

Russian woman speaks for Jews in captivity

By HY SHENKMAN
Eleanora Plotnikoff got out. So did her husband and grandfather. The rest of her family was arrested by the Russians for wanting to emigrate.

Mrs. Plotnikoff stopped at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Myron Joyrich in Franklin to tell of the problems of Soviet Jews.

She stood in the entrance greeting guests with an ear-to-ear smile. They had come to hear her. And they all had one thing in common—a concern for Soviet

Jews and Eleanora, who made it to freedom.

SHE WAS the symbol and idol of thousands of other courageous young people fighting for freedom to live where they desire.

Pictures of Russian Jews, who are behind bars for wanting to emigrate to Israel, hang on a wall. Some guests wore metal name tags on their lapels with a name of a Jewish prisoner in Russia.

A portrait of Eleanoras family hung prominently in the library. If they were here in person they, too, would shake everyone's hand. But the Eleanoras family was just on a picture on the wall, looking motionless at their daughter surrounded by friends.

"Tomorrow, I'm leaving for Washington to meet with Senator Jackson. Every Jew in Russia knows about him, but the Russians wish they didn't," she said.

"Many Americans don't know how troubled Russia is economi-

cally and they need badly the American dollars. The senator is trying to expose this weakness.

"If his amendment goes through, Russia will be practically compelled to let all the people out who wish to emigrate."

ELEANORA, slim, petite and witty, looks about 19 but is actually 26 going on 37. A former English teacher in Russia, she listened intently to the questions and replied swiftly without ducking or hesitating.

"A family in Baltimore invited me," Eleanora said.

"They asked me to come and speak on behalf of Russian Jews. They paid for my ticket and travel. The Israeli government gave me the permission at once, of course."

"We were always second-rate citizens in Russia with their government being at war with us. We thought that this is just fate and it has to be that way."

"But it took the Six Day War to wake us up. It gave us a new face, prestige."

"As a product of a religionless country, I was never exposed to the belief in God. But I do believe that somewhere, there is a province which made us Russian Jews to be chosen to tell the world the truth," she said.

"Our problem is not only a Jewish problem. It is also a human problem. Therefore, I feel that it is the moral obligation of every de-

cent man, Jew or non-Jew to stop this business of suppression and allow people to live where and how they wish.

"**WE MUST** stop injustice," Eleanora said, "so it doesn't spread elsewhere in the world. This is what I believe," she says, "we are chosen for—to expose and to warn all people that it can happen to them too."

"We got tired of those Russians looking down at us and we stopped smiling at their crummiest anti-semitic jokes. We refused to be scapegoats for their failures," Eleanora said angrily.

"The Six Day War gave us wings to pull ourselves up a little and just enough courage to tell them to go to hell. A new angry brand of Russian Jews, you might call militant has emerged, and we were no longer to be intimidated" she said.

"For us going to jail became a part of the fight for our dignity. My mother who suffered through heart attacks with my sister, who is sick with tuberculosis, along with 16 other Russian Jews was thrown in jail for 15 days."

"They just came to complain about the delays in giving them a visa. They were told to leave and when they hesitated they were roughed up, locked up and charged with 'hoologanism.' There was one little error in the charge since the policemen were the hoologans."

Asked how many more would like to emigrate, she replied, "There are 3 million of us but there are 200 million who would like to leave Russia. Russians say they would like to be Jews for a day or two just to get a visa."

"Israel was the underdog fighting for survival with 2 million Jews against 100 million Arabs. For the first time we felt proud," she said.

"We realized that 2,000 years of suffering is enough, and that there is a mother country who wants us and is waiting for us with open arms."

"**WE DECIDED** that we no longer have to give to a country our sweat, brains and blood to defend it and then wind up being a second-rate citizen. Suddenly we felt a foot taller and happy about becoming a part of our people, who sheds blood for us so we too can have our own home."

"I'm encouraged with the response and help from the American people," she said.

"Your help will bring them hope and liberation. The moment we forget about them, we sign their death sentence."

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