not religious. Although there was no religion in Leib's life, he says he always knew he was a Jew, since he was a little boy, “I always felt that I was a Jew, I always knew.”

Leib was 7 when the war broke out in Bezhitza in 1941. His father was conscripted into the Red Army in the first days of the war, and his mother, then 29, stayed alone with three small children. The mother decided to flee from the occupied area, and they began their long and dangerous journey to the east, together with the grandfather and Leib’s aunt with her children. Leib recalls traveling by train and by foot. He remembers constant bombing, cold, and hunger. However, he does not remember feeling scared as a child. He was together with his family. Besides, Leib always felt curious about new places, events, and people. His first memories are about exploring the newly dug trenches in his town together with a group of boys, “It was very interesting.”

The family spent the war years in a small village in the South Urals, where Leib’s mother and aunt worked so much that the children hardly saw them. They stayed on their own most of the time, trying to keep together. The children experienced extreme hunger, cold, and diseases, but had an opportunity to go to a local school. When Leib first went to school, following the example of other children, his mother did not know about it until a few weeks later.

The family experienced extreme hardships, but everyone survived. Leib’s father also came back from the army. They returned to Bezhitza after the war, only to find out that no one of their kin was alive. Everyone who stayed in Bezhitza was killed by the Nazis. Leib’s only remaining family were those who fled together with him to the Urals. In fact, Leib recalls that as a child, he overheard some stories about the fate of his relatives, such as a story about his cousin and his family who were burned alive in a synagogue. However, these stories were very few and most of them “did not reach” him until much later. He does not know any names of his extended family members who perished. There were no direct conversations about the tragedy in his family; his parents kept silence. Although Leib does not know how and when he first learned about the events of the Shoah, the knowledge was there, “It was already in my brain, in my bones.”

Leib was bullied at school, but he was a strong boy and used to be able to defend himself. He was nicknamed Bar Kokhba (the name of the famous leader of the Jewish revolt against the Romans in the II century), because of his ability to stand up for himself and others. Studies came easy to him; he loved to learn and was a star student at school. However, when he was graduating, a gold medal was withheld from him. Leib’s mother said to him that “medals were not for the Jews.” This injustice did not affect Leib as much as it did his mother, but the following event deeply hurt him: his application to a Leningrad post-secondary institution was rejected because of his Jewish background. Leib was eager to learn, and eventually found an opportunity to enter a different, less prestigious school. He began his studies in Leningrad.

During Leib’s student years away from home, his parents were unable to support him. He had to take physical labour jobs to make his living, and experienced hunger, cold, and other hardships. He recalls that all these years he kept warm using an old winter coat that his tailor grandfather made for him when he was a teenager. Leib felt disadvantaged as a Jew, for example, he was refused a dormitory placement. However, he was determined to complete his studies, and graduated with honours with an engineering degree.

Leib's first work place was in a newly developed institute in the city of Tomsk in Siberia. It was there that Leib met his wife Galina, with whom he has been together for almost 50 years by now. They have two daughters and three grandchildren.

Leib's engineering career was fulfilling and successful. He established himself in high management positions, traveled across the country, and taught power engineering in continuing professional education system. He loved his work, and considered himself a workaholic. He also always loved to learn, to read, and to explore new areas of knowledge in his professional field and beyond. He worked long hours, but "always had time for something interesting," for example, meeting new people, studying the Bible (although he was always an atheist), attending lectures, and simply exploring local libraries in every place where he traveled.

He was surrounded by good friends, and "always trusted people." Despite the awareness about the dangers associated with speaking out in the Soviet country, Leib "was never afraid of arguing or telling the truth, and mainly did what [he] chose to do."

Leib did not encounter many serious incidents of anti-Semitism, but he was well aware of repressions and discrimination in the Soviet Union. He believes that he was spared from oppression because he used to be a highly respected and knowledgeable worker, and he was much needed as a specialist at that critical time, when the country needed to *"develop power engineering."* Because of his valued qualities, his Jewish identity, as well as his free thought, did not always interfere with his work and life choices. Leib was not seriously affected by discrimination, except occasional personal encounters with anti-Semitism.

When Leib was about 40 years old, he was diagnosed with an aggressive form of tuberculosis, and his doctor announced that he had but a few months to live. Despite this grim prediction, he survived. Recalling his miraculous recovery, Leib compares it with many other events of his life when he had expected the worst, but "something helped him out of it."

In the late 80s, Leib was arrested upon a wrongful accusation. The charges were absurd and obviously unjust, and there was no evidence of crime. At that time, Leib headed a major department in a large government engineering organization in Alma-Ata (Kazakhstan). He believes that someone in his organization wrote an anonymous complaint and accused him of criminal conduct, in pursuit of their career purposes. Such anonymous letters used to be quite successful and common in the Soviet Union at that time, with its corrupt justice system and human rights neglect.

Leib felt betrayed and deeply hurt also because no one from his organization had courage to stand up for him, although the accusation was obviously wrong. Leib spent almost a year in prison in Alma-Ata, under extremely harsh, humiliating conditions. During all this time he was not allowed to see his wife, and was never given access to a lawyer. In addition to all the hardships of his situation, Leib felt that his family suffering was even more intense than his own, "It was horrible [for me], but even more so for my family."

Leib fought for his liberation by writing numerous letters and trying to prove his innocence ("of course I fought, I could never help fighting"). He was not prepared to silently accept injustice. However, Leib does not think that his struggle made a difference. He attributes his release from prison to yet another miracle in his life, because "no one gets out of the Soviet prison alive, it is against the normal." At that time, political atmosphere in the country changed, and Leib thinks it contributed to his liberation. His incarceration experience was extremely traumatic and ruined his professional and social life. Most of his friends were now afraid to talk to him or his wife, and returning to his workplace became impossible. The traumatic events of those years prompted his family's decision to emigrate. Leib had always wanted to leave the Soviet Union, because "this is a country with no freedom," but there was no opportunity to emigrate until that time.

After arriving in Canada, Leib began working in odd part time jobs, to support his wife and himself. He found each of his simple jobs "interesting" and stimulating. He took jobs as a janitor, as a night guard in a Jewish funeral house, and also tutored school students in math, physics, and computer science. Leib has learned how to use a computer and loves to explore the Internet. Communication in English is still challenging for him, and he misses the nature of Kazakhstan. However, Leib manages to learn from every new situation, when meeting new people or exploring the local Jewish community.

Maya

Maya was born in 1931 in Moscow. Her mother was a physician, with the origins in a large Jewish community in the Eastern Ukraine. Maya and her younger sister grew up in very close connection with their many uncles, aunts and cousins who had come from the Ukraine and settled in Moscow. There were many physicians among Maya's uncles and cousins, very successful and well known in town. Her father was an engineer, a respected specialist in a high position in one of the Moscow plants.

Maya's parents raised her and her sister as atheists. There was no other possibility in their Soviet environment. Although her mother and father grew up in traditional Jewish religious families and spoke Yiddish and Hebrew, they received their high education in the Soviet country, after the revolution.

Maya went to a regular Soviet school (there were no Jewish schools in Moscow at that time). She believes that her family maintained rich Jewish cultural traditions and values, which she inherited. She used to hear Jewish music at home all the time (her father and uncle were good singers), as well as the stories of her parents' childhood. Maya remembers her mother's stories about terrible Jewish pogroms which her family survived in the Ukraine during the war, in 1917 – 1918. Most of their family's friends were Jewish, and as Maya was growing up, her extended family was her most influential environment.

One of the most tragic events in the family was an arrest that ruined Maya's cousin's family. Maya's little cousin Lilia lost her both parents. Lilia's father was arrested and executed (under the accusation of being an "enemy of the people"). Her mother, Maya's aunt, was also arrested and imprisoned in one of the Siberian camps for many years. Maya's other aunt adopted Lilia, and only the family members knew that the girl was not her own daughter. The secret was kept within the family until Lilia's mother was rehabilitated and returned from the camps after Stalin's death in 1953.

Maya's mother used to travel to Druskeninkai, Lithuania, then USSR, every year for the entire summer. This was a resort town, and Maya's mother worked there as a doctor, while using this opportunity to take her children and nephews to the resort for the summer holidays. Maya's father stayed in Moscow because he could not leave his work.

When the war broke out in June 1941, the family was in Druskeninkai. Because the place was very close to the border, it was occupied by the Germans in the first days of the war. Maya was 10 years old, and her sister was 5. Maya's mother, with two little children, found herself caught up in a strange place, alone, under the bombing and extreme threat, among crowds of panicking local people. As a physician, she was also responsible for her personnel. They already knew about the immediate danger for the Jews.

Maya's mother managed to organize the evacuation of her personnel and escape from the town "with the last truck available." They fled to Moscow just before the Germans invaded the town. Their journey from Druskeninkai to Moscow lasted more than a month, under constant bombing, on a freight train crowded with women, old people, and small children. Maya remembers constant fear and extreme hunger. A dysentery epidemic broke out on the train, and Maya's mother was the only physician; she worked hard to help as many people as possible. Maya remembers that despite extreme crowdedness with many very young children on the train, there were no deaths of dysentery on the way. She attributes it to her mother's efforts. When they finally arrived in Moscow, Maya's father had already despaired of seeing them again. At the moment when they saw each other, Maya saw her father crying. She was stunned when she saw that his hair had turned grey.

Maya's father could not leave Moscow, because his plant was producing military equipment, and he could not leave his work. He remained in Moscow throughout the war, often working 18 hours per day. The mother with the children parted from the father and fled to safety in a Siberian town Orenburg (then called Chkalov). She started working as a physician there. Within a few months, Maya's family was joined in Orenburg by her two aunts with small children whose husbands had been conscripted to the Army, and her older cousin, Sunichka, whose entire family had been murdered by the Nazis in Poland.

Sunichka was the only survivor of the entire family of a beloved sister of Maya's father, who had remained in Poland. It was a tragedy from which the family could never entirely recover. There were other tragic losses, such as the death of Maya's older cousin who had volunteered for the Army and served in the artillery. He was killed in the front line where he was together with his father, Maya’s uncle, a military surgeon.

All the women and children were crowded in a small room in their Orenburg place. Maya’s mother worked long hours and could not take care of the children. Food was scarce: often the only food available for each child was one cup of sunflower seeds per day. In winter, the cold was severe, but they did not have winter clothes. Maya went to school wearing summer shoes, and suffered severe frostbites that kept her awake at nights. Maya’s mother decided to send the children to an orphanage (a “children’s house”) where she was hoping they would be kept warm and safe, and would get at least some minimal food. By sending them to the orphanage, she was hoping to save them from starvation. Maya, her little sister and two cousins spent many months in the orphanage. The mother announced her nephews as her own children, to get them admitted. Maya remembers that other children in the orphanage teased her as a Jew, and she felt alone and missed her mother very much. She contracted malaria in the orphanage and barely survived.

Maya and her sister were reunited with their mother and returned to Moscow after the war ended. Maya graduated from school with a silver medal, and enrolled in a medical school. She dreamt of becoming a doctor, like her mother and uncles. She was a student at the medical school in Moscow at the time of the notorious Doctor’s Trial, when many of her favourite professors were arrested as “doctors-saboteurs,” and her mother was fired from her job at one of the head institutes in Moscow. Her family was devastated. Maya spoke out at school, trying to convince her fellow students that the accusations against their professors had been fabricated. Many sincerely believed the official propaganda.

When Maya graduated from medical school in 1954, she had serious difficulties finding work in Moscow, similar to many other Jewish physicians. By that time, she was married, and her husband helped her find a job at his organization. Later she changed a few jobs until she was offered a position of a general physician at a psychiatric hospital, which she accepted and held for over 40 years, until she retired. She was always loved by her patients and highly respected by her coworkers; she did not retire until the age of 75.

Maya got married to Abram when she was 18. They have been together for more than 55 years, and have two daughters, three grandchildren, and a great-grandson. Both daughters and one grandchild became physicians. Maya and Abram now live in Moscow.

Abram

Abram is a war veteran: he was fighting against the Nazis with the Soviet Army. He is also a survivor of the Holocaust: as a Jew, he was spared from being murdered because he did not remain on the occupied territory, having volunteered for the Army, 17 years old at that time. The entire Jewish and Roma populations of his home town were murdered. Abram lost numerous members of his extended family and most of his friends to the Holocaust.

Abram was born in 1923 in Simferopol (a large town in Crimea, in southern Ukraine, then the USSR). It was a multi-national area. As a young boy, Abram spent his summers in a nearby Jewish kolkhoz (a Soviet collective farm). There were three kolkhozes in the close proximity of each other: the Jewish kolkhoz named Mainfeld, the German, and the Roma kolkhoz. Abram's friends were boys and girls from all these places. He went to a Tatar school and learned the basics of the Tatar language. Abram grew up among people of various ethnic backgrounds, and considers himself an internationalist.

Abram's parents had no high education. His father was a tailor, and his mother never worked outside the home. Abram's only sister Sima was 11 years older than him. The mother was religious and observed the Jewish traditions, but the rest of the family was not religious. Abram considers himself an atheist. He never received Jewish religious education. However, he says that he is "the son of the Jewish people," and has never rejected or denied his identity.

In October 1941, Abram's home town was occupied by the Germans, so his family had to flee to Kazakhstan to save their lives. Abram was already in the Army. By that time he had graduated from a pilot school, and was eager to become a military pilot. However, he was assigned to the tank troops, and because he had also graduated from high school, he quickly became an officer. Abram was barely 20 in July 1943 when he participated in the famous Kursk Campaign as a tank crew commander.

Abram was seriously wounded in the Kursk Campaign. His tank crew and all his closest and most beloved friends were killed. He was the only survivor. When his tank was caught in fire, Abram carried his wounded friend away on his back, but the friend died in his arms.

Abram had a concussion, was in a coma for some time, and then incurred an acute stress reaction, from which it took him a few weeks to recover. There was no medication available, and a military doctor treated him with a mixture of pure alcohol and chocolate. When he recovered, his commander took him to the field and showed him a small obelisk-shaped monument established for his crew. Abram saw his own name written on the obelisk among the others, because he had been presumed dead too. At that time Abram's family also received an erroneous notification of his martyr death. His parents were already mourning when they received the news that their son recovered from his wounds.

Abram insisted on being sent back to the front line, and was given a new tank and a new crew. Later he was assigned to teach in the Military Academy and finished the war as an instructor for young tank troopers.

After the war, Abram went back home only to discover that his world had been ruined. All his Jewish and Roma friends had been murdered, and the triangle of multinational kolkhozes had disappeared. The apartment where his family used to live had been occupied by a local Communist Party leader, and they never got their home back. At that time, the Soviet authorities initiated the notorious deportation of Crimea Tatars and ethnic Germans – entire communities were uprooted and deported to Siberia and

Kazakhstan as a form of collective punishment; hundreds of innocent people perished in the exile, in the unthinkable conditions. Abram recalls that Tatars were given 24 hours to leave their houses, with a 20 kilo limit of take-along luggage.

Abram's home had been taken away from his family while they were in evacuation, and was now occupied by a local Party official. Because as a veteran Abram could not be ignored, he was offered compensation – one of the houses abandoned by a deported Tatar family. Abram and his father were disgusted by this offer, and left the town.

Abram went to the university in Moscow to study engineering, and became an aviation designer. He married Maya when they both were still university students, and they had two daughters. They have been together for more than 55 years.

At the time of Abram's graduation, in the wave of state anti-Semitism, he was not allowed to work in the place of his choice. He had graduated with honors, but because he was a Jew, he had to struggle for a permission to remain in Moscow and get a decent job. He succeeded with the support of his professors, who sincerely valued him, but was assigned a job at a smaller, non-prestigious company, "where they also herded all the other 'disabled by item 5'." However, he was a hard worker and a talented engineer, full of new ideas and loved by his coworkers, so he was quickly promoted at his job. Abram worked in the same organization for over 50 years, and retired when he was 83.

Abram has a history of becoming passionately interested in a variety of creative pursuits. One of such pursuits is his life-long work. Abram is an aviation designer. He became ardently involved in aviation at the age of 14, before the war, when he joined an aviation club. He was flying airplanes by the age of 16. Abram's other pursuits could be called hobbies, if it were not for their vast role in Abram's life. He tended to fall in love with these occupations and master them at a high expert level, to the extent that professionals would seek his advice. In addition to photography – a passion to which he remains loyal all his life – Abram has become proficient in other pursuits, from painting to horticulture to assembling a massive collection of classical music records. His unique collection was known in professional music circles and accessed by some celebrity performers.

Abram never belonged to any veteran groups or participated in any victory parades or celebrations that were common in the Soviet Union. He was the only survivor of his unit, and did not have anybody to meet with, to talk about the past. Memories of loss, in the battlefield and beyond, were painful for him.

Alexander

Alexander was born in 1926 in Il'intsy, a small Jewish shtetl with the population about 5,400 people, close to Vinnitsa, Ukraine, then USSR. His name at birth was Israel (Srul), but he changed it later to a more Russian-sounding name for convenience. When he went to school, he was very embarrassed by the name Srul, and quickly changed it informally to Sasha. Later, after his birth certificate and all the other records were lost during the war, he used this occasion to also change his formal name into Alexander.

His mother Freida (Fania) Pivchik (maiden name) came from a very religious Jewish family. Her father – Alexander's grandfather – was a rabbi in Gaysin (a shtetl close by). She had good Jewish education. However, Freida did not have any profession, and did not work outside home (except helping her husband in his store, and some farm work during the war time). Alexander's father Froim also had received an excellent Jewish education and was a bright person, but did not have any formal professional training and worked in small sales all his life. The parents spoke Yiddish at home and were religious. They used to always attend the synagogue and kept strict kosher at home. After the synagogues were closed by the Soviet authorities, the father continued to go to minyan services in people's private houses. Alexander remembers that his parents used to take him to the synagogue for all Jewish holidays when he was little. He did not know his grandparents, because he was the youngest child, and they had passed away by the time he was born.

Alexander had two older half-siblings (brother Nikolai and sister Mania) from his father's first marriage. His father's first wife was his niece (such marriages were common in their family), and she died young of tuberculosis, leaving him with two young children. He had another two children with Freida – Alexander and his sister Fira who was two years older than him.

In 1931, the Jewish shtetlach in the Ukraine were hit hard by famine. When hunger and poverty became unbearable, Alexander's father and older half-brother moved to Makeevka, a large industrial and coalmining town, to find jobs that could support the family. Freida with the children followed them shortly. When they first arrived, Alexander, then 5 years old, was teased and beaten by local kids because he did not understand a word in Russian. Alexander's first language was Yiddish. His mother had to watch him and "bribe" the Russian kids with candy, to protect her son, and Alexander had to quickly learn the new language.

Alexander went to a regular Soviet public school when he turned seven. Most children in his class were Russian, only one other boy was Jewish (Alexander's best friend with whom he kept in touch until his emigration). However, he did not experience any anti-Semitism during his school years. He remembers that his parents told him about their many encounters with anti-Semitic hatred in Makeevka, but he was not affected.

At school, Alexander became interested in music (he played the tuba in a band), went to a ballet dancing club, and got involved in a shooting club (so called "Voroshilov riflemen"). These activities kept him very busy during his school years, until the war started in 1941.

When the war broke out, Alexander was 15 and had just graduated from grade 8. The Jewish community in Makeevka divided: one group insisted that they had to flee, and another maintained that there was nothing to be afraid of, the war would end in a few months, and everyone should stay. Alexander's family hesitated. There was no organized evacuation plan, and the Soviet government did not provide any information about the immediate danger to the Jews. There was no information whatsoever about the events of mass murder of the Jews in Eastern Europe, except some distant rumours which many people did not believe.

It was impossible to leave the town without official evacuation papers, which also made the escape very difficult. Alexander's family was saved by his father's nephew Beniamin who worked in the local metallurgic plant (the large plant named after Kirov). It was important for the government to save the expensive plant equipment and keep the plant running, to manufacture strategically significant production for the military needs. Beniamin, as a plant worker, was scheduled to be evacuated together with the entire plant. He arranged that Alexander's family was entered in the list of the plant evacuees, as his family members. Alexander says that this saved their lives. When Alexander's family came back after the liberation, they found nobody alive.

Alexander and his family had an opportunity to leave Makeevka thanks to Beniamin's help, but they were in great doubt. Twice they loaded their cart and left their house, but changed their decision on the way to the train and returned. When the family took off for the third time, they finally made their minds and boarded the last available freight train that carried the remaining load of the plant equipment and workers' families. Their journey lasted about a month. It was late November 1941 when they finally arrived in a small Russian village near Nizhni Tagil (Ural), where they spent the war years.

Alexander's older brother and sister did not come together with them. His brother Nikolai was conscripted into the Soviet Army. By then, he had nearly graduated from the medical school, and express examinations enabled him to join the Army as a military surgeon. Alexander's older sister Mania was a nurse and also went to the Army.

Alexander and his parents started working in the village (it was a sovchoz that produced pedigree cattle and also ran some farming works). Alexander became an apprentice to a metal turner working on mechanic equipment. Because all the men had been conscripted into the Army, very soon Alexander became the only metal turner in the village, an extremely responsible task that involved long hours of hard labour. However, this work made him a respected person in the village and also allowed the family to have food and shelter.

In 1943 Alexander became a student at a metallurgic technical school in Nizhni Tagil, specializing as a steel founder. At the same time, he also was assigned to attend some military training because he was already 17, nearing the conscription age. He completed training courses for mountain infantry and then for airborne troops. However, being a student for a strategically important occupation gave him deferment of military service.

In the end of 1944, when Ukraine was liberated, Alexander and his family returned home. When they came back, they found their house empty and ruined. All their belongings had been looted, and the roof of their house had been broken. The father managed to repair the house, and they started to rebuild their lives. Life was difficult after the war, food was scarce, and the family struggled with hunger and poverty.

Alexander continued his studies in the metallurgic technical school in Makeevka (specializing in electrical equipment), and graduated in 1947. He wanted to continue his education and become an engineer, even though his parents did not support his dream; they wanted him to get married and settle down in his work place at the plant. (Alexander recalls that his parents were simply scared for him, because life was hard, and they thought his being a student might expose him to some dangers.) After a number of unsuccessful attempts to enrol in a higher education institution, Alexander became a student in the town of Melitopol (the Institute of Agriculture Mechanization and Electrification). After his graduation in 1953, Alexander was assigned a job as an agricultural engineer in Kokchetav, Northern Kazakhstan.

In Kokchetav Alexander joined the communist party. He was told that his high position at work required party membership; if he rejected the requirement, he had to resign from his job. The decision was made. Alexander was a believer: when he joined the party as a young man, he sincerely believed in the ideal picture of communism, as he knew it. He would never pretend or do anything he did not believe in his heart. He used to speak the truth when it was necessary, despite any danger or inconvenience associated with speaking his mind, and accepted the consequences.

At the time when Alexander took his first job as an engineer in Kazakhstan, he was introduced to his future wife Fira. Alexander's mother had a brother, a respected Jewish leader (a shoichet), in Soroki where Fira lived at that time. He knew Fira's father very well. The relatives arranged their exchange of photos in the mail, and they began corresponding. For a year, Alexander and Fira exchanged weekly letters, and through these letters they got to know each other. In 1954, on his first vacation, Alexander went to Soroki and met Fira face-to-face for the first time. They got married immediately.

When Alexander came back to Kokchetav after the vacation, he brought along his new wife. Together they struggled through four years of poverty, hard work, and poor housing (for their first half year together they shared a small room with Alexander's male friend). Their first daughter was born in Kokchetav, and because the conditions were too harsh for the young family with a child, they returned to Makeevka for good in 1958. Alexander started working as an engineer at the metallurgic plant, and Fira taught at school. They lived and worked in Makeevka until they retired and immigrated in Canada in 1992.

Hanna

Hanna was born in 1924 in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine (then USSR). Dnepropetrovsk was a big city, with a large Jewish population and vibrant Jewish culture (synagogues, theatres, Jewish schools). This all changed when the Soviet authorities closed all the synagogues, theatres, and Jewish schools in mid-1930s. At that time, many Jews continued to get together secretly for minyans in private houses, and secretly baked matzos on Pesach.

Hanna's family celebrated Shabbat and Jewish holidays, and spoke Yiddish at home. Hanna's mother kept strict kosher and never ate non-kosher food even during the war.

Hanna remembers how her mother used to take her, a little girl, along, as she traveled to secretly purchase matzos from an underground bakery, and on the way back they carried the matzos on a little toy sled, hidden under the blankets. If discovered, they could be persecuted. Hanna went to a Ukrainian school where she spoke Ukrainian and Russian (her third and fourth languages, after Yiddish and Hebrew). She knew very well not to talk at school about anything related to their faith, traditions, or conversations that they had at home. Jewish parents used to teach their children secretly, despite the obvious danger of arrests and repressions. Children were used to keeping the secret.

Hanna's mother was born in Poland. She came to Ukraine to live with her sister, got married, and stayed. She was seven years older than her husband. Hanna's mother had no secular education, and could not read or write, or even sign her own name. She worked as a seamstress and raised the children. Hanna had an older brother.

Hanna's father was a skilled tailor, and also was elected as a Deputy of the local Municipal Soviet (Council), which was exceptionally unusual for a Jew at that time. However, he never joined the Communist Party. At one point, he was arrested for a joke he told, after someone reported him. He was interrogated and released on the next day, with the instructions to keep his detention in prison a secret under the death threat.

Hanna remembers the times of severe hunger during the famine in Ukraine in the early 1930s. Those were hard times, but the family survived.

Hanna was 17 when the war broke out in June 1941. Both Hanna and her brother had graduated from school. The war started without any warning; Hanna does not remember being aware of the events in Europe or the fate of the Jews, prior to that moment. Official sources provided very limited information. Hanna's brother tried to get some information by listening to Western radio stations: illegally he got a little radio transistor (it was forbidden), and kept it under his pillow. This was too dangerous, and when their father found out the radio, he threw it away. They could have been arrested for having it.

When the war was announced on the Soviet radio on June 22, 1941, there was panic and fear. Hanna's father knew from some sources about the immediate danger to the Jews, and he managed to arrange for evacuation papers for the entire family, including the extended family (his and his wife's sisters and brothers and their children). It was almost impossible to leave the city without the evacuation papers. Hanna's father convinced his wife to flee with the children, but he had to stay because he was conscripted into the city's Air Defense forces. Hanna, her mother and brother, together with the mother's cousin and her children, started their long and dangerous journey to the East, to escape from the Nazis. However, many extended family members refused to go, because they did not believe the rumors about the Nazis' cruelty (they knew the Germans as the cultured people, and believed nothing would happen to them). Later Hanna learned that all of them were killed.

They traveled by trains, carts, boats, and on foot for many weeks, in very harsh conditions (with little food and water, under constant bombing, and in total uncertainty). They could take almost nothing from home, except for one change of underwear, a couple of bed sheets, and very little food. Finally they arrived in Kazakhstan, in a small village (kolkhoz) where they settled with some help from the local authorities who organized shelter and jobs for the refugees. They did not experience any anti-Semitism, because local people knew nothing about Jews. All of them worked in the farm and received some bread and simple food. They lived in a little room with no furniture: Hanna's brother brought some straw and they made beds out of it. However, they felt safe and could survive.

Later the father joined them, and together they moved to Chimkent (a larger town nearby). Hanna's father worked in the local factory that made clothing for the military. He used to go to the town market and look for refugee Jewish children who had to fend for themselves, because they had been orphaned or lost their parents. He found many homeless Jewish children who tried to survive in the streets by stealing food at the market, which was very dangerous, and took them to his factory, so they could have a job, food, and shelter. He helped many Jewish boys and girls to survive in Chimkent. One of these boys, Boris, stayed with Hanna's family. After the war he returned to the Ukraine together with them, and Hanna's father helped him reunite with his lost sister.

Hanna's brother was conscripted into the Soviet Army, and they never saw him again. He was killed fighting the Nazis in the front line in 1942. Hanna received a letter notifying the family about his death, but she was unable to show the letter to her parents for two years after she received it. She hid the letter from them. When she finally told her father, and then the mother learned about her son's death, she tried to kill herself.

After the war ended, Hanna and her family stayed in Chimkent for some time. They started receiving letters from their relatives who had returned to Dnepropetrovsk. The news was very sad: all their relatives and friends who stayed in Dnepropetrovsk were murdered. Thousands of Jews were killed. Hanna knows exactly the place in Dnepropetrovsk where the Jews were forced to dig their own mass grave, and then shot to death or pushed into the grave alive. "The earth was shaking" there, according to eye witnesses, days after the murder. For decades after the war, there was no memorial in this place of mass killing.

When the surviving Jews started to return to Dnepropetrovsk shortly after the end of the war, there were many reports about aggression against them. Still in Chimkent, Hanna's family received a letter from their relatives informing them that her uncle was brutally murdered in Dnepropetrovsk, after he returned to his home place. Hanna's family was afraid to come home, and decided to go to Chernovtzy and settle there, because this place was considered more "Western" and safer for the Jews.

In Chimkent Hanna took courses for secretaries and started working. In Chernovtzy she went to a vocational school and became a salesperson. She worked in sales, as a manager at the store, all her life. In Chernovtzy Hanna met her future husband Mikhail. Their mothers arranged their marriage. Mikhail had served in the army during the war, and lost his left arm. He worked as a metal worker. Hanna and Mikhail had one daughter. Hanna always spoke only Yiddish at home, and continued to secretly keep Jewish traditions in her family, during all her life in the Soviet Ukraine.

Hanna lived in Chernovtzy until 1973, when it became possible to immigrate to Israel. After a difficult struggle to get a permission to leave the Soviet Union, Hanna went to Israel together with her husband and mother. Her father passed away just months before they left for Israel. Her mother lived to be 101 years old, and died in Israel. Hanna's husband also died in Israel, after having a surgery for the complications of his war-time wounds.

Hanna's daughter stayed in Chernovtzy, because her husband worked in a "secret" institution, and the Soviet authorities did not grant them permission to leave for Israel. They became "refusniks." The daughter's husband lost his job, and the family suffered a lot. The daughter's husband was arrested and tortured, and although the detention lasted only one day, he suffered a massive heart attack and died two weeks after the arrest. Hanna's daughter stayed alone, with two children. She managed to reunite with her mother only 9 years after Hanna's emigration.

Hanna is very proud of her daughter who graduated from the Conservatory in Kiev and became an accomplished violinist (it had been Hanna's mother's wish to teach the child music). Hanna has two grandchildren who also received high education, and a 6-year-old great-granddaughter. Hanna's granddaughter is a professional musician, like her mother.

APPENDIX B

POTENTIAL RISKS, SAFEGUARDS, AND ETHICAL PROCEDURES

Potential risks	Safeguards and Procedures
Ethical concerns of the “stress of divulging”: Revisiting memories of the past might, in the interview situation, expose participants to more than minimal risk of the developing (or a relapse) of posttraumatic symptoms. The study had the potential for identifying distressed or disturbed individuals.	1. Interviews focused on strengths and resilience; involved validating the experiences and emotional response. 2. Professional training and experience of the researcher reduced this risk to a minimum, and allowed for timely identification of symptoms, if any. 3. Participants were fully informed about the purpose of the research, their proposed role, and the possible benefits and risks of participation, as part of the informed consent process. 4. Participants were given full control over the degree of participation, pacing of the interviews, and a choice to withdraw from the research at any time. The researcher was available for contact at all times. 5. Provisions were made to the interview design and follow-up that minimized the risk and optimized the positive effect of the interviews. 6. Arrangements were made with Jewish Family Service Calgary for providing professional counseling and support, free of charge. There were no incidents of need for counselling. 7. Interviewing in the participants’ language of choice enhanced their comfort levels and minimized anxiety.
There could be a risk of participants’ perceived obligation to be available for the study.	1. Although the researcher was known as a former employee of the partner agency, she did not represent any decision-making organization that might have been perceived as being able to withdraw services. 2. Elimination of any elements of coercion from the recruitment process was reflected in the recruitment note and in the Consent Form.

In a small community, and with a small sample size, even rigorous precautions to protect anonymity may be compromised by casual communications of participants.	1. The participants were given full information about this risk as part of the Consent Form, which guided them in their decision. 2. The interview place was chosen by the participants. 3. Awareness of this risk urged the researcher to make the confidential contributions of the participants unidentifiable in the reports. Including such materials was avoided, if the participants chose anonymity.
Ethical concerns of cross-language research: The ethics of accurate and honest translation	1. Researcher has advanced degrees in both languages and is qualified to do competent translation. 2. The recruitment note and consent form were translated and presented to potential participants in both languages. 3. Participants were consulted for verification and confirmation of summaries; the researcher invited participants' feedback.
The researcher belongs to the same culture: there may be a risk of making preconceived assumptions by the researcher	1. Risk was ameliorated by constant awareness, checking the data, and confirming by participants' feedback. 2. Researcher's academic advisors were not of the same culture, and were able to challenge any possible preconceptions.
Issues of trust and boundaries.	1. The researcher belongs to the same culture: establishing stronger trust and rapport, while enhancing the participants' comfort levels. 2. Considering stronger trust relationships with the participants, the researcher had an obligation to be even more protective of the participants' rights.

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Purpose of the Study

This study will explore the resiliency in recent émigrés from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) who survived the Holocaust. Numerous studies of trauma and resilience were based on the first-wave immigrants from Eastern Europe who left their home countries shortly after their liberation, and spent their adult lives in North America. Recent Soviet émigrés had their own resiliency pathways. However, the knowledge embedded in these pathways has attracted little attention of the researchers, and represents a largely unexplored area – this group remains "hidden."

You have been invited as a research participant because you have the experience of overcoming extremely hard challenges, and it is very important for this study to know how you see these experiences. You belong to a group of émigrés from the FSU who have survived the Holocaust, lived through decades of the Soviet regime, and coped with all the difficulties of your recent immigration. There is a hope that this study will help the community understand the strengths and unique values of the Holocaust survivors – newcomers from Russia.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to meet with the researcher for interviews two or three times, each time up to two hours. There will be about a month interval between the interviews. Each interview will be an open conversation, where you will not be asked any specific questions, but rather encouraged to tell freely about your experiences. At the time of your second interview, you may be also asked to fill out a short questionnaire, prepared in the language of your choice (English or Russian).

The interviews will be conducted in the language of your choice (English or Russian). They will be audio taped, then recorded in computer files and on paper, analyzed and summarized by the researcher. You will be asked to review and confirm summaries and quotes (if any), before this information is presented or published. This will take an additional time of up to two hours, approximately a month after your last interview.

After this is done, the information collected will be used for further analysis. The entire study, including the analysis and write-up, will take up to four years. In the end, you will be given the summary overview of final research results.

Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate altogether, may refuse to participate in parts of the study, or may withdraw from the study at any time without any obligations. Should you decide to withdraw from the study, you will be expected to tell the researcher about your decision. If you withdraw in the middle of the process, the materials from your interviews will be destroyed, and will not be used for the study.

Your attention to this project will be greatly appreciated, whether you choose to participate or not. The researcher does not work for Jewish Family Service Calgary (JFSC), and if you are, or will be a client at this agency, your participation in this study will not have any connection with your entitlement for services.

What type of personal information will be collected?

There are several options for you to consider if you decide to take part in this research. You may want to remain anonymous. Then no personal identifying information will be revealed in the research documentation, and the researcher will keep your personal information (i.e. name, address, personal history) strictly confidential. She may use a pseudonym to quote you, if you instruct her to do so.

You may prefer to disclose your name, and give the researcher permission to quote you by name. If you choose to leave your name open for the publications, the researcher will meet with you on a separate occasion and ask you to approve and confirm all the summaries and quotes that will bear your name. No materials will be published under your name without your review and approval.

Please put a check mark on the corresponding line(s) that grants me your permission:

I grant permission to be audio taped: Yes: ___ No: ___

You may quote me and use my name: Yes: ___ No: ___

I wish to remain anonymous: Yes: ___ No: ___

I wish to remain anonymous, but you may refer to me by a pseudonym: Yes: ___ No: ___

The pseudonym I choose for myself is: ___________________________________

Are there risks of benefits if I participate?

As you may know, there is a long tradition of documenting the Holocaust survivors' life stories in North America. Specific experiences of recent newcomers from the FSU have not been significant part of this tradition. Survivors who lived in Russia for decades after the WWII still remain "silent." This study will give an opportunity for you to help understand the strengths and unique values of the Holocaust survivors – newcomers from the FSU. Your contribution to this knowledge will be of great value, since it has remained concealed for a long time. It is an opportunity for you to contribute to giving a voice to the group you belong to.

The interviews will focus on your resiliency that helped you overcome extremely hard challenges. In these interviews, you will address your personal strengths and ability to adapt and cope. At the same time, many Holocaust survivors who gave their testimonials and shared their stories have reported that bringing back the memories of their past was not only rewarding but also painful for them. Recalling these events may provoke uncomfortable thoughts or emotional discomfort.

The researcher who will be interviewing you is a competent trained professional, and you can rely on her understanding and support during the interview, and any time after. You will not be alone. You will have your researcher's telephone numbers, and will be able to talk to her on the phone if you wish. At any stage during the interviews, you will be able to slow down, stop, or choose whether to continue, at any time. Please make a note of it, and do not hesitate to communicate your concerns to the interviewer.

The researcher will call you on the phone shortly after each interview, to ensure you feel comfortable, and have all support you need. If you choose to access supportive counseling or therapy at any time of the study, an experienced psychologist at the JFSC will provide you with this service strictly confidentially and free of charge, with a professional Russian-speaking interpreter, if you wish. Upon your choice, you can request interpretation services from your researcher or another Russian-speaking professional.

You can choose to withdraw from the study at any time, and still receive therapy or any other services at JFSC, if you wish: there will be no connection between your participation and your entitlement for services.

What happens to the information I provide?

The audio tapes and any written transcripts of your interviews will be stored safely in a locked cabinet, so that no one except the researcher and her supervisor at the University will be allowed to listen to the interview tapes. There will be no names on the tapes or written transcripts. Your anonymity will be ensured in any information intended for publication. If you instruct your researcher to use a pseudonym for you, quoting or excerpts from your personal history will be done only in a non-disclosing way, with no identifying information, and only the pseudonym will be used at all times.

In the event that you wish to be identified, you may grant permission to use your name for quotes and summaries. In this case, the audio tapes and any raw data will still remain confidential. Only materials approved by you will be published under your name.

It is natural for you to discuss your participation in this study with your friends and family, but this may cause concerns if you decide to keep your anonymity. Please make a note of it. The researcher will be available to support you.

The original taped interviews will be stored safely and confidentially on a computer disk and audiotapes (or discs), for as long as the researcher considers them needed. Your interview may be of interest for a Jewish museum or another archive. In such case you will be contacted separately for your permission. No information will be used for archives without your specific written permission. If you decide to withdraw at any time in the process, all the previously gathered information will be destroyed, and the researcher will not use it for the study.

Signatures (written consent)

Your signature on this form indicates that you 1) understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) agree to participate as a research subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Name: (please print) ______________________________

Participant's Signature _________________________Date: _______________

Researcher's Name: (please print) ___________________________________

Researcher's Signature: _________________________ Date: _______________

APPENDIX D

RECRUITMENT LETTER

Recruitment Letter
Date ________
Dear Mrs. ___________________ (name of the potential participant)

You may remember that I used to work at JFSC, and left the agency two years ago. I am now at the University, and have a chance to begin a research study for my PhD dissertation. I became interested in how people adapted and coped with their experiences of the past war. I decided to initiate research into the resiliency of recent émigrés from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) who survived the Holocaust.

I would like to invite you to take part in this study. You have been offered to participate because you have experience of overcoming extremely hard challenges, and it is very important for this study to know how you see it. You belong to a group of émigrés from the FSU who have survived the Holocaust, lived through the decades of Soviet regime, and coped with all the difficulties of your recent immigration. If you decide to take part in this study, I will likely ask for two or three interviews with you.

If you are interested, I would like to talk about it more, and give you more details before you make a decision. I want you to know that this study is not related to the services you might receive from the JFSC: if you decide to reject my invitation, it will not affect your entitlement for services at our agency in any way. I do not work at JFSC any more. Please call me at 220-6297 at the University, or at 252-7991 at home in the evening time, and if you are interested, we will agree where and when we can meet. If I haven't heard from you, I will give you a call in a week or two.

Agency's Supporting Letter

Date _________
Dear Mrs. ___________________ (name of the potential participant)

Svetlana Shklarov used to work with us at Jewish Family Service Calgary as Services to Seniors Coordinator, and now she is working at the University of Calgary. She has also enrolled as a student in a graduate program, and the focus of her dissertation is studying the resiliency of Holocaust survivors who are recent newcomers from Russia. We are supporting her study, and have suggested your name as a person in this group.

Svetlana does not currently work for Jewish Family Service Calgary. Your decision whether to participate in this study will not affect your entitlement for services at our agency in any way.

Svetlana's letter is attached. If you become interested in taking part in Svetlana's work, please contact her directly at the phone number provided in her letter.

(Signature)