The Generation of Older Georgian Immigrants - History of Givi Forakishvili's Emigration.

Respondent
Anonymous Person
Relative of Givi Forakishvili

Interviewer
Nini Sikharulidze

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Introduction
Givi Forakishvili's relative recalls the story of his emigration during World War II. Givi Forakishvili was one of the important members of the Georgian Diaspora in the U.S. Unfortunately, contact with his wife and children is lost.

Background

Nini Sikharulidze: Thank you for your time. Could we begin with talking about how Givi Forakishvili's story of immigration begins?
Givi Forakishvili's Relative: His first and last names are not unknown to the immigrant community. He was born and raised in Georgia. He was a student when he was drafted into the army for the Soviet Union, and served near the Lithuanian border when Nazi Germany attacked the USSR. Immediately, he was captured. After being captured, no one knew about his fate in Georgia. The war lasted for five years, and years after the war ended, he was no longer thought to be alive. His family had already grieved him.

Nini Sikharulidze: How did the family in Georgia find out that he was still alive?
Givi Forakishvili's Relative: What was interesting was that in the 50s, I don't remember the exact year, probably it was 1956, Sukhishvili Dance Troupe toured in the U.S. During the concert in New York, Givi Forakishvili attended one of the concerts. He asked Nino or Iliko to take his letter to Tbilisi to inform his parents. That's how his parents found out that he was still alive.

Givi also wrote memoirs. He was also a translator during his captivity in Germany. He graduated from a German school and was fluent in the language, which is why he also acted as an interpreter throughout his captivity. After the war, he stayed in Germany because he knew that the Soviet Union would not forgive his return to Georgia. He knew that they would shoot him because they would accuse him of being a collaborator and being on the enemy's side. Therefore, he stayed in Germany. He married a German woman, Ilse. In the early 50s, the couple got a U.S. visa and moved to the U.S. They had three children there.

Settling in the U.S.

Nini Sikharulidze: In which state did they settle in?
Givi Forakishvili's Relative: In the U.S., Givi's family settled in New York at first. I know that at first it was very difficult for them to live in the U.S. Givi himself worked as a taxi driver. His wife was a custodian. With time, the couple moved to Florida.

Nini Sikharulidze: Do you know if he kept in touch with other Georgians in the U.S.?
Givi Forakishvili's Relative: Givi knew many Georgian immigrants in the U.S. Gogi Moralishvili was his close friend. They also went to Allaverdy. At that time, Allaverdy was a vacation spot for Georgians in the summer.

Nini Sikharulidze: Do you know if they visited Georgia?
Givi Forakishvili's Relative: It was in 1978 that Givi's wife and children came to Georgia for a visit. Givi did not. They visited and got to know their relatives. In 1996, I remember that Givi, already in old age, came to Georgia. He visited us, the relatives.

Nini Sikharulidze: Perhaps he spoke Georgian as usual, right?
Givi Forakishvili's Relative: It was interesting that he spoke fluent Georgian, but spoke with a Tbilisi accent of the 1920s. His syntax was identical to that time period.

Nini Sikharulidze: Does his wife and children have contact with Georgia?
Givi Forakishvili's Relative: We kept contact with Givi's wife Ilse after Givi's passing. However, we have not been in touch for several years. We fear that she might also be dead. Unfortunately, the connection with Givi's children is also completely lost. They were not interested in their father's Georgian heritage and origin. There is no contact with Givi's children. We no longer know their whereabouts. Givi wrote memoirs. He read many manuscripts for us when he came to Georgia. Unfortunately, none of his writings have been published.