

## Ludmyla Andryjowycz

**LA** - My grandfather, my father's father, was a fairly rich man in Konotop [city]. When the Bolsheviks came [to power] they took away all his property, but grandfather managed to hide some money, gold coins. He buried them in the orchard. When he became ill, he called his children, and told them that in the orchard by a pear tree, there's money buried. Dig it up and share it amongst yourselves, because there are bad times coming. These coins helped us to survive the Famine easier. Because at that time in Ukraine there were stores, called Trade Syndicates (TORGSYNs)<sup>1</sup> where you could get flour, sugar, but only for gold. From time to time my father would take a gold coin and go and bring back a small bag of flour, or sugar, and this helped us survive.

**Interviewer** - *Where was this TORGSYN?*

**LA** - They were in various cities. But this is how the Bolsheviks, for the grain that they took away from the villagers, they appropriated all the gold in Ukraine, perhaps not all the gold, but a lot of it, because you could only buy things for gold.

We were swollen, yes. Not deathly swollen, but we were swollen [from hunger]. But in fact our grandfather saved us.

When I was a child, I learned to value bread. All my life I ate a lot of bread, and am always ready to eat a piece of bread. Bread is a part of the Ukrainian soul.

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<sup>1</sup> An acronym for *Torgovlia s inostrantsiamy* – or "Store for Foreigners," where only gold, precious metals or foreign currency could be used. During the Famine, TORGSYNs were a means for the Soviet government to augment their gold reserves – desperate, starving people could trade gold or other family heirlooms for usually very small amounts of grain or other foodstuffs