

EXODUS Project

Interview of Larisa Voin

July 19, 2016

Page 1

EXODUS

Larisa Voin.mp4

Date: 07-19-2016

Lynn timervis: This is Lynn timervis and I am here with Larisa Voin at Plough Towers on July 19th, 2016. Tell me your full name.

Larisa Voin: My name is Larisa, first name. Last name, Voin after...I changed my last name after married with Vladimir Voin.

Lynn timervis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: And just one step back, we met each other at least 40-some years ago. We like each other but his boss decided to separate us and 16 years ago with our friend's help we met each other again. We had been both divorced in this time and we thought, "Okay, we made the circle. We need to be together." Yes. And this is what happened on July 17th of this year is in Memphis, in the U.S., already 13 years.

Lynn timervis: Well, how wonderful. Well, what is your date of birth?

Larisa Voin: My...my...

Lynn timervis: If you don't mind...

Larisa Voin: Can you stop for a second? [video cuts out] My...okay. My date of birth is June 26th, 1952 and I was born in Ukraine in Kharkiv.

Lynn timervis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: We had small family, me, Mom, Dad, and grandfather and grandmother on one side. Another side, grandmother and grandfather, they passed away when I was very, very young and I really had a nice childhood. My parents took very, very good care of me. My mom liked to tailor and she made nice, nice clothes for me to my first grade because in the school you have uniform, you have special, special clothes. And I even...they had very, very tough time. They finished college and been unemployed. My mom was pregnant and supposed to use metro to went to her first place. It was about an hour, it doesn't matter which weather. And my father, he was a civil engineer and he didn't get the job first. And then he got the job. Now looking back I understood a reason why he didn't...he didn't get a job and she got the job far, far away, because they were Jewish.

Lynn timervis: Mmm.

Page 2

Larisa Voin: Even my grandfather from my dad's side was a **revolutioner**. He was very, very involved in all of these...**paved the road** in 1917 and he was in this Jewish young people, women and men, "Oh, we need to make...**to change the wars.**" _____. And they believed from their heart but reality was different. And I lived in the part of the city, it was a lot of Jewish families around and I had some, not a lot, some Jewish kids in my school and I can say, maybe I was so naïve I didn't pay attention. I didn't feel any _____, but to get to college, it was difficult. I wanted to be a doctor, a medical doctor and we had huge...it's not college, it's institute. In former Soviet Union it's called institute to prepare different doctors, medical doctors. But the director of this institute said, "No, I don't think any Jewish person can come or if they have some connections..." My family didn't. So I went to a civic engineering institute and so my first degree is civil engineering and my course was a lot of Jewish people. We were like...I had a wonderful five years. Let's see, 50% of students in this course was Jewish. Excellent company, we still be in touch. Can you believe it? We still be in touch.

Lynnie Mirvis: Wow.

Larisa Voin: After all this...almost everybody after **16**. And then I got a job. It was, again, a lot of Jewish people in this...

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: In this department but then I married and my son was born so it was very, very hard for me to work...

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: ...in _____. So to be engineer, it wasn't my field. I still love to be in medicine around and we decided, me and my mom, we decided to find something different and my mom, her first degree, English teacher.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: But then she decided to change and she went to Kiev to be a speech therapist. So I liked the job, I went to the clinic, I saw how she was working, I thought, "Okay, I can do this." I went to Sloviansk in Ukraine and this is, let's say, an open institute.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: So I have to be there twice a year. We enter in summer for a month to learn something, pass test, and I got...because I got grades from my first previous degree.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: So I got this diploma and started to be a speech therapist. Yeah.

Lynnie Mirvis: Oh, that's wonderful.

Page 3

Larisa Voin: It's very, very wonderful and we lived in small apartment. Honestly I cannot say it was tough life.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: Of course it was very hard to find some food but, no, it's...Ukraine, it's really different from Russia.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: You can go to farmer's market, it depends on how many money you have.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: But then it got to be worse, worse, and worse and my son grow and it's already come, an age for him to go to Soviet Army but I know the Jewish boy be in Soviet Army, it will be danger. Not just bad. Danger.

Lynnie Mirvis: Could you describe that? Why?

Larisa Voin: Because he's Jewish. It's enough. It's enough.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: Even sometimes I feel in my younghood my nose was longer than supposed to be, my last name not right. Yeah, I feel it. I was like...it wasn't really just worse and tough, but yeah.

Lynnie Mirvis: Did...

Larisa Voin: Pretty often for some, some side, some person, some way, I'd be reminded, "You're Jewish. You're different. You're not good."

Lynnie Mirvis: Mmm.

Larisa Voin: Even when I passed test to get my second degree, a teacher in front of me, I feel from her skin she was _____, she really hated me, and she said, "Okay, I think you need to leave this country." I said, "You know what?" I'm like, "I have a chance to go to other countries, you're not, because I'm Jewish. I can go to Israel, I can go... whole world in front of me because a lot of Jewish people around the world, communities, they open for us." And after _____and, like I said, future for Soviet Army for my son, I'd already been divorced and I said, "You know what? I'm taking my son and he wants to leave, too." A lot of Jewish people come from Israel, open centers, and they show this beautiful country and we decided to go. Me and my son, we went to Israel.

Lynnie Mirvis: Do you know what year that was? What year that was?

Larisa Voin: It was...it was at the end of 1994.

Lynnie Mirvis: Okay.

Larisa Voin: It was December of 1994.

Page 4

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: And my son went to Tel Aviv University and for all these kids who came from foreign Soviet Union, it was...I don't know how to say it in English. Let's say preparation study.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: Language, some preparation to past tests...

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: ...that they need to know. This is how he spent time here. He would go to the morning and come back to the evening and he went to _____ Tel Aviv University for biological...

Lynnie Mirvis: Wow.

Larisa Voin: Yeah. He is a really smart boy. And I...when we went to Israel, I looked around. We had some friends there and they helped us to rent a small apartment. It was really small, nothing inside. It was tough, tough time. I had been waiting to my huge, huge container, came from Ukraine because I put everything, so we rented one apartment and in December it was so cold in Israel, I don't have any heater. We slept in some small, small beds and then we went to another apartment. Then my ex-husband came and my mom came so then it was a lot of Russian newspapers in Israel, they're still there. And some of my friends saw University of Tel Aviv opened course for foreign speech therapists.

Lynnie Mirvis: Wow.

Larisa Voin: We went there, I applied, and I got this course for a year.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: Every day we go there. It was Hebrew, it was English, it was...

Lynnie Mirvis: Two languages.

Larisa Voin: It was extremely difficult and hard to do. It...but in the end of the year, it was full study year, I passed 17 tests on English, on Hebrew.

Lynnie Mirvis: Wow.

Larisa Voin: And I still didn't...and I was 45 when I finished this.

Lynnie Mirvis: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Larisa Voin: I was the oldest student in this course.

Lynnie Mirvis: [Laughing] Uh-huh.

Page 5

Larisa Voin: And...

Lynnie Mirvis: How wonderful.

Larisa Voin: ...I got diploma and started...started to look at the work. And I got two jobs, two places. In the morning, I had been working in ____.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: It's a huge place for kids with special needs...

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: ...from babies' age, like 9 months 'til 30.

Lynnie Mirvis: Wow.

Larisa Voin: Yeah. It was a building, maybe six stories, one place. In another place it was kindergarten. And I was...I was so lucky because I liked this and I saw kids with different, different, different diseases and I got huge experience.

Lynnie Mirvis: Wow.

Larisa Voin: And we went...they were all ____but they so friendly, so like it, they appreciate my help, my experience, and we did a good job. Second place...so I had been working from 8:00 until 2:00, after 2:00 I would fly to another place, aftercare for boys with autism. Big boys from 12 'til 22.

Lynnie Mirvis: Wow.

Larisa Voin: Yeah, it was really a little bit dangerous job because they big boys, they very, very,...

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: ...strong and some of them just grabbed my head and so I had some neck problems after this. And it was huge experience, too. I prepared them a communication book...

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: ...from computers, some systems, so their feelings, their food, what they want to do they pointed so it was... I was a single mom so I...

Lynnie Mirvis: That's hard.

Larisa Voin: Yeah, I needed to make money and it was really, really...not bad. Then I had my private practice, to kids speaking Russian and Hebrew. Dual language kids, it's very, very difficult for kids. So it was okay. My son still learning, he finished his first degree and then applied for second degree.

Page 6

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: And then my friend...my ninth grade...ninth grade, we still friends. She lives in Chicago.

Lynnie Mirvis: Oh, wow. Yeah.

Larisa Voin: Vladimir had divorced here and my friend decided, "Wait a second." She remembered we met each other and he liked me, I could remember him. And she said she will try to help us to meet each other again, and she did it. We spoke on the phone. I went...I invited him to Israel because I think every Jewish in the world is supposed to go to Israel.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: And I invited him in Hanukah time. It was December. It's an excellent time for Israel.

Lynnie Mirvis: Oh, I bet. Yeah. So beautiful.

Larisa Voin: Beautiful. Nice weather, not hot, not cold. Perfect. And then he invited me to here and we...we and our friends in Chicago, we met...okay. This some sights that...and he asked me to marry him.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mmm.

Larisa Voin: It was unexpected and I said, "No." I didn't know. I did so huge career and beautiful career in Israel but on the other hand, my mom there, my son there, I can't leave them. But you see, July 17th, it was 13 years. So I left Israel after nine-plus years.

Lynnie Mirvis: Wow.

Larisa Voin: Yeah.

Lynnie Mirvis: Where did you live in Israel, in Tel Aviv?

Larisa Voin: Petah Tikva.

Lynnie Mirvis: Okay, you said that. Right.

Larisa Voin: It's like a big Memphis.

Lynnie Mirvis: You said that.

Larisa Voin: It's big Tel Aviv. From Petah Tikva to Tel Aviv is one hour.

Lynnie Mirvis: Right.

Larisa Voin: Maybe in car it's just less.

Page 7

Lynnie Mirvis: So you left after nine years.

Larisa Voin: Mm-hmm. And when I came here in the U.S. I didn't speak any English.

Lynnie Mirvis: Oh, wow.

Larisa Voin: Except "yes," "no," "thank you," "hi," "bye," "goodbye," and "hello." It wasn't easy and I went here and we tried to find my way by asking people how, how. And I didn't want to sit at home because I had been so busy and now to be home and... because Vladimir...

Lynnie Mirvis: Right.

Larisa Voin: And I knew which place I'm looking for, first place to work because I'm a speech therapist and I knew to get language you need to be in place with a lot of people around.

Lynnie Mirvis: Right.

Larisa Voin: And **Marena** helped me, they all helped me. She had some client, customer.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: Maybe I'm wrong. Okay, this lady had been busy to find jobs for people.

Lynnie Mirvis: Oh, okay.

Larisa Voin: And my first place was...

Lynnie Mirvis: The Jewish Family...you mean somebody from the Jewish Family Center?

Larisa Voin: No, no, no, no, no. Some department on Poplar.

Lynnie Mirvis: Oh, okay, right.

Larisa Voin: Maybe HR or something like this.

Lynnie Mirvis: Right. Uh-huh.

Larisa Voin: People applied for job like home attendant, housekeeper, something and then this...

Lynnie Mirvis: Right.

Larisa Voin: ...and did not...and in other stores just hiring people. And this lady said, "Oh, Dinstuhl's in Laurelwood, looking for..." "Okay, fine. This is what I need."

Lynnie Mirvis: Oh, boy. Yeah. [Laughing]

Larisa Voin: So I'd been working six months there...

Page 8

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: ...and Judy Moss knows me pretty well.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: And after two months when they started to understand people, it was kids, there was adults, young, old, middle aged, so different _____. After two months, when I started to understand them and they started to understand me, I said, "Okay, I'm in the right place."

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm. Mmm.

Larisa Voin: In this time, I had _____ my diplomas. I got...from my grades I got bachelor's degree on speech therapy.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: So I already had American diploma and some...and Vladimir also looking _____ and some of his customers, this lady already in retirement, she was a speech therapist in Memphis City Schools.

Lynnie Mirvis: Ahh.

Larisa Voin: And he said, "Okay, my wife has this. Can she apply for something?" She said, "Okay, let's see." And she gave me a way because he doesn't know of course because it's not his field.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: He helped me to fill paperwork and apply for teacher assistant.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: It's another step up.

Lynnie Mirvis: Right.

Larisa Voin: And I got a job in Cordova Elementary like a teacher assistant. Okay. Now, to drive there, we had one car, I didn't drive a car.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: Because Israel had a lot of public transportation.

Lynnie Mirvis: Yes, yes.

Larisa Voin: I used the bus, some...bus taxi.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Page 9

Larisa Voin: And it was...it was an hour drive in the morning. Vladimir drove himself and me...no, I need to get driver's license.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm, right, yeah.

Larisa Voin: I got...and I didn't speak English so we went to this station, department, and somebody asked because I didn't speak English, "Can she do this verbal?" "Yes." I got driver's license. Okay. Now we're driving together to his store, previous store next to Kroger. Early morning, I'm supposed to be no later than 9:00 in Cordova.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: Rush hours. He stayed at the store, I am taking the wheel, and flying to Cordova Elementary. [Laughing]

Lynnie Mirvis: [Laughing]

Larisa Voin: Then I stayed there until aftercare, until 6:00.

Lynnie Mirvis: Yeah, yeah.

Larisa Voin: And I didn't have GPS, I didn't have MapQuest, once...and I have to drive back to his store to pick him up.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: Once my drive was two hours.

Lynnie Mirvis: Oh my.

Larisa Voin: We have cell phone. I said, "I didn't know. I didn't remember this way." Oh. I had been crying, I had been laughing, but I'm trying to...finally I got it.

Lynnie Mirvis: Uh-huh.

Larisa Voin: It was...it was something.

Lynnie Mirvis: That is harsh.

Larisa Voin: Another story. Okay.

Lynnie Mirvis: What about your son and your...did he come too, here, or were you...

Larisa Voin: Okay, my son, he married there in Israel.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: And he came here for his first doctorate...

Lynnie Mirvis: Okay.

Page 10

Larisa Voin: ...to Harvard.

Lynnie Mirvis: Wow. Wonderful. You're proud of him.

Larisa Voin: Yeah.

Lynnie Mirvis: And he was in the field of...the bio...

Larisa Voin: This field.

Lynnie Mirvis: Right. Yeah.

Larisa Voin: Because...

Lynnie Mirvis: Bioengineering or no?

Larisa Voin: Honestly, I don't know. It was biological, then it was some anti-cancer research.

Lynnie Mirvis: Is he an MD or PhD?

Larisa Voin: PhD. He has PhD. He got his PhD...okay. Bachelor, MD, and PhD in Israel and he went for doctorate here.

Lynnie Mirvis: Where is he now?

Larisa Voin: In Boston.

Lynnie Mirvis: Oh, he's in Boston?

Larisa Voin: They're in Boston. He and his wife and my two granddaughters.

Lynnie Mirvis: What is their names again? Tell me.

Larisa Voin: His name?

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: Dmitri.

Lynnie Mirvis: Dmitri?

Larisa Voin: Dmitri.

Lynnie Mirvis: Dmitri Voin.

Larisa Voin: No, no.

Lynnie Mirvis: No, Dmitri...what's his last name?

Page 11

Larisa Voin: Schwartzman.

Lynnie Mirvis: Schwartzman. Oh, Dmitri...okay.

Larisa Voin: Classic Jewish last name, **Schwartzman**.

Lynnie Mirvis: Right, right. And I wanted to just ask you about...you had talked a little bit about anti-Semitism and what was it like...what else can you think about about being Jewish? Did you celebrate Jewish holidays, did you have any Jewish connections with your family?

Larisa Voin: This is an interesting story. My...okay. I had two grandparents. My dad's side and my mom's side. Mom...my mom's parents was very educated people.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: And her dad was son of a very rich Jewish person from Ukraine City. My grand-grandfather was owner of huge manufacturer to...after the revolution, it was everything gone. And my grandmother was a pediatrician.

Lynnie Mirvis: Pediatrician? Oh.

Larisa Voin: Pediatrician. She was the number one on the board of the pediatricians in our city. Very educated people, very intelligent. On my dad's side, it's totally different. Like, minus and plus. Totally opposite. Both of them was born in small Jewish village, not educated. My grandfather was a **revolutioner (26:37)** like I said and my grandmother didn't work. And to celebrate Jewish holidays for these educated grandparents, it wasn't.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: My mom didn't...now, she remembers when she was young, her grandfather...that's it. In her family...maybe Pesach. Maybe. But Pesach when her grandfather and grandmother was alive, then it stopped. On my other side, **revolutioner** person, no, it wasn't. It's...what, religion? No. We avoid religion. Then in Soviet Union it was danger, really danger because we lived in several story houses so it was Russian people, Ukrainian people, they had Jewish people if they will call KGB, they will come and person gone. No, it was...it was impossible. Totally impossible. I remember like a girl, my grandfather from...the **revolutioner** because my other grandmother passed away when I was really a baby and of course my other grandfather didn't celebrate this. But my grandmother from the village, I remember she bought a chicken, kept chicken in the bathroom covered, gave her some small plate with water and with some grains, she was feeding her. Then she can go somewhere. Now I understand it was Yom Kippur.

Lynnie Mirvis: Ahhh. But you never saw what she did with it.

Larisa Voin: Mm-mmm.

Lynnie Mirvis: She never...

Larisa Voin: She took and she go for some ____ He caught...

Page 12

Lynnie Mirvis: Uh-huh.

Larisa Voin: He caught this chicken. Maybe we ate the chicken, maybe she gave it to some poor.

Lynnie Mirvis: For Yom Kippur.

Larisa Voin: For somebody, I don't know.

Lynnie Mirvis: Right.

Larisa Voin: But I remember...

Lynnie Mirvis: The chicken.

Larisa Voin: Then when I would have been married and I'm trying to be close to this Jewish life because, you know, we don't have a Jewish life.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: My parents, no. They was very...not ____ people at all and even they didn't know how to celebrate it.

Lynnie Mirvis: Right.

Larisa Voin: Uh, I'm trying to find matzah for Passover because I knew to eat bread on Passover. In ____ it's impossible because it's a law...

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: ...on Passover, and we found somebody who made really, really ____ **(29:55)** at home. He made matzah and we went there in the dark, in the evening. It's so funny. A lot of Jewish families do the same. We take pillow cover because this is square shape to put all matzah because matzah was square shaped and then we bring it home.

Lynnie Mirvis: Wow.

Larisa Voin: This is our celebration of the Jewish holiday. That's it.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: No, to celebrate Jewish holidays. No candles for Shabbat, nothing. I didn't know what it is, Rosh Hashanah, before I go to Israel. Now it's...it is in my blood.

Lynnie Mirvis: So in Israel, you learned more.

Larisa Voin: We learned before we go to Israel because ____, some of them came to my city, to Kharkiv, because Kharkiv had second place synagogue in Europe.

Page 13

Lynnie Mirvis: Ahh.

Larisa Voin: And I'd be ____ like in front. It was huge, it's still huge, beautiful building but in Soviet Union, some government, they made health club in synagogue. It was sport, it was...so this presenter from ____ came, they destroyed walls inside, they opened it. It's so beautiful now. It is second place in Europe in my city, yeah.

Lynnie Mirvis: Wow. So before you left for Israel, the ____ came to your...your town? Did you know...

Larisa Voin: Yes, yes, yes.

Lynnie Mirvis: Yes, okay.

Larisa Voin: Some of his...

Lynnie Mirvis: Some of his students.

Larisa Voin: ...students. Yes.

Lynnie Mirvis: Okay.

Larisa Voin: Came to our house to let's say rebuild Jewish life in Kharkiv.

Lynnie Mirvis: So you learned more then.

Larisa Voin: Yes. I learned more. I started to learn Hebrew and his wife helped me to...to know what does it mean, Jewish life, especially for women.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: Number one, light candles.

Lynnie Mirvis: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Larisa Voin: And all the...mikveh, all these and other stuff.

Lynnie Mirvis: Really? So she taught you?

Larisa Voin: Yeah, yeah.

Lynnie Mirvis: So when you were married the first time. Yeah.

Larisa Voin: To cook...yeah.

Lynnie Mirvis: Yeah.

Larisa Voin: To cook some, to make challah. I didn't know it. Then, like I said, my son came to Army age...

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Page 14

Larisa Voin: ...and we decided...I decided...he wouldn't, but I decided to move to Isreal.

Lynnie Mirvis: Right.

Larisa Voin: In Israel, of course he will go to Army, it's any...

Lynnie Mirvis: Did he go in Israel?

Larisa Voin: Yeah. He go and he had three years, not easy years. Even though I'm a single mom but he was in serious, serious places. It was...it was...it wasn't an easy life. I didn't buy any apartment, I didn't...I bought the car but I got some loan, I left the car for my son, but it was...it's...nine years for Israel, it's not enough. But I got...I made very nice career.

Lynnie Mirvis: You did. You made a good career.

Larisa Voin: Then we came here so after I got this for a job, then teacher assistant, I went to...

Lynnie Mirvis: Yeah, can you can compare what the differences are, Soviet Union, Karkov, and then Israel and then here, Memphis? What was different?

Larisa Voin: It's three different lives.

Lynnie Mirvis: Three different lives.

Larisa Voin: Yes, totally, totally. In Soviet Union, yeah, it was a good life I thought but when I came to Israel, when I look back, it wasn't. It wasn't. Every time we needed to... to fight, but fight for normal things in Israel and here, to food, to get the car, nice refrigerator, just...it sounds abnormal here. In Israel and here, people fighting, too, but different problems.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: Yet it can be minor problems, it can be health problems, but not food, not to make your life. And...

Lynnie Mirvis: Food was hard in Kharkiv? Food was sometimes hard to find?

Larisa Voin: Yes. Yes, yes.

Lynnie Mirvis: That's hard to understand, you know, what that means. I mean, I don't know what you...can you describe that?

Larisa Voin: I remember...I remember...yes. I can give you some examples. When you have a young child at home, you need milk, right?

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: So it wasn't milk in...like, here you...in the store it's standing for two weeks for example. No. They came in a big car and they put milk like this in your...

Page 15

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: ...container and it...

Lynnie Mirvis: You brought a container to the store?

Larisa Voin: Yeah, I brought a container to the store.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: And the seller just take this like you would with, like, soup in your container. It is the milk. It's a huge container, they open...like in villages.

Lynnie Mirvis: Right.

Larisa Voin: You saw. But I remember it was very, very...very hard to buy milk and it was winter, extremely cold. Extremely cold. It was -20 on the Celsius, I don't know what's Fahrenheit. It was long line. I send my first husband to stay in line out of the store on the street, on the sidewalk, and after 15 minutes I came to change him because it was cold.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: He would be freezing.

Lynnie Mirvis: Right.

Larisa Voin: But we...we lived maybe 10 minutes from this store.

Lynnie Mirvis: Yeah.

Larisa Voin: He went there, he went home, I went there. Then...okay, it took about an hour...

Lynnie Mirvis: Wow.

Larisa Voin: ...to get the milk so we changed with each other.

Lynnie Mirvis: Amazing. Wow.

Larisa Voin: And when you already have milk you bring at least two containers because you can boil it, but anyway, it's not staying and...

Lynnie Mirvis: You have to boil it.

Larisa Voin: Yes.

Lynnie Mirvis: It's not pasteurized.

Page 16

Larisa Voin: No. Boil it, because it...even boiling milk stayed just two or three days, no longer.

Lynnie Mirvis: Uh-huh.

Larisa Voin: But you never know when another day you can buy milk. And it would... Bread. We have some stores that sell just bread, just bread, and we know in the evening a bread truck will come to bring bread to the morning, in the nighttime. So...and store is still open and they started to sell this and line again. I'm telling you, it's...it was abnormal problems.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: Abnormal, yeah.

Lynnie Mirvis: Wow.

Larisa Voin: For me...okay, if a person wants more money, he's looking for second, third job.

Lynnie Mirvis: Right.

Larisa Voin: For me it's a problem but this is person's decision. To make more money, more jobs. Fine. Enough money, just one. Okay. People working hard here but they know they're working, they will earn something good.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: There, you've been busy for some...it's abnormal. Yes, and ____, yeah. You can go to the street...I mean, walking through the street and somebody...like I said, my nose was longer than supposed to be and somebody said...in Russian it's called _____. In Poland _____ is Jewish.

Lynnie Mirvis: Yeah.

Larisa Voin: In Poland, this is normal.

Lynnie Mirvis: Right.

Larisa Voin: _____. But in Russian it's very, very painful.

Lynnie Mirvis: Yeah.

Larisa Voin: "Go out from my country." Why is it your country? So this...we lived in a huge, huge building.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: Eight stories and it was 90 apartments.

Lynnie Mirvis: Wow.

Page 17

Larisa Voin: It was just two Jewish families.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: And once somebody said...my son, he was a teenager, "____, go away."

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: It was last straw for me to decide to leave this place, this country. Yeah.

Lynnie Mirvis: So just one thing about Memphis, how did you find the people here when you came to Memphis? Is there anything...

Larisa Voin: Well, I was really lucky because my husband already had company so...

Lynnie Mirvis: Right.

Larisa Voin: ...I didn't feel alone so we have company, people who lived a long time, especially the ____ family and another family and ____ family. And other friends, so...

Lynnie Mirvis: That was wonderful.

Larisa Voin: Then when my English started to grow up, I started to speak to other Jewish people and not Jewish people. It's very, very nice friend atmosphere. I don't know, maybe it's **southern, maybe** ____.

Lynnie Mirvis: That's wonderful. Well, is there anything else that we didn't cover that you'd like to talk about that we didn't speak about?

Larisa Voin: I like to live here.

Lynnie Mirvis: Mm-hmm.

Larisa Voin: Of course, I miss my...

[dictation ends]

EXODUS/pti:ec