Tatiana Tets

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Riga
Latvia
Interviewer: Ella Levitskaya
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Tatiana Tets lives in an old five-storied apartment building in the center of Riga. She has one room in a shared [communal] apartment 1. There is another family living in the apartment. The house is decayed, and there are probably not many people willing to lodge in it. Tatiana is a slim lady of medium height. She has dark hair cut short. She has difficulties walking. Her back bothers her, and she hardly ever goes out. She has many pot plants and books in her room. She has Russian, German and Latvian books. She has pictures of her relatives and friends on bookshelves. Tatiana is happy to see me. She suffers from loneliness. Tatiana is a nice, hospitable and intelligent lady. She told me an interesting story.

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My family background

I know little about my paternal grandparents. They came from Latvia. A few generations of my grandfather's kin lived in Liepaja [200 km from Riga]. My grandmother was also born in Latvia, though I know no details about her place of birth. Perhaps, she also came from Liepaja, but I'm not sure about that. At that time matchmaking was a common thing, and the bride and bridegroom didn't necessarily come from the same town. My father's family lived in Liepaja. My grandfather's name was Samuil Tets [see Common name] 2, Shleime in the Jewish manner, and my grandmother's name was Taube. I don't know what my grandfather did for a living. My grandmother was a housewife. There were many children in the family, but besides my father Iosif, born in 1879, I only knew my father's older brother Motus and his younger sister Ida, Ite in the Jewish manner. The other siblings moved away. Some moved to Russia, when Latvia belonged to the Russian Empire, and others moved to other countries. My father may have told me about his family, when I was a child, but I don't remember any details.

My father's parents were religious, and observed Jewish traditions. All I know about them is what my father told me. However, even if my father hadn't mentioned their religiosity to me, I would have come to this conclusion myself. My father was very religious. I'd say he was organically

religious. I believe such attitude to religion and traditions of one's own people can only be engrained in childhood in the family environment. One can only absorb this under the influence of the family atmosphere following what parents profess.

It was common in Latvia that its residents spoke several languages. Historically many Latvian residents spoke German. They also knew Russian, since Latvia belonged to tsarist Russia before it declared independence 3. My father's family also spoke German and Russian, but at home they preferred to communicate in Yiddish.

All I know about my father's childhood and boyhood is that my father and his sister Ida finished a German gymnasium in Liepaja. They also received higher education. My father left Liepaja for St. Petersburg where he entered the Pharmaceutical Faculty of the Military Medical Academy. This happened during the tsarist regime, when there was a Jewish quota of admission to higher educational institutions 4. It was even stricter with military institutions, particularly considering that Jews had no right to be awarded officers' ranks. However, there were exceptions, and my father was the one. He must have been very determined and smart, and could reach his goals. Ida went to study in Tartu, Estonia. Though Estonia also belonged to tsarist Russia, it was more liberal to Jews. There were no Jewish quotas in higher educational institutions, and Jews had no restrictions with regards to getting education. Ida graduated from the Dentists' Faculty of the Tartu University.

Upon graduation from the Academy, my father returned to Liepaja, but there were no vacancies in the town pharmacies, and my father couldn't afford to open his own pharmacy. My father moved to Riga where there were more job opportunities for him. He found a job and rented an apartment. His sister Ida followed him to Riga. She graduated from university in 1909. After finishing her studies Ida married a doctor in Riga. His surname was Wolpe. She moved in with her husband. Ida worked as a dentist. She had her own dentist's office. Her older daughter Margarita was born in the late 1910s, and her son Mikhail was born in 1920. My father's older brother Motus also had a pharmacist's diploma. He graduated from a different educational institution than my father. I don't remember which one. Motus owned a pharmacy, and he also worked there. He lived in Liepaja. I don't remember Motus' wife, and his son Veniamin was born in 1905. My grandfather and grandmother died in the late 1910s or early 1920s. They passed away before I was born. They were buried at the Jewish cemetery in Liepaja.

My mother's family lived in Latvia, in Jekabpils [130 km from Riga]. That was my grandfather and grandmother's home town. My grandfather Hirsh Shreiberg dealt in forestry. He owned several storage facilities. Grandmother Fania was a housewife, which was common for Jewish women at the time. My grandfather earned well. The family was quite wealthy. There were five children in the family. My mother was the oldest. She was born in 1888. Her Russian name was Yelena, and her Jewish name was Hinde-Dina. I don't know the names of my mother's brothers or sister. All I know is that the difference in their age was one to two years. So, I will name them in sequence. After my mother came Leib [Russian name Lev], and the next one was Fyodor, whose Jewish name was Faivish. I don't remember the third brother's name. I never saw him. Mama's sister Ida was the youngest.

Before World War II the Jewish population constituted about half of the total population in Jekabpils. There was a big Jewish community in Jekabpils. There was a synagogue, a general education Jewish school and a cheder for boys of the town. There was a Jewish cemetery, and there was a shochet

near the synagogue, who slaughtered animals according to the rules of kosher eating.

I don't know how religious Mama's parents were, but they strictly observed Jewish traditions. They celebrated Sabbath on Friday evening. My grandmother lit candles and prayed over them. The family had a festive dinner. My grandfather didn't work on Sabbath. He went to the synagogue on Saturday, and this was a strict rule. They also celebrated Jewish holidays at home. On holidays the entire family went to the synagogue. My grandmother followed all kosher rules and taught her daughters to follow them. The boys studied at cheder. My grandfather also ensured that his daughters received a Jewish education. The children also received secular education. Theirs was a traditional Jewish family. They spoke Yiddish, Russian and German.

My mother, her brothers and sister studied at the private Jewish gymnasium where subjects were taught in German. All children, except Ida, entered the Medical Faculty of Tartu University. My grandfather died in 1913. Probably that was why Ida, the youngest one, received no higher education. The education fee was rather high, and the family couldn't afford to pay for her after my grandfather died. My grandfather was buried at the Jewish cemetery in Jekabpils according to Jewish traditions.

All brothers of my mother graduated from the Medical Faculty of Tartu University. My mother entered the Dentists' Faculty of this university where she met my father's sister Ida. They became lifelong friends. They were very close.

My mother's oldest brother, Lev, became a lung doctor upon graduation from university. He married a Jewish girl from the town of Ludza in Latvia. Her name was Raisa, Rasia in Jewish. I don't know her maiden name. She had two children: son Grigoriy, named after Grandfather Hirsh, and daughter Elina. Before the [Russian] Revolution of 1917 5 Lev and his family moved to Moscow. He became a popular doctor, Professor of Medicine. His wife Rasia worked as a translator. Grigoriy followed in his father's footsteps. He became a doctor and a candidate of medical sciences. Elina graduated from the Faculty of Foreign languages of the MSY [Lomonosov Moscow State University] 6 and worked as an English teacher at school.

My mother's brother Fyodor served as a doctor at the front during World War I. He met his future wife Minna at the front. She came from Saratov. Minna grew up in a Jewish family. She was a pharmacist. She was a medical nurse at the front. They got married after the war. Fyodor and his wife moved to Moscow. Fyodor worked as a dermatologist. Their only son Vladimir finished the Moscow Conservatoire and became a musician. After Latvia declared independence our correspondence with them terminated. It was not safe for residents of the USSR to have or keep in touch with relatives abroad 7.

Unfortunately, my mother's third brother was less fortunate. During the short period of the Soviet regime in Latvia after the Revolution of 1917 he was exiled to Siberia. I don't know what the charges against him were. He was a student, and Mama said he wasn't in the least interested in politics. He was about 20 years old and he was single. We don't even know where in the Gulag 8 he perished. When Latvia became independent, nobody ever notified us about him.

Mama's younger sister Ida married Ilia Freidus, a Jewish man from Liepaja. Ilia was a pharmacist and owned a pharmacy. They had two children. Their older daughter's name was Sara, and the younger one's name was Glika. Ida was a housewife. Ida and her family lived with grandmother in

her house. Ida was the only one of all children who stayed in Liepaja. I have bright memories about the house. When at school, I often spent my summer vacations with my relatives. This was a wooden house. There was a front door to Ilia's pharmacy on one side of the house. On the other side there was a front door leading to the living quarters.

My parents met at my father's sister Ida's place. My father often visited her. Mama also visited her best friend in Riga. My parents met and fell in love with each other. They got married in 1913. They had a traditional Jewish wedding in Jekabpils. The town's rabbinate issued their marriage certificate.

After the wedding my parents settled down in Riga. They rented an apartment in the center of the town. Mama made one room her dental office. Also, Mama worked as a dentist in the clinic of the Russian doctors' society. Most of the members of this society were Jewish doctors. They were very good doctors. Once or twice a week Mama received her patients, sent to her by the clinic's receptionist. My father was a pharmacist.

Growing up

My older brother Grigoriy, named after Grandfather Hirsh, was born in 1914. He was circumcised in accordance with Jewish traditions. I was born in 1926. I have the Russian name of Tatiana registered in my documents, and my Jewish name is Taube. I was named after my paternal grandmother, who had passed away before I was born.

After my brother was born, Mama didn't quit her job. She hired a nanny for my brother. Her name was Emma Valde, and she was Latvian. Emma was married. She had two daughters. She worked for us from morning till night. She became a member of our family. This wonderful lady was well respected by all members of our family.

My parents were religious. We observed all Jewish traditions at home. My father fixed a mezuzah over the door to our apartment. I remember that we all had chains with little David stars on them. We celebrated Sabbath at home. Mama lit candles and prayed over them. When Father came home from work, we all sat down to dinner. My parents tried to do no work on Saturday. However, if Mama had emergency patients, she never sent them away, but my parents did their best to observe Saturday. We also celebrated all Jewish holidays. We had matzah at home on Pesach. There was no bread at home during the holiday. Before Pesach we did a general cleanup of the apartment. We swept away all bread crumbs before we took out the special tableware and dishes that were kept in a separate cupboard during the year. We had traditional Jewish food, and father conducted seder. We invited relatives and friends to visit us. On Yom Kippur my parents fasted. My parents went to the synagogue on Jewish holidays. We spoke Russian and German at home. My parents and my older brother could also speak Yiddish, but I knew no Yiddish. I could understand the subject of discussion, but I couldn't speak it myself.

I don't know whether my brother studied at a cheder. He was twelve years older than me, and I know about his childhood what he had told me. At least I know that he received a religious Jewish education. Grigoriy could read and write in Hebrew and knew prayers. At 13 he had his bar mitzvah. All Jewish boys in Latvia had bar mitzvah rituals at 13. It was actually mandatory for the families we knew.

There was a big Jewish community in Riga. There were seven big choral synagogues in Riga, and there were 27 prayer houses and smaller synagogues according to the official information, but there must have been more actually. There was a mikveh at the choral synagogue. There was a Jewish cemetery and a big Jewish theater in the town. The Jewish community regained this building, and it houses the Latvian society of Jewish culture 9. There was a Jewish hospital [Bikkur Holim] 10 in Riga, a Jewish maternity home, and the community sponsored the elderly people's home and children's home. There was a number of Jewish general education schools teaching Hebrew, Yiddish and German. There were Jewish students' and sports societies. The biggest of these was Maccabi 11. There were Jewish students' balls with charity auctions and lotteries at them. Charity was well developed. Also, the synagogues collected moneys for Palestine. Each Jewish family considered charity a deed of honor. There were no fixed amounts. Everybody donated as much as one could afford to donate.

There were Jewish pogroms in Latvia during the tsarist regime. The biggest Jewish pogrom happened in 1905 [see Pogrom in Riga in 1905] 12, when people protested against the tsarist regime and deportation of Jews from Riga. On 22nd October 1905 a pogrom occurred at the Moscowskiy forstadt 13, populated by poor Jewish residents. Latvian and Jewish workers tried to stop the pogrom makers, but they were arrested by the police. Next day the pogrom makers attacked the elderly people's home. There were victims there as well. The pogrom lasted two days, and the police didn't even make an attempt to stop it. The pogrom stopped as suddenly as it started. It may have been plotted by the police. There were no more pogroms afterward.

My brother Grigoriy studied at a gymnasium where all subjects were taught in Latvian and Russian. After finishing the gymnasium Grigoriy entered the Law Faculty of Riga University. He also worked in a law office in the evenings. This job enabled him to earn his living, which was important for him. My parents worked hard to earn our living. They also paid for their children's education that was expensive. My parents wanted us to get an education. They wanted us to have a secure future, and they believed education played an important role in it. Grigoriy was good at his studies. He also worked as attorney assistant, which was good for him as well. My brother was a convinced Zionist [see Revisionist Zionism] 14. My parents usually took two-three days of vacation during Pesach, and we visited my grandmother and mama's sister in Jekabpils. We spent summer vacations at a dacha 15 in the vicinity of Riga. I stayed there with a nanny, and my parents went to work in the morning and came back in the evening.

Two years before I was to go to school, my parents sent me to a private German kindergarten. Of course, Emma was very good and could teach me all the necessary things, but it was common practice in Latvia, for parents to send their children to kindergartens before school. Children need some time to learn to socialize with other children and prepare for school. Emma took me to the kindergarten in the morning. We learned music, handicrafts, painting and played games. We spoke German and had French classes every day. We went home in the afternoon. I spent most of the time of the day with Emma. Her daughters were a little older than me, and we were friends. I still keep in touch with one of them, and the other girl has joined a better world, unfortunately. I had Jewish, Russian and Latvian friends. Some were my friends in the kindergarten and others were my parents' or neighbors' children. к сожалению, уже нет в живых. арше меня, и эти девочки стали моими подругами., научить жить в детском коллективе. ена. дни. где

At the age of eight I went to a private Jewish gymnasium where subjects were taught in German. I did well at school. Many of my classmates were my friends from the kindergarten. They came from wealthy Jewish families, and their parents could afford to pay for their studies at the private gymnasium. It was a secular school, but there was a course on Jewish history, religion and traditions. We also studied Russian and French before the political coup [in Latvia] in 1934 16, when executive non-parliamentary authoritarian rule was established Latvia. This was a start of anti-Semitism in Latvia. All Jewish schools were eliminated. There was no Yiddish or German allowed at schools. Most Jews also switched to Latvian in their everyday life. All students' societies were closed. Jews were not allowed to hold official positions. The number of Jewish deputies in the Latvian Saeima (Parliament) was dramatically reduced. A Jewish quota was unofficially introduced in higher educational institutions. However, Latvia recorded major industrial achievements, and the standards of living were improving. In general, the rights of national minorities were observed.

My parents had frequent discussions about Hitler coming to power in 1933. However, there were no major concerns about the situation in Germany. Nobody thought there was a big chance that it would spread beyond Germany. In 1939 Jewish refugees started arriving in Riga from Austria and Germany. Our government even issued Latvian passports to them. The Jewish community supported these people. Jewish families collected money for them. The community accommodated them and provided them with food and clothes. We had a few people joining us for lunch every day, and there were many other Jewish families helping the refugees. They told us about the horrible things happening in Germany. They told us about persecution and humiliation, extermination of Jews, and jails and concentration camps. It was hard to hear such things and hard to believe they were possible at all. When the German forces attacked Poland [see Invasion of Poland] 17, there were new waves of refugees coming to Latvia. The situation was very worrying. Everybody listened to radio news and read newspapers. Hitler was scary. The danger was very real, and there was a lot of enthusiasm, when the Soviet Union defeated German armies in Poland, and the Non-Aggression Agreement [Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact] 18 was signed between the Soviet Union and Germany.

In the early 1930s my brother was going to move to Palestine to help build a Jewish state. Many Zionists were leaving at the time. They wrote about their hardships and hard work. My brother was strong. He had already worked at construction sites and farms, and was ready to do any job. However, my parents were scared of letting him go, him being their only son. They tried to talk Grigoriy out of it, or at least to convince him to postpone his departure till I finished my studies and started work. My brother stayed in Riga. Many of his friends left then.

The Soviet invasion of the Baltics

In 1939 Soviet military bases were established in Latvia. My parents and many other people were enthusiastic about this fact. We thought this was some guarantee that the Germans wouldn't attack Latvia. People thought Hitler wouldn't dare to attack Latvia, when the Soviet bases were in place. When Latvia became a Soviet Republic in 1940 [Annexation of Latvia to the USSR] 19, most people accepted this fact with enthusiasm.

I remember the Soviet armies marching into Riga in August 1940. There were endless tanks moving along the road, and open trucks with Soviet soldiers on the sides. It was very peaceful.

People were throwing flowers to soldiers. I remember this sight well. My family and I were among the audience watching the Soviet Army 20 march. Most of the Jews in Riga were very positive about the Soviet rule. Most Jews were social democrats with leftist leanings, and they liked the principles declared by the Soviet rule: equality of all nations living in the USSR, the power of people and internationalism. These ideas do sound attractive. It never occurred to people how one could slant these ideas.

Nothing changed for our family, when the Soviet rule was established. We had no property, and were not afraid of nationalization. I kept going to school, and my parents kept going to work. The Soviet authorities nationalized my father's pharmacy, but he kept his job. Mama had no private office, but kept working as a dentist at the clinic. We kept living in the same apartment, though it no longer belonged to its owner. It became governmental property. Therefore, the changes that were changing other people's lives had no impact on us.

During the war

On 14th June 1941 deportation of Latvian residents began [see Deportations from the Baltics (1940-1953)] 21. There was no advance notice that it might happen, but there was trouble in the air. The weather was hot, and windows were open. One could hear the sound of car engines. There were not so many cars in the streets at the time, particularly, during the nighttime. These sounds were troubling. I don't know, maybe adults had some idea about what it was all about. Only in the morning we found out what had happened. There were quite a few students missing from school that day. We were told that they were deported with their families to Siberia, being enemies of the people 22. A number of my parents' friends and acquaintances were deported. It was so scary. People were discussing what was happening. I remember what my father told us about someone he knew in Ludza. This man told a joke of some political nature, and his friend went to the NKVD 23 office where he reported on this man and gave his own comments. The one who told the joke was deported with his family. He was sent to the Gulag, and his family was sent into exile. There were many such cases. It was enough to report that someone was against the Soviet rule, and there was no other evidence required. Such people were arrested and sent to camps. This was the truth of life, and all people knew this was happening. This might have continued, but on 22nd June 1941, a week after the first deportation, Germany attacked the USSR [Great Patriotic War] 24.

We had a radio, and my brother always listened to news on weekends. He knew several languages, and listened to various radio stations. During the war in Poland in 1939 he heard on the radio that Fascists were killing Jews, throwing babies and old people out of windows of their homes. When the war against the USSR began, they repeated the program and mentioned that this might also happen in the USSR. My brother rushed to tell us that Germany had broken the Non-Aggression Agreement and attacked the country, and that we had to leave immediately and find a safer place. My parents agreed. Other Jews also knew about the atrocities in Poland, but not all of them wanted to evacuate. They were probably hoping that Germans wouldn't do the same in Latvia. Germans occupied Latvia during World War I, but they were rather liberal to Jewish residents then. Many Jews relied on these memories, and this happened to be deadly for them. I also think, they feared to leave their home and whatever belongings they had. Also, many people felt a stronger fear of Bolsheviks 25 than Germans. Anyway, many stayed, and actually all of them perished. Only those, who were deported to Siberia or evacuated, survived.

My parents telephoned their relatives. Ida Wolpe, my mother's sister, her husband and their son Mikhail resided in Riga. Their older daughter Margarita moved to Belgium in the 1930s, long before the Soviet rule was established in Latvia. She had finished an art school in Riga and was a gifted sculptor. She went to Belgium to continue her education. When Latvia became Soviet, Margarita moved to the USA. Ida and her husband refused to join us. Their son Mikhail and other young people headed to Pskov where Mikhail volunteered for the Soviet Army. Mikhail served at the front line.

Mama's sister Ida Freidus also decided against leaving her home. Her older daughter Sara had graduated from university by then. She married Kadashevich, a Jewish man, and they lived in Riga. Ida's younger daughter Glika studied at school and lived with her parents in Jekabpils. Sara, her husband and his parents evacuated to the rear.

We evacuated on 28th June 1941. We actually left our home. All we had with us was a small suitcase and whatever fit into Mama's tool bag. We headed to the railway station. People were throwing bottles filled with flame liquid on us. They were Latvian people. The Germans didn't enter Riga before early July. When we got to the station, we got into a freight train consisting of ten carriages for cattle transportation. There were makeshift two-tier plank beds in the carriage. We were told the train headed to Yaroslavskaya region in Russia. My nanny Emma came to say 'good bye' to us. She brought us her woolen sweaters and a piece of cheese. This cheese was the only food we had. Somehow it didn't occur to us that we needed to take food with us. My cousin Sara Kadashevich and her family were in the same train. Mama also met her acquaintance from Riga in the train.

Our train was often bombed on the way. A bomb hit the rear carriage, and it was detached. The train stopped at railway stations where we could get some boiled water. We had cheese, but we couldn't eat. The only thought was to survive. We wanted to live! In this emergency situation we felt no hunger. There was only one goal to survive and escape from the Germans. We saw how aggressive Latvian residents were, and we knew that when the Germans came, Latvian residents would actively involve themselves in actions against Jews.

We reached Yaroslavl, and from there trucks and cab wagons transported people to collective farms 26. Our family and the Kadasheviches, as well as many other refugees from Riga, were taken to the village of Olonino, Kostroma region [500 km from Moscow]. We were accommodated in a local house where three other families from Riga were staying. We worked at the collective farm growing flax. I remember the crew leader knocking on our window in the morning: 'Hey, get up there and go tousle the flax!' Mama had her instruments with her, and this saved us from starving. After work Mama received patients to help them, when they had tooth problems. In case of emergency they even visited us at night. They brought her food: bread, a bag of flour or a few potatoes. Local residents supported and sympathized with us. Of course, their village became overpopulated, but they knew we were forced out of our homes. The secretary of the Olonino Party organization, a very nice lady, met all newcomers with bread and salt according to the old Russian traditions. She also helped people before they got used and learned to survive.

Winter was on the way, and we thought about it with fear. Winters in Kostroma region are very cold while we had no warm clothes with us, and there was no place to get any. I don't remember, whose idea it was to move to Central Asia where it might be not so cold, but everybody liked the idea. In

late October we left the village. The railway station was quite at some distance from the village, and again the party secretary came to our rescue. She arranged a cab and a cab-driver for us, gave us some food for the road and came to say ‘good bye’ to us. This was the way she treated all those willing to move to another place.

Somehow we reached Kuybyshev. There were no train timetables, and only after one got into the train, one might hear where it was heading. Even locomotive operators couldn’t guess how long the trip would take. Only military trains heading to the east observed the schedule, and other passenger trains were to wait at reserve tracks till they passed. I don’t remember how long it took us to get to Kuybyshev [2500 km from Moscow]. Our luck didn’t fail us there. When the train stopped at the platform, we heard the railway station radio announcement that there was a train to Tashkent on a platform. We rushed there and managed to crowd into the carriage, which was very fortunate, considering that there was no control over the boarding process, and people were pushing and pulling each other, almost moving over each other’s heads. In November 1941 we arrived at Yangiyul [3200 km from Moscow] not far from Tashkent, Uzbekistan. A rear hospital from the vicinity of Moscow also evacuated to this town. Since my parents had medical education, the local military office sent them to work in this hospital. My brother, who knew several foreign languages, went to work as an English and Russian language teacher at school.

We were accommodated in a clay kibitka [Kibitka (n.) A rude kind of Russian vehicle, on wheels or on runners, sometimes covered with cloth or leather, and often used as a movable habitation.] hut for hospital employees. There was a clay floor and walls in the hut and there was nothing else available. The hospital provided planks, and we made plank beds and stools. The hospital also provided shabby bed sheets, so we had these. We also made skirts and blouses from these sheets and painted them with plant concoctions.

I went to the local Uzbek school. We learned all subjects in Russian and had a few Uzbek classes weekly. There were many refugees in Yangiyul. Initially the locals sympathized with us. They invited us to meals, and brought us pilau and flat breads. Some time passed, and they were no longer friendly with us, and at some point of time they started blaming us for all their troubles. I agree, they were having problems, considering that so very many people arrived at their town. There were lines in food stores, and there were food coupons [see card system] 27 issued to get food. Evacuated people were accommodated in local huts, and this caused discomfort, of course. However, it wasn’t fair to blame those, who evacuated against their will, in all existing problems. Anyway, the hospital personnel had separate residential quarters, and we hardly had any contacts with local residents. However, we knew Uzbek traditions and rituals. I still remember the Uzbek rules of having a meal and also, how to make flat bread.

The hospital quarters made our life much easier. We had meals at the hospital. There were many Polish Jews taking medical treatment in the hospital. The international Red Cross provided assistance to them sending medications and food products, including chocolate and even cookies in tins. There were also other benefits in the hospital. There was a shower room, and we were provided soap. It was a luxury at the time.

Most patients were very young, even younger than my brother. After school I rushed to the hospital. Doctors and medical nurses gradually got used to my working as a hospital attendant. I helped patients with their toilet, wrote letters for them and just sat beside them talking. My parents

taught me to be kind and sympathetic. I was glad to help those, who were in a more difficult situation than me. There were other people helping the hospital personnel. In late 1942 my brother was offered a job in the hospital. He had a legal education, and was appointed chief of the military hospital headquarters.

In 1943 our hospital changed its status and became a military field hospital. It belonged to military unit 2959, 57th Army of the 3rd Ukrainian Front. This meant that the hospital was to relocate to the front line. We were contract personnel and might choose to stay in Yangiyul, but we were used to working at the hospital and we decided to follow it. We knew this wasn't the safest choice, but there were dangers everywhere. I wasn't a hospital employee, but I didn't want to stay in Yangiyul. So I submitted my application for the position of a hospital attendant to the chief doctor. Since I was under the age of 16 at the time, I couldn't be employed according to existing employment rules. In my application I wrote that my year of birth was 1924, adding two years to be eligible for employment. Nobody checked documents at the time, and I got the job. Later the hospital arranged a course to train medical nurses, and I attended the course after work. After finishing the course I was appointed a ward nurse. I was happy to be able to tend to patients with more proficiency. I also joined the Komsomol 28 in the hospital.

The hospital was moving along with the front line forces. We started in Odessa region. The wounded were taken to the hospital straight from the front-line sanitary battalion. Many of them were severely wounded. The wounds were scary. Back in Yangiyul I saw the wounded after they had been given first medical aid and some initial medical treatment, but in this field hospital we were the first phase, and this was hard. Perhaps it wasn't so hard on younger hospital personnel. It's hard to imagine now, but at that time, we felt this like something new and even interesting. It was something like some romantic veil on combat actions. It goes without saying how deeply we sympathized with the wounded and did our best to help them. We worked in shifts. The shift lasted 24 hours, and then we had a two-day rest. Of course, we didn't rest for two days. We took some sleep before we went back to the hospital. Besides medical procedures, our patients needed help with taking meals. We also read them newspapers and helped others to learn to walk on crutches. There were always things to do in the hospital. We listened to the news on the radio and knew how our armies advanced liberating towns. We looked forward to the liberation of Latvia.

We advanced farther and farther to the west. We went across Dnepropetrovsk region, the rest of Ukraine and Moldova. From there we moved to the border of the USSR: Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary. Our last point was Graz, Austria.

We always had a lot of work to do, but the most difficult time was when we had to relocate. We had to pack the equipment and load it on trucks, and also relocate all patients, promptly deploy the hospital at the new location and be ready to receive new patients. At times the hospital was deployed in tents before we could move to existing school or hospital buildings. When we had such an opportunity, we had our reception office in a tent, where patients were sorted out before they were appointed to hospital departments. In 1944 my father died of a heart attack in Moldova. He was buried near the hospital. We had his name and dates of birth and death engraved on his gravestone, but when we searched for his grave after the war, we failed to find this spot. Everything changed. There were new houses built where ruins had been before. The grave was gone. There is only my father's name on my mother's gravestone.

After the war

Our hospital celebrated 9th May 1945 [Victory Day, capitulation of Germany] in Austria. The radio was never off, so that we missed no news. Then we finally heard it announcing that Hitler's Germany had capitulated and the war was over. Everybody had looked forward to this announcement, but it came as a surprise, anyway. Many people cried from joy and grief that many of their relatives never lived to this day. We all rushed to the wards to tell our patients that the day had finally come. I remember how I came into the ward and told the inmates that the war was over. The severely wounded young man, who had just been taken to the hospital, asked me to write to his mama that he was alive and that he was sure to return home now that the war was over. I wrote this letter and sent it off, when at night this young man died. This was the hardest death through the whole time I worked in the hospital. We all cried after him, the doctors and nurses. We were so happy that the war was over.

Our hospital relocated to Romania. The hospital was overcrowded. There were patients in surgeries, therapeutic and neurological departments. We also received former prisoners of concentration camps. They were starved, and could not resist diseases. Their recovery took a long time, but most of them made it.

In summer 1946 we returned to Riga. We had no place to live, and my former nanny Emma gave us shelter. She had a room in a shared apartment. Her married daughters lived separately. We stayed with Emma till we received a room in a shared apartment from an executive committee [Ispolkom] 29. Emma told us about the horrible end of my father's sister and Mama's best friend Ida Wolpe. In August 1941 Germans gathered all Jews in the ghetto in Riga 30. Ida, her husband and many friends of my parents, who had failed to evacuate, also were taken to the ghetto. Emma brought food to the ghetto fence and managed to give it to the inmates. She traded clothes for food. Of course, it was very risky for her to make these attempts, but she couldn't be bothered to think about her own risks. In late October 1944 all ghetto prisoners were killed in the Rumbula forest 31. Ida's son Mikhail returned from the front. He became an invalid after he was wounded in his leg. Mikhail moved to Moscow. He got married and had children. Mama's sister Ida Freidus, her husband Ilia, their younger daughter Glika and Grandmother were killed in Jekabpils. Only their older daughter Sara, who evacuated with us, survived. Local Latvians showed great respect for Uncle Ilia before the war. Ilia visited his patients even at night, if necessary. At that time they didn't care that he was a Jew, but then the most terrible thing happened during the war. The Freidus family and my grandmother were killed by Latvians before Germans even came to Jekabpils. They broke into the pharmacy and shot the family. Latvians also participated in all actions initiated by the Germans. Latvians have always been accurate and thorough performers. The Germans could absolutely rely on them. However, my nanny Emma used to say that there are no bad nations, but there are evil people.

Mama went to work as a dentist in a clinic. My brother went to work as a lawyer at a plant. I was preparing to take entrance exams to the Philological Faculty of the University. Our peaceful life began. However, we kept in touch with our wartime friends. I corresponded with my friends from the hospital living in Moscow and Dnepropetrovsk after they demobilized. My brother also met his future wife in the hospital. Maria Gaisinskaya, a Jewish woman from Dnepropetrovsk, was a doctor. We were friends and corresponded with her after the war. Once we invited her to visit Riga and stay with us. My brother spent much time with her taking her around Riga. They went to theaters

and got to know each other better. When it was time for Maria to go back home, they told us they were going to get married. Maria moved to Riga. They had a common wedding. They registered their marriage at the municipal registry office and invited the family to a quiet dinner. In 1949 Maria and Grigoriy's daughter Ilana was born.

After the war anti-Semitism emerged in Riga. It never affected our relationships with Emma and her family, but in the streets one could hear the word zhyd [kike] more and more frequently, and I was surprised that nobody tried to stop these rascals. The state-level anti-Semitism was not so evident.

In 1946 I entered the Philological Faculty of Riga University. I entered the department of journalism. Perhaps, the fact that I was a war veteran, helped me to avoid any problems. I passed my exams and was admitted. There were other Jews in my group, and the attitude toward us was just ordinary.

Proceedings against cosmopolitans 32 in 1948 had no effect on us. There were Komsomol meetings at the university where enemies of the people were execrated, but these meetings were mostly based on newspaper articles. It was harder on those who worked. I don't think any of our acquaintances lost their jobs, but all of them were afraid of losing it. Also, people feared deportation of Jews to Birobidzhan 33 since there were rumors that this was to happen. Perhaps, there wasn't a single person that had no concerns about the future. There was deportation in 1948-49, but they were mainly wealthier farmers, who did want to join collective farms. I don't think there were people deported from towns.

The postwar Latvia started the struggle against religion 34 and national traditions. The Jewish theater, evacuated at the beginning of the war, never returned to Riga. There is still the building of the former Jewish theater in Riga. It housed various offices. After the breakup of the Soviet Union [1991] the building was restituted to the Latvian Society of Jewish culture. Only one synagogue functioned [Editor's note: after the war two synagogues functioned in Riga. One was closed in the late 1950s. In 1963 making matzah was forbidden. It was supplied from Vilnius. In 1964 non-Jews started to be buried in the Jewish cemetery in Riga]. Religion was under a ban, but on Jewish holidays people crowded in the synagogue and its whereabouts.

Our family continued observation of Jewish traditions after the war. My brother's family also lived with us. We couldn't celebrate Sabbath with Saturday being an official working day, and we had to go to work and attend classes. However, we celebrated it on Friday evening. Mama lit candles. There was no challah sold, but Emma learned to make it. Emma made excellent Jewish food. She made delicious gefilte fish, chicken broth and strudels. We couldn't follow the kashrut either. We didn't eat pork, but there was no place to buy kosher meat. There were problems with food products in general. We bought what was available. It goes without saying that we never mixed meat and dairy products. We also celebrated all Jewish holidays at home. Emma made traditional Jewish food and we invited guests. We always had matzah on Pesach. Emma bought matzah at the synagogue. We didn't dare to go to the synagogue since my brother was afraid of losing his job. As for me, I had to beware of the university, but nobody could forbid us to celebrate holidays at home. On Pesach my brother conducted seder. Our family got together. Sara Kadashevich and her family, my mother's brother Fyodor and our friends joined us. On Yom Kippur we fasted for a day according to the rules. We did our best, considering the circumstances. We also celebrated Soviet

holidays: Victory Day 35, 9th May. Other Soviet holidays, like 1st May and 7th November [October Revolution Day] 36 were just days off for us, when we could stay away from work.

In 1948 the Jewish state of Israel was established. It was a great event for us. We were happy to feel that Jews were no longer homeless pilgrims scattered and oppressed all over the worlds. We have a state of our own, and even the very fact of it protects us. My brother invited a few friends and they had a party on this occasion. Since then we've always celebrated the Day of Israel in May.

Mama died in 1957. We buried her at the Jewish cemetery in Riga according to the Jewish tradition. We had our father's name engraved on Mama's gravestone. When we visit the cemetery, we commemorate the two of them.

In 1951 I graduated and received the diploma of a journalist. Jewish graduates faced evident anti-Semitism during the process of distribution of [mandatory] job assignments 37. We were the best students through the entire period of our studies, but none of us received a job appointment to a major newspaper. Our jobs were in factory newspapers or in smaller editors' offices. I joined the Party while at university. I wouldn't say I was driven by career considerations. After evacuation and my work in the hospital I had patriotic feelings. I believed that Communists were to lead the initiative of restoration of the country ruined by the war. Actually, I was not alone. After the war we were already Soviet people and practiced the Soviet ideology. Before we received our job assignments I was invited to the town party committee. They told me that the radio committee had a vacancy for a journalist, with fluent Russian and Latvian, a party member, and that I met these requirements. Then the party instructor asked me who I was. I repeated my name and told him that I was a party member and a war veteran. He repeated the question and asked me about my nationality. I said I was a Jew, and he said he thought I was Polish. He apologized for having bothered me, and this was clear and unambiguous. I was assigned to the railroad builder industrial newspaper where I worked till I retired. I got along well with other employees, and my management was quite satisfied with my performance. In truth, many Jews realized they had their own place in life and to avoid problems, they had to be quiet and take their share. I would say this briefly: everybody must know one's place. Following this rule one could avoid potential problems.

In 1953 Stalin died. Many people grieved after him. It was like they had lost one of their own kin. I wouldn't say I took his death as something personal. I guess it was like some troubled expectation of what was going to happen and what life was going to be like without Stalin. It was common belief that Stalin had been the one to make all decisions, or at least, people believed this was true. We were used to the fact that there was a wise chief leading the country and that he was the father of all people of the USSR. We didn't know how we would go on living without his wise decisions and his firm hand. We recovered our insight after the Twentieth Party Congress 38. I believed that Stalin's name was associated with all those crimes, but I didn't relate them to the role of the Communist Party. Vice versa, I believed that the Party found out the truth and corrected the mistakes made by one person.

I got married in 1956. I would rather not talk about my ex-husband. All I would say is that he was a Jew and came from Daugavpils in Latvia. His family perished in Daugavpils during the war. We had no traditional Jewish wedding. We just registered our marriage in the municipal registry office. Our marriage didn't last long. Perhaps, this was the reason why we preserved good relationships after the divorce. We had no children, and this is all about my marriage.

In the 1970s numbers of Jews immigrated to Israel. Many of my acquaintances and friends from Riga also moved there. My cousin Sara Kadashevich and her family moved to Israel. My cousin Mikhail Wolpe and his family left Moscow for the USA where his sister Margarita lived. I was alone and didn't consider departure. If my brother and his family had decided to leave, I would have joined them, but my brother and his wife had jobs, and my niece Ilana studied at the Law Faculty of Riga University, and none of them considered departure. I couldn't even think of moving alone leaving my dearest ones behind and knowing that I might never see them again. My niece moved there in the 1990s, but she did it for the sake of her children. She wanted them to be free people in a free country and have perspectives for the future. It's hard to make such important steps just for one's own sake. I said 'good bye' to my friends going to start a new life, helped them to arrange farewell parties and saw them off to the railway station… They wrote me letters, and I was happy they were doing well at the new place.

I could never imagine that I would ever be able to visit Israel or invite my friends here. I've always watched news about Israel. During the Six-Day-War 39, or the Judgment Day War [Yom Kippur War] 40, there was probably no Jew in Riga who wasn't concerned about the situation in Israel. The Soviet mass media interpreted the situation in Israel in a very specific manner. They called Israel an aggressor, and defense of its territories was interpreted as a crime of the Israel military. This was the only way they could write about it, and not one word of sympathy could break through that. There was little information in such news, to be honest. We listened to the Voice of America 41 to find out the news. These broadcasts were jammed, but it was possible to tune the radios in the evening. My brother tracked down the course of the war and kept us posted. We were all worried about Israel. Besides the fact that it was our own Jewish state, we had friends and relatives living there and we were worried about them. Each victory of Israel was like a holiday for us.

In 1984 my brother Grigoriy died. We buried him at the Jewish cemetery. Then my niece and her family immigrated to the USA. There was nobody left with me. My work, friends and books helped me to overcome my loneliness. I also corresponded with my friends living abroad.

I retired in 1986. I stayed at home for some time before I realized that I was missing work and communication. I went to work in the library. I liked the job and my colleagues. I finally retired in the early 1990s, when my health condition didn't allow me to continue work.

At first I was enthusiastic about perestroika 42. There were evident changes. The freedom of speech and freedom of the press were introduced. We got access to the books, for reading of which people had been taken to jail before. There was no need to listen to the Voice of America or other radios. There was all the information available in newspapers. Religion was allowed. There was freedom of correspondence with people living in other countries, and it was allowed to travel abroad and invite people here. I wish it had happened earlier. I've always wanted to visit Israel, but it wasn't possible during the Soviet regime. When there were no obstacles for traveling abroad left, my health condition didn't allow me to travel. However, at times I feel like I've been to the country. I know so many details from letters, stories, films and photographs. There was less anti-Semitism during the Gorbachev rule. Jews had not so many problems finding jobs or entering colleges. Relations with Israel improved. Life was good, and there was hope that it would be even better, but then things suddenly became worse. Food stores resembled postwar stores. There were lines to buy the most necessary food products or clothes. People were becoming more and more unhappy about things, until finally the Soviet Union broke up. In 1991 Latvia became independent again [see

Reestablishment of the Latvian Republic] 43. I think it was natural. Great empires get ruined, and this is a natural historic process. I cannot objectively assess this process. The past seems to have been good. I was young and healthy and had a job. Life went as it should have. Perhaps, this time is good for young people. I am old, ill and lonely and I don't care about things.

The Jewish life was developing during perestroika. The Latvian society of Jewish culture and the Jewish community were established in 1988. It provides vital assistance to many people, helping them to survive. It provides help to the people who are in need of medical assistance. The community also provides assistance to lonely and ill people. It provides hot meals and food packages, and also pays our utility bills. The society helps us not to feel abandoned and useless. The community arranges tours and visits to the cinema and theaters. We celebrate all Jewish holidays in the community. I visit the community, when I feel better. I go to the small synagogue in my street. The rabbi takes every effort to make the synagogue our home. I go to the synagogue, when I feel all right. On Memorial Day I come to the synagogue to recite a prayer for my deceased relatives. I wish they had lived to see this time of renaissance of the Jewish life in Latvia.

Glossary:

1 Communal apartment
The Soviet power wanted to improve housing conditions by requisitioning 'excess' living space of wealthy families after the Revolution of 1917. Apartments were shared by several families with each family occupying one room and sharing the kitchen, toilet and bathroom with other tenants. Because of the chronic shortage of dwelling space in towns communal or shared apartments continued to exist for decades. Despite state programs for the construction of more houses and the liquidation of communal apartments, which began in the 1960s, shared apartments still exist today.

2 Common name
Russified or Russian first names used by Jews in everyday life and adopted in official documents. The Russification of first names was one of the manifestations of the assimilation of Russian Jews at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. In some cases only the spelling and pronunciation of Jewish names was russified (e.g. Isaac instead of Yitskhak; Boris instead of Borukh), while in other cases traditional Jewish names were replaced by similarly sounding Russian names (e.g. Eugenia instead of Ghita; Yury instead of Yuda). When state anti-Semitism intensified in the USSR at the end of the 1940s, most Jewish parents stopped giving their children traditional Jewish names to avoid discrimination.

3 Latvian independence
The end of the 19th century was marked by a rise of the national consciousness and the start of national movement in Latvia, that was a part of the Russian Empire. It was particularly strong during the first Russian revolution in 1905-07. After the fall of the Russian monarchy in February 1917 the Latvian representatives conveyed their demand granting Latvia the status of autonomy to the Russian Duma. During World War I, in late 1918 the major part of Latvia, including Riga, was taken by the German army. However, Germany, having lost the war, could not leave these lands in

its ownership, while the winning countries were not willing to let these countries to be annexed to the Soviet Russia. The current international situation gave Latvia a chance to gain its own statehood. From 1917 Latvian nationalists secretly plot against the Germans. When Germany surrenders on 11th November, they seize their chance and declare Latvia's independence at the National Theatre on 18th November, 1918. Under the Treaty of Riga, Russia promises to respect Latvia's independence for all time. Latvia's independence is recognized by the international community on 26th January 1921, and nine months later Latvia is admitted into the League of Nations. The independence of Latvia was recognized de jure. The Latvian Republic remained independent until its Soviet occupation in 1940.

4 Percent of Jews admitted to higher educational institutions

In tsarist Russia the number of Jews in higher educational institutions could not exceed five percent of the total number of students.

5 Russian Revolution of 1917

Revolution in which the tsarist regime was overthrown in the Russian Empire and, under Lenin, was replaced by the Bolshevik rule. The two phases of the Revolution were: February Revolution, which came about due to food and fuel shortages during World War I, and during which the tsar abdicated and a provisional government took over. The second phase took place in the form of a coup led by Lenin in October/November (October Revolution) and saw the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks.

6 Lomonosov Moscow State University

founded in 1755, the university was for a long time the only learning institution in Russia open to general public. In the Soviet time, it was the biggest and perhaps the most prestigious university in the country. At present there are over 40,000 undergraduates and 7,000 graduate students at MSU.

7 Keep in touch with relatives abroad

The authorities could arrest an individual corresponding with his/her relatives abroad and charge him/her with espionage, send them to concentration camp or even sentence them to death.

8 Gulag

The Soviet system of forced labor camps in the remote regions of Siberia and the Far North, which was first established in 1919. However, it was not until the early 1930s that there was a significant number of inmates in the camps. By 1934 the Gulag, or the Main Directorate for Corrective Labor Camps, then under the Cheka's successor organization the NKVD, had several million inmates. The prisoners included murderers, thieves, and other common criminals, along with political and religious dissenters. The Gulag camps made significant contributions to the Soviet economy during the rule of Stalin. Conditions in the camps were extremely harsh. After Stalin died in 1953, the population of the camps was reduced significantly, and conditions for the inmates improved somewhat.

9 Latvian Society of Jewish Culture (LSJC)

formed in autumn 1988 under the leadership of Esphiк Rapin, an activist of culture of Latvia, who was director of the Latvian Philharmonic at the time. Currently LSJC is a non-religious Jewish community of Latvia. The Society's objectives are as follows: restoration of the Jewish national self-consciousness, culture and traditions. Similar societies have been formed in other Latvian towns. Originally, the objective of the LSJC was the establishment of a Jewish school, which was opened in 1989. Now there is a Kinnor, the children's choral ensemble, a theatrical studio, a children's art studio and Hebrew courses in the society. There is a library with a large collection of books. The youth organization Itush Zion, sports organization Maccabi, charity association Rahamim, the Memorial Group, installing monuments in locations of the Jewish Holocaust tragedy, and the association of war veterans and former ghetto prisoners work under the auspice of the Society. There is a museum and document center 'Jews in Latvia' in the LSJC. The VEK (Herald of Jewish Culture) magazine (the only Jewish magazine in the former Soviet Union), about 50,000 issues, is published in the LSJC.
10 Jewish hospital Bikkur Holim: established by the community with the same name. It existed in Riga since the late 19th century. In 1924 Ulrich Millman and the Joint funded construction of a hospital where they provided assistance to all needy besides Jews. The hospital consisted of three departments: therapeutic, surgery and neurology. Director of the hospital was Isaac Joffe, director of Riga's health department in the early 1920s. Doctor Vladimir Minz, one of the most outstanding surgeons, was head of surgery. He was the first surgeon in Latvia to operate on heart, brain, and do psychosurgery. Fascists destroyed the hospital, its patients and personnel in summer 1941. Doctor Joffe perished in the Riga ghetto in 1941, Professor Minz perished in Buchenwald camp in February 1945.

11 Maccabi World Union
International Jewish sports organization whose origins go back to the end of the 19th century. A growing number of young Eastern European Jews involved in Zionism felt that one essential prerequisite of the establishment of a national home in Palestine was the improvement of the physical condition and training of ghetto youth. In order to achieve this, gymnastics clubs were founded in many Eastern and Central European countries, which later came to be called Maccabi. The movement soon spread to more countries in Europe and to Palestine. The World Maccabi Union was formed in 1921. In less than two decades its membership was estimated at 200,000 with branches located in most countries of Europe and in Palestine, Australia, South America, South Africa, etc.

12 Pogrom in Riga in 1905
the Jewish pogrom was a response of the tsarist authorities to the ultimate demands of mass revolutionary meetings. One of the demands was to stop deportation of Jews from Riga. The pogroms began in Moscow forstadt in the second half of 22nd October 1905. The 'black hundred' military, hooligans and pogrom makers, armed with guns, pickets and stones, broke into Jewish shops and attacked passers-by. The pogrom makers reached the Jewish orphanage. Patrols of Jewish and Latvian workers tried to scatter around the crowds of pogrom makers, when gendarmes started firing at the patrols. On 23rd October pogrom makers killed a young Jewish man and a

woman. When the patrol wanted to convince pogrom makers to go to their homes, the police arrested the patrollers. Before noon about 1000 pogrom makers got together near the church in Kalnu Street. They had icons, portraits of the tsar and gonfalons. Singing the Russian anthem they headed to the orphanage where they killed two people and injured ten others. They also killed over ten people in the streets, and 30 were reported to have been injured, according to the governor's report. There are grounds to believe that the actual numbers were higher. The pogroms stopped on 24th October.

13 Moscowskiy forstadt

during the rule of Catherine I in the 1720s Jews were forbidden to reside in Latvia, and they were chased away from the country. During the rule of Catherine II this decree was cancelled in part. Visitors were to stay in a Jewish inn in the vicinity of the town. Those Jews, who obtained residential permits were allowed to live in Moscowskiy forstadt in the vicinity of Riga. In 1771 the first Jewish house of prayers was opened there. In 1813 residents of the Slock town (present-day Sloka, vicinity of Riga Yurmala town) were allowed to reside in the Moscowskiy forstadt. Jews actively populated this neighborhood in the suburb. Even when Latvia became independent in 1918, and the Pale of Settlement was eliminated, poor Jewish people moved to Moscowskiy forstadt, where prices were lower, and there were synagogues and prayer houses, Jewish schools and cheder schools, and Jewish life was easier. Moscowskiy forstadt was a Jewish neighborhood before June 1941. During the German occupation a Jewish ghetto was established in Moscowskiy forstadt.

14 Revisionist Zionism

The movement founded in 1925 and led by Vladimir Jabotinsky advocated the revision of the principles of Political Zionism developed by Theodor Herzl, the father of Zionism. The main goals of the Revisionists was to put pressure on Great Britain for a Jewish statehood on both banks of the Jordan River, a Jewish majority in Palestine, the reestablishment of the Jewish regiments, and military training for the youth. The Revisionist Zionists formed the core of what became the Herut (Freedom) Party after the Israeli independence. This party subsequently became the central component of the Likud Party, the largest right-wing Israeli party since the 1970s.

15 Dacha

country house, consisting of small huts and little plots of lands. The Soviet authorities came to the decision to allow this activity to the Soviet people to support themselves. The majority of urban citizens grow vegetables and fruit in their small gardens to make preserves for winter.

16 Coup in Latvia in 1934

originally, after gaining independence in 1918, Latvia was a democratic parliamentary republic. In November 1933, the Saeima eliminated the workers and peasants' fraction by its decision, and its deputies were sent to court. President Karlis Ulmanis stages a bloodless coup in May 1934 and puts an end to political chaos caused by a fractured parliament. All political parties were banned, their publishing offices were closed and the Seim was dismissed. All workers', political organizations and trade unions were eliminated. Jews were gradually forced out of Latvia's political and economic life. The Jewish socialist party and youth movements were banned. Anti-Semitic demonstrations

became more frequent, Jews were not allowed to hold official positions, and there was a percentage quota introduced in Riga University. A dictatorship was established in Latvia in 1934. Thus, Ulmanis did not involve broad repression and spoke publicly as the 'guarantor of stability'. On the whole, his regime did not violate the rights of national minorities, and in the late 1930s they even sheltered few thousand Jewish refugees from Germany and issued them Latvian passports. Many Latvians remember the Ulmanis' time as a period of economic and cultural reviviscence. The standard of living in Latvia was one of the highest in Europe at the time.

17 Invasion of Poland

The German attack of Poland on 1st September 1939 is widely considered in the West as the date for the start of World War II. After having gained both Austria and the Bohemian and Moravian parts of Czechoslovakia, Hitler was confident that he could acquire Poland without having to fight Britain and France. (To eliminate the possibility of the Soviet Union fighting if Poland were attacked, Hitler made a pact with the Soviet Union, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.) On the morning of 1st September 1939, German troops entered Poland. The German air attack hit so quickly that most of Poland's air force was destroyed while still on the ground. To hinder Polish mobilization, the Germans bombed bridges and roads. Groups of marching soldiers were machine-gunned from the air, and they also aimed at civilians. On 1st September, the beginning of the attack, Great Britain and France sent Hitler an ultimatum - withdraw German forces from Poland or Great Britain and France would go to war against Germany. On 3rd September, with Germany's forces penetrating deeper into Poland, Great Britain and France both declared war on Germany.

18 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact

Non-aggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, which became known under the name of Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Engaged in a border war with Japan in the Far East and fearing the German advance in the west, the Soviet government began secret negotiations for a non-aggression pact with Germany in 1939. In August 1939 it suddenly announced the conclusion of a Soviet-German agreement of friendship and non-aggression. The Pact contained a secret clause providing for the partition of Poland and for Soviet and German spheres of influence in Eastern Europe.

19 Annexation of Latvia to the USSR

upon execution of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact on 2nd October 1939 the USSR demanded that Latvia transferred military harbors, air fields and other military infrastructure to the needs of the Red Army within three days. Also, the Soviet leadership assured Latvia that it was no interference with the country's internal affairs but that they were just taking preventive measures to ensure that this territory was not used against the USSR. On 5th October the Treaty on Mutual Assistance was signed between Latvia and the USSR. The military contingent exceeding by size and power the Latvian National army entered Latvia. On 16 June 1940 the USSR declared another ultimatum to Latvia. The main requirement was retirement of the 'government hostile to the Soviet Union' and formation of the new government under supervision of representatives of the USSR. President K. Ulmanis accepted all items of the ultimatum and addressed the nation to stay calm. On 17th June 1940 new divisions of the Soviet military entered Latvia with no resistance. On 21st June 1940 the new government, friendly to the USSR, was formed mostly from the communists released from

prisons. On 14-15th July elections took place in Latvia. Its results were largely manipulated by the new country's leadership and communists won. On 5th August 1940 the newly elected Supreme Soviet addressed the Supreme Soviet of the USSR requesting to annex Latvia to the USSR, which was done.

20 Soviet Army

The armed forces of the Soviet Union, originally called Red Army and renamed Soviet Army in February 1946. After the Bolsheviks came to power, in November 1917, they commenced to organize the squads of worker’s army, called Red Guards, where workers and peasants were recruited on voluntary bases. The commanders were either selected from among the former tsarist officers and soldiers or appointed directly by the Military and Revolutionary Committee of the Communist Party. In early 1918 the Bolshevik government issued a decree on the establishment of the Workers’ and Peasants’ Red Army and mandatory drafting was introduced for men between 18 and 40. In 1918 the total number of draftees was 100 thousand officers and 1.2 million soldiers. Military schools and academies training the officers were restored. In 1925 the law on compulsory military service was adopted and annual drafting was established. The term of service was established as follows: for the Red Guards - two years, for junior officers of aviation and fleet - three years, for medium and senior officers - 25 years. People of exploiter classes (former noblemen, merchants, officers of the tsarist army, priest, factory owner, etc. and their children) as well as kulaks (rich peasants) and Cossacks were not drafted into the army. The law as of 1939 cancelled restriction on drafting of men belonging to certain classes, students were not drafted but went through military training in their educational institutions. On 22nd June 1941 the Great Patriotic War was unleashed and the drafting in the army became exclusively compulsory. First, in June-July 1941 general and complete mobilization of men was carried out as well as partial mobilization of women. Then annual drafting of men, who turned 18, was commenced. When WWII was over, the Red Army amounted to over 11 million people and the demobilization process commenced. By the beginning of 1948 the Soviet Army had been downsized to 2 million 874 thousand people. The youth of drafting age were sent to the restoration works in mines, heavy industrial enterprises, and construction sites. In 1949 a new law on general military duty was adopted, according to which service term in ground troops and aviation was three years and in the navy- four years. Young people with secondary education, both civilian and military, with the age range of 17-23 were admitted in military schools for officers. In 1968 the term of the army service was contracted to two years in ground troops and in the navy to three years. That system of army recruitment has remained without considerable changes until the breakup of the Soviet Army (1991-93).

21 Deportations from the Baltics (1940-1953)

After the Soviet Union occupied the three Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) in June 1940 as a part of establishing the Soviet system, mass deportation of the local population began. The victims of these were mainly but not exclusively those unwanted by the regime: the local bourgeoisie and the previously politically active strata. Deportations to remote parts of the Soviet Union continued up until the death of Stalin. The first major wave of deportation took place between 11th and 14th June 1941, when 36,000, mostly politically active people were deported. Deportations were reintroduced after the Soviet Army recaptured the three countries from Nazi Germany in 1944. Partisan fights against the Soviet occupiers were going on all up to 1956, when

the last squad was eliminated. Between June 1948 and January 1950, in accordance with a Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR under the pretext of ‘grossly dodged from labor activity in the agricultural field and led anti-social and parasitic mode of life’ 52,541 people from Latvia, 118,599 people from Lithuania and 32,450 people from Estonia were deported. The total number of deportees from the three republics amounted to 203,590. Among them were entire Latvian families of different social strata (peasants, workers, intelligentsia), everybody who was able to reject or deemed capable to reject the regime. Most of the exiled died in the foreign land. Besides, about 100,000 people were killed in action and in fusillade for being members of partisan squads and some other 100,000 were sentenced to 25 years in camps.

22 Enemy of the people

Soviet official term; euphemism used for real or assumed political opposition.

23 NKVD

People’s Committee of Internal Affairs; it took over from the GPU, the state security agency, in 1934.

24 Great Patriotic War

On 22nd June 1941 at 5 o’clock in the morning Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union without declaring war. This was the beginning of the so-called Great Patriotic War. The German blitzkrieg, known as Operation Barbarossa, nearly succeeded in breaking the Soviet Union in the months that followed. Caught unprepared, the Soviet forces lost whole armies and vast quantities of equipment to the German onslaught in the first weeks of the war. By November 1941 the German army had seized the Ukrainian Republic, besieged Leningrad, the Soviet Union's second largest city, and threatened Moscow itself. The war ended for the Soviet Union on 9th May 1945.

25 Bolsheviks

Members of the movement led by Lenin. The name ‘Bolshevik’ was coined in 1903 and denoted the group that emerged in elections to the key bodies in the Social Democratic Party (SDPRR) considering itself in the majority (Rus. bolshynstvo) within the party. It dubbed its opponents the minority (Rus. menshynstvo, the Mensheviks). Until 1906 the two groups formed one party. The Bolsheviks first gained popularity and support in society during the 1905-07 Revolution. During the February Revolution in 1917 the Bolsheviks were initially in the opposition to the Menshevik and SR (‘Sotsialrevolyutsionyery’, Socialist Revolutionaries) delegates who controlled the Soviets (councils). When Lenin returned from emigration (16 April) they proclaimed his program of action (the April theses) and under the slogan ‘All power to the Soviets’ began to Bolshevize the Soviets and prepare for a proletariat revolution. Agitation proceeded on a vast scale, especially in the army. The Bolsheviks set about creating their own armed forces, the Red Guard. Having overthrown the Provisional Government, they created a government with the support of the II Congress of Soviets (the October Revolution), to which they admitted some left-wing SRs in order to gain the support of the peasantry. In 1952 the Bolshevik party was renamed the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

26 Collective farm (in Russian kolkhoz)

In the Soviet Union the policy of gradual and voluntary collectivization of agriculture was adopted in 1927 to encourage food production while freeing labor and capital for industrial development. In 1929, with only four percent of farms in kolkhozes, Stalin ordered the confiscation of peasants' land, tools, and animals; the kolkhoz replaced the family farm.

27 Card system

The food card system regulating the distribution of food and industrial products was introduced in the USSR in 1929 due to extreme deficit of consumer goods and food. The system was cancelled in 1931. In 1941, food cards were reintroduced to keep records, distribute and regulate food supplies to the population. The card system covered main food products such as bread, meat, oil, sugar, salt, cereals, etc. The rations varied depending on which social group one belonged to, and what kind of work one did. Workers in the heavy industry and defense enterprises received a daily ration of 800 g (miners - 1 kg) of bread per person; workers in other industries 600 g. Non-manual workers received 400 or 500 g based on the significance of their enterprise, and children 400 g. However, the card system only covered industrial workers and residents of towns while villagers never had any provisions of this kind. The card system was cancelled in 1947.

28 Komsomol

Communist youth political organization created in 1918. The task of the Komsomol was to spread of the ideas of communism and involve the worker and peasant youth in building the Soviet Union. The Komsomol also aimed at giving a communist upbringing by involving the worker youth in the political struggle, supplemented by theoretical education. The Komsomol was more popular than the Communist Party because with its aim of education people could accept uninitiated young proletarians, whereas party members had to have at least a minimal political qualification.

29 Ispolkom

After the tsar’s abdication (March, 1917), power passed to a Provisional Government appointed by a temporary committee of the Duma, which proposed to share power to some extent with councils of workers and soldiers known as ‘soviets’. Following a brief and chaotic period of fairly democratic procedures, a mixed body of socialist intellectuals known as the Ispolkom secured the right to ‘represent’ the soviets. The democratic credentials of the soviets were highly imperfect to begin with: peasants - the overwhelming majority of the Russian population - had virtually no say, and soldiers were grossly over-represented. The Ispolkom’s assumption of power turned this highly imperfect democracy into an intellectuals’ oligarchy.

30 Riga ghetto

established on 23rd August 1941. Located in the suburb of Riga populated by poor Jews. About 13 000 people resided here before the occupation, and about 30 000 inmates were kept in the ghetto. On 31st November and 8th December 1941 most inmates were killed in the Rumbuli forest. On 31st October 15 000 inmates were shot, on 8th December 10 000 inmates were killed. Only

younger men were kept alive to do hard work. After the bigger part of the ghetto population was exterminated, a smaller ghetto was established in December 1941. The majority of inmates of this ‘smaller ghetto’ were Jews, brought from the Reich and Western Europe. On 2nd November 1943 the ghetto was closed. The survivors were taken to nearby concentration camps. In 1944 the remaining Jews were taken to Germany, where few of them survived through the end of the war.

31 Rumbula forest

the location where Latvian Jews, inmates of the Riga ghetto and Soviet prisoners-of-war were shot is in the woods near the Rumbula railway station. At the time this was the 12th kilometer of the highway from Riga to Daugavpils. The drawings of common graves were developed. There was a ramp made by each grave for prisoners to step into the grave. Soviet prisoners-of-war were forced to dig the graves to be also killed after performing their task. The total number of those killed in Rumbula is unknown. The most accurate might be the numbers given in the report of the police commander of Latvia, who personally commanded the actions in Rumbula. He indicated 27 800 victims in Rumbula, including 942 from the first transport of foreign Jews from Berlin, executed in Rumbula on the dawn of 30th November 1941, before execution of the Riga ghetto inmates. To hide the traces of their crimes, special units of SS Sonderkommando 1005 opened the graves and burned the remains of victims in spring and summer 1944. They also cruJewished burnt bones with bone crushing machines. This work was done by Soviet prisoners-of-war and Jews, who were also to be executed. In the 1960s local activists, despite counteraction of authorities, made arrangements in place of the Rumbula burial. They installed a memorial gravestone with the words ‘To the victims of fascism’ were engraved in Latvian, Russian and Yiddish.
32 Campaign against ‘cosmopolitans’: The campaign against ‘cosmopolitans’, i.e. Jews, was initiated in articles in the central organs of the Communist Party in 1949. The campaign was directed primarily at the Jewish intelligentsia and it was the first public attack on Soviet Jews as Jews. ‘Cosmopolitans’ writers were accused of hating the Russian people, of supporting Zionism, etc. Many Yiddish writers as well as the leaders of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee were arrested in November 1948 on charges that they maintained ties with Zionism and with American ‘imperialism’. They were executed secretly in 1952. The anti-Semitic Doctors’ Plot was launched in January 1953. A wave of anti-Semitism spread through the USSR. Jews were removed from their positions, and rumors of an imminent mass deportation of Jews to the eastern part of the USSR began to spread. Stalin’s death in March 1953 put an end to the campaign against ‘cosmopolitans’.

33 Birobidzhan

Jewish Autonomous Republic: Formed in 1928 to give Soviet Jews a home territory and to increase settlement along the vulnerable borders of the Soviet Far East, the area was raised to the status of an autonomous region in 1934. Influenced by an effective propaganda campaign, and starvation in the east, 41,000 Soviet Jews relocated to the area between the late 1920s and early 1930s. But, by 1938 28,000 of them had fled the regions harsh conditions. There were Jewish schools and synagogues up until the 1940s, when there was a resurgence of religious repression after World War II. The Soviet government wanted the forced deportation of all Jews to Birobidzhan to be completed by the middle of the 1950s. But in 1953 Stalin died and the deportation was cancelled. Despite some remaining Yiddish influences - including a Yiddish newspaper - Jewish cultural activity in the region has declined enormously since Stalin's anti-cosmopolitanism campaigns and since the liberalization of Jewish emigration in the 1970s. Jews now make up less than two percemt of the

region's population.

34 Struggle against religion

The 1930s was a time of anti-religion struggle in the USSR. In those years it was not safe to go to synagogue or to church. Places of worship, statues of saints, etc. were removed; rabbis, Orthodox and Roman Catholic priests disappeared behind KGB walls.

35 Victory Day in Russia (9th May)

National holiday to commemorate the defeat of Nazi Germany and the end of World War II and honor the Soviets who died in the war.

36 October Revolution Day

25th October (according to the old calendar), 1917 went down in history as victory day for the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia. This day is the most significant date in the history of the USSR. Today the anniversary is celebrated as ‘Day of Accord and Reconciliation’ on 7th November.

37 Mandatory job assignment in the USSR

Graduates of higher educational institutions had to complete a mandatory two-year job assignment issued by the institution from which they graduated. After finishing this assignment young people were allowed to get employment at their discretion in any town or organization.

38 Twentieth Party Congress

At the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956 Khrushchev publicly debunked the cult of Stalin and lifted the veil of secrecy from what had happened in the USSR during Stalin’s leadership.

39 Six-Day-War

The first strikes of the Six-Day-War happened on 5th June 1967 by the Israeli Air Force. The entire war only lasted 132 hours and 30 minutes. The fighting on the Egyptian side only lasted four days, while fighting on the Jordanian side lasted three. Despite the short length of the war, this was one of the most dramatic and devastating wars ever fought between Israel and all of the Arab nations. This war resulted in a depression that lasted for many years after it ended. The Six-Day-War increased tension between the Arab nations and the Western World because of the change in mentalities and political orientations of the Arab nations.

40 Yom Kippur War

The Arab-Israeli War of 1973, also known as the Yom Kippur War or the Ramadan War, was a war between Israel on one side and Egypt and Syria on the other side. It was the fourth major military confrontation between Israel and the Arab states. The war lasted for three weeks: it started on 6th October 1973 and ended on 22nd October on the Syrian front and on 26th October on the Egyptian

front.

41 Voice of America

International broadcasting service funded by the U.S. government through the Broadcasting Board of Governors. Voice of America has been broadcasting since 1942, initially to Europe in various European languages from the US on short wave. During the cold war it grew increasingly popular in Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe as an information source.

42 Perestroika (Russian for restructuring)

Soviet economic and social policy of the late 1980s, associated with the name of Soviet politician Mikhail Gorbachev. The term designated the attempts to transform the stagnant, inefficient command economy of the Soviet Union into a decentralized, market-oriented economy. Industrial managers and local government and party officials were granted greater autonomy, and open elections were introduced in an attempt to democratize the Communist Party organization. By 1991, perestroika was declining and was soon eclipsed by the dissolution of the USSR.

43 Reestablishment of the Latvian Republic

On 4th May 1990 Supreme Soviet of the Latvian Soviet Republic has accepted the declaration in which it was informed of the desire to restore independence of Latvia, and the transition period to restoration of full independence has been declared. The Soviet leadership in Moscow refused to acknowledge the independence of Latvia and initiated an economic blockade on the country. At the referendum held on 3rd March 1991, over 90 percent of the participants voted for independence. On 21st August 1991 the parliament took a decision on complete restoration of the prewar statehood of Latvia. The western world finally recognized Latvian independence and so did the USSR on 24th August 1991. In September 1991 Latvia joined the United Nations. Through the years of independence Latvia has implemented deep economic reforms, introduced its own currency (Lat) in 1993, completed privatization and restituted the property to its former owners. Economic growth constitutes five-seven percent per year. Also, it’s taken the course of escaping the influence of Russia and integration into European structures. In February 1993 Latvia introduced the visa procedure with Russia, and in 1995 the last units of the Russian army left the country. Since 2004 Latvia has been a member of NATO and the European Union.