Lev Galper

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Moscow
Russia
Interviewer: Ella Levitskaya
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Lev Galper talked to me at his home. Lev is a tall slim man with nicely cut grey hair and bright dark eyes. He is so handsome that his old age - he is 85 - is hard to believe. His speaking manner is easy and natural, with a touch of mild humor.

Lev lives with his wife, daughter and granddaughters in his three-room apartment in one of the new Moscow districts. The apartment is very comfortable, furnished and equipped with taste and love.

There are a lot of books, though Lev complains of being unable to read much because of his eye problems.

His wife Nina also looks younger than her age. They make a very handsome couple: tall, broad-shouldered Lev and his tiny, graceful wife. They are very considerate towards each other.

- **My family background**

My father's family lived in the shtetl of Bykhov in Belarus [180 km from Minsk]. I cannot describe Bykhov as I have never been there and my father never told me about it. Father's parents, my grandfather Leib Galper and my grandmother, were born there. I don't know my grandmother's name though I met her several times. I never heard anyone calling her by name, only 'Grandma' or 'Mama.' I don't know their dates of birth either.

My grandfather was a hairdresser, and my grandmother was a housewife; she kept house and took care of the children. I only vaguely remember my grandmother: she was a short stout woman

dressed in dark clothes and wearing a black kerchief on her head.

My grandparents had five children; I don't know their dates of birth. Beniamin was the eldest; then two daughters, Sura and Ita, were born. In 1888 my father was born. His common name 1 was Zinovy, while his Jewish name was Zalman. The youngest child in the family was Mikhail whose Jewish name was Meilakh.

My father's parents were religious. I don't know if my father had any Jewish education. Evidently, he had some elementary knowledge, as he could read Hebrew and knew how to pray. But he was unable to get a secular education. His family was very poor and the sons, at the age of eight, were sent to learn a trade. So they didn't have an opportunity to study. The eldest brother, Beniamin, became a tailor's apprentice. The two younger sons, my father and Meilakh, started learning the hairdresser's profession when they turned eight.

At first they were bottle-washers: they warmed water for shaving, had tools ready for the barbers, swept the floor and, at the same time, learned how to cut hair and shave. After two years, the apprentices were able to work on their own. Both worked at my grandfather's barber's shop. Certainly, it was not a 'salon,' but a small room with two or three working places. Before World War I, the whole family moved to Volchansk, the chief town of a district in Kharkov region [70 km from Kharkov and 450 km from Kiev]. They hoped to earn more there and to find a greater choice of marriageable young men for their daughters.

Volchansk used to be rather a large merchants' town [see Guild I] 2. It was located within the [Jewish] Pale of Settlement 3, so Jews were allowed to live there. Volchansk had a large Jewish community. The Jewish population made up about 40 percent of the town's residents. Besides Jews, there were also Russians, Ukrainians, and Poles there. Downtown houses were made of stone and had one or two stories. There even were several three- storied houses. Jews settled mainly in the central part of the town.

There were people representing the Jewish intelligentsia: doctors, lawyers, teachers. But, at the same time, there were a lot more poor people; those who could hardly make both ends meet. In the center of the town, houses were built close to each other because the land there was more expensive than on the outskirts. Those who lived on the outskirts fed the town. They were mostly involved in agriculture. Volchansk often hosted major wholesale fairs, and people used to come there from far away. In the center of Volchansk there was a big synagogue built with the money donated by rich Jewish merchants.

There were also smaller synagogues, and several prayer houses, and a cheder. Of course when the Soviet power came most of the synagogues were closed. The Soviet power started its struggle against religion 4. But the big downtown synagogue was left open, as well as the small house next door where the shochet worked.

Both my father's sisters got married in Volchansk. Certainly, they had traditional Jewish weddings: with the chuppah and with the rabbi - as it should be. I can hardly remember Ita: when she got married she left Volchansk and came to visit her relatives only a few times. She had two children, but I don't even remember their names. However, I knew well Sura, her husband Sakhne Kozin and their children: their daughters, Bella and Lyuba, and their son, Mikhail. After getting married, Sura became a housewife, and her husband was in commerce.

My father's elder brother, Beniamin, took a great interest in revolutionary ideas. At that time the Bolshevik 5 party was prohibited, and my uncle became a member of an underground revolutionary circle where they studied works by Marx and Engels 6. In 1915 my uncle joined the Bolshevik party. In the circle he met his future wife Manya. She was a Jewish girl who had come to Volchansk from a shtetl and worked as a dressmaker. They joined the party together and got married soon after that.

Naturally, they didn't have a Jewish wedding; communist ideas were incompatible with religion. The party division they belonged to sent them to Dnepropetrovsk [a city with a population of more than a million in the east of Ukraine, 420 km from Kiev]. Beniamin and Manya settled there, and both of them worked as dressmakers. They stayed in Dnepropetrovsk and never returned to Volchansk. They had two children. They named their daughter Rosa after revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg 7, and their son was named Felix after Dzerzhinsky 8.

In Volchansk, my father got a job at a barber's shop. Of course, he had no money to start his own business, and, together with his brother Meilakh, he worked for their master.
Neither my father, nor Meilakh took an interest in politics, unlike their elder brother. They worked trying to save some money for getting married and buying a dwelling.

My mother's family lived in the small Belarus shtetl of Glusk, Mogilev region [120 km from Minsk]. I know almost nothing about my mother's parents. Grandfather Chaim Glukhovsky was a craftsman; Grandmother whose name I don't know was a housewife. My mother's parents were religious people, and they gave Jewish education to their numerous children. They had many children, but, besides my mother, I knew only one of her elder sisters, Nekhama. Two of mother's elder sisters immigrated to Denmark in 1904. Mother was in correspondence with them until the mid-1930s.

Once, in the middle of the 1920s, my mother's sisters even came to Volchansk to see us. They stayed for a few days and left. Then reprisals started [during the Great Terror] 9, and to keep in touch with relatives abroad 10 became dangerous, so mother ceased doing so. Three other sisters left for the USA during World War I. We never heard anything from them.

Three of my mother's brothers stayed in Belarus. Before the war mother occasionally corresponded with them, but during the war we lost touch with them. Since we failed to find them after the war and they never got in touch with us again, I think they all died during the Great Patriotic War 11. Germans organized mass shootings of Jews in Belarus. I believe that my mother's brothers and their families fell victims to these actions.

My mother was the youngest in the family. She was born in 1899. In her passport issued in the Soviet times, she had the Russian name of Eva. Her Jewish name was Iokha. I've never come across this name. I guess it was a diminutive for Iokheved.

During World War I my mother's family moved to Bobruisk, Mogilev Region [130 km from Minsk]. It was a big city for those days.
In Glusk people suffered from famine very much during the war. That was probably why they decided to move to Bobruisk.

My mother's elder sister Nekhama married Meishe Polyakov from Volchansk and after the wedding she went to Volchansk to live with her husband. My mother went to see them. And my father

already lived in Volchansk at that time. So it was there where they met. They did without a traditional Jewish matchmaking; my father just asked my grandfather Chaim to bless their marriage.

My parents got married in Volchansk at the beginning of 1919. They had a traditional Jewish wedding. After the wedding they rented lodging from a Jewish family in the same street where Aunt Nekhama lived.

The [Russian] Revolution of 1917 12 in no way influenced my parents' way of life. The Soviet power took property from the rich and exiled them to Siberia, but nothing threatened my parents. My father continued to work as a hairdresser, and hairdressers are needed under any power. My mother didn't work after her marriage.

- **Growing up**

I was their first child; I was born in late 1919. My paternal grandfather Leib had died not long before I was born, that is why I got his name. But in my documents I was registered under the Russian name of Lev. Grandfather was buried in the Volchansk Jewish cemetery; after his death my grandmother moved to Dnepropetrovsk to live with her eldest son Beniamin.

It was a very hard time, the time of the Civil War 13. People starved and suffered from terrible epidemics of different types of typhoid, which also killed a great number of victims. Besides, Jewish pogroms 14 often happened during the Civil War. Volchansk wasn't spared of them either. My mother used to tell me about the Jewish pogroms that started when Petliura's 15 troops came to Volchansk.

My parents' neighbors, Russian Orthodox believers, hid our family in the attic of their house. Mother said that she was most of all afraid that I would cry and gang 16 members would hear me crying, so she was holding her hand against my mouth all the time. But I was calm and none of Petliura's men suspected anything. After the Civil War, life straightened out little by little. My father earned enough by that time; at any rate we were well provided for. In 1921 my younger sister was born; her common name was Berta, but her Jewish name was Beba.

My mother's sister Nekhama, with her husband and two children, occupied a half of the house; the other half was inhabited by Yankel Polyakov, a cousin of Nekhama's husband Meishe. During the NEP 17 Yankel became a businessman and grew rich. When the NEP was over he was afraid that he would be arrested very soon if he stayed in Volchansk where everybody knew him. So he left Volchansk for some place in Donetsk region. He sold his half of the house to my parents. The house was big, made of wood covered with plaster. It had been built for two families, that is why it had two separate entrances and its two parts were isolated from each other.

Each half consisted of two rooms and a kitchen with a big Russian stove 18. My father did his best to make the house comfortable; he faced it with bricks and made a well in the yard so that my mother wouldn't have to fetch water from the street. The plot of land near the house was so small that there was no room for a kitchen garden. Mother planted some flowers there and she grew some greenery in a small bed for our meals.

In Volchansk Jews didn't live in one neighborhood, like they often did in other places. In our street there lived three or four Jewish families besides us and Nekhama's family. We had a good relationship with our Ukrainian neighbors. Jews didn't keep away from 'goyim,' and Ukrainians and Russians weren't anti-Semitic. In general, I think that before World War II there was no anti-Semitism, at least I never noticed any manifestations of anti-Semitism or heard about it from other Jews.

I would like to visit Volchansk very much. Unfortunately, I am already 85 and I'm afraid I'm not strong enough for such a trip. I remember quite well all our neighbors in our street, I remember our house. Though, the house doesn't exist any longer. In the 1970s, when the town started growing, they built a machine-building factory and houses for the factory employees right in our street.

They demolished all the old houses and built many-storied modern buildings in their place and broadened the street. I realize this is not my Volchansk any longer, I will just not recognize the places I knew in my childhood, but it is still my dream to go to Volchansk.

Having moved to Volchansk, my parents continued to observe Jewish traditions. Near the market place there worked a shochet. My mother always bought live hens and then sent me with them to the shochet. We observed the kashrut. Mother had separate crockery for meat and dairy meals. Saturday was a working day at that time. On Friday evening my mother lit the candles and prayed over them.

On Saturday my father went to work but mother tried not to do anything about the house before the first night star, when, according to the Jewish tradition, the next day began. Yiddish was spoken in our house; I used to know it well and I still remember it. But my sister who was just two years younger than me didn't know Yiddish; she spoke Russian.

- **Our religious life**

On Jewish holidays my parents always went to the synagogue. After I turned four my father used to take me to the synagogue with him. Mother sat upstairs, together with other women, and I was with my father downstairs, in the men's seats. At our home we also celebrated Jewish holidays according to all the rules. Before Pesach we baked matzot. Our relatives and Jewish women from our street came to our place.

We had a spacious kitchen and a big Russian stove. Some made dough; others rolled the dough out, while I had the most important job: I had to make small holes in the rolled dough with a special wheel made from the pinion of the big wall clock. It took us several days to bake the matzot, because there had to be enough matzot for all the families who took part in the baking. There was no bread in our house during all the days of the holiday; we ate only matzot.

Mother cooked various dishes for the holiday meals: chicken broth, boiled chickens, gefilte fish, cholent, tsimes 19, various baked puddings; she baked strudels of matzot flour stuffed with jam, nuts and raisins. On Pesach Eve we took a big wooden box with the Passover crockery down from the attic. On the first Passover night father held the Pesach Seder.

I used to ask him the traditional questions that I had learnt by heart. In the center of the table there was a beautiful gilded cup for Elijah the Prophet. I already knew that during Pesach the

Prophet came to every Jewish house, blessed it and took a sip of wine from his cup. We left the front door open for the Prophet to come in. I always watched his cup very carefully and sometimes I was lucky to see the wine in the cup tremble for a moment.

Before Yom Kippur we always held the kapores ritual at home. Mother bought white hens for herself and for my sister and white cocks for my father and me. Father read aloud a prayer, and then each of us took his/her hen by its tied feet and twisted it above the head with the following words: 'Let you be my atonement.' Mother always cooked a square meal to be eaten before the fast. My parents fasted for 24 hours, but I and my sister were fed, as the fast wasn't obligatory for children. On the morning of Yom Kippur my parents went to the synagogue and stayed there till the night prayer.

Me and my sister were taken care of by a Ukrainian woman who lived next door. I also remember how everybody who came to our house during Chanukkah gave me and my sister coins. I don't remember any other holidays; after all about 80 years have passed since. And in the early 1930s the Soviet power intensified its struggle against religion. The only synagogue left by that time was closed, and people didn't celebrate Jewish holidays any longer.

During the NEP we were well-to-do though only my father worked. Later, when the NEP was forbidden and transition to the planned economy was under way, Cheka 20 started arresting people and taking their gold and other valuables. The wisest people managed to leave before the arrests began. Most of the Volchansk Jews were arrested no matter whether they had any valuables or not. For some reason the Cheka thought that all the Jews must have hidden at least something. My father was arrested, as well as his brother Meilach, and Uncle Meicha Polyakov, too. When chekists came to us to search the house they didn't find anything but still arrested my father.

My mother had a tsarist golden coin hidden somewhere; she was going to use it to have false teeth made for herself. She sewed it up into the belt of her skirt. She went to see my father in prison and was told that they would keep him until he handed over his gold. So mother brought them that coin and soon my father was released.

In 1932-33 there was a famine in Ukraine 21. We didn't starve only because there was a big oil-mill in Volchansk and we could buy there oil- cakes [pressed sunflower seeds with the husks]. Normally these oil-cakes were bought to feed cattle, but in those hard years we ate them ourselves. One couldn't eat much: they caused stomach ache, but we nibbled them little by little which saved us from the permanent hungry feeling. We are everything that was eatable; we gathered grass and roots and cooked soup with them. By and large, we survived somehow.

- **My school years**

In 1927 my parents sent me to a general education school. There were three schools in Volchansk: two of them provided a seven-grade education and one was a ten-year secondary school. Al those schools had been built by a rich merchant before the revolution. There was no Jewish school. I had known Ukrainian well since my childhood, so I was sent to the Ukrainian class. There were two Ukrainian classes and one Russian class where children from the nearby Russian villages studied. In my class there were almost no Jews. I didn't feel any anti-Semitism; the relationships among the school students and between teachers and students were absolutely even.

My favorite subjects were exact sciences: mathematics, physics. I had no problems with humanitarian subjects, but I cannot say I liked them very much. Over all the seven school years I was an excellent student. At school I joined the Young Octobrists 22, and then the pioneers [see All-Union pioneer organization] 23.

When I finished the 7th grade our school was closed and turned into a museum. Probably, there were not enough children in Volchansk to fill all the three schools. All the students from our school were transferred to the ten-year school. In the 8th grade I joined the Komsomol 24. The attitude towards me in the new school was good; they even elected me chairman of the school Komsomol committee. [Editor's note: Komsomol units existed at all educational and industrial enterprises. They were headed by Komsomol committees involved in organizational activities.] It meant a lot in Volchansk at that time.

At the new school I was also an excellent student. I had a lot of spare time and my mother insisted that I should study German. A teacher lived next door, she was a German, and she gave me lessons at her home. She mainly taught me communicative skills and correct pronunciation and didn't pay much attention to grammar.

- **Anti-semitic incidents**

I first felt anti-Semitism when I was in the 10th grade, when a new teacher of the Russian language and literature came to our school; her name was Dudina. She hated me and my sister who went to the same school. Maybe she was just a mean person, but I think that our Jewish background also played a part. Certainly, it was easier to deal with my sister: she came home in tears almost every day. The teacher picked on me all the time, but I was able to stand up for myself and other students saw that she was unfair towards me.

Once, six month before the graduation exams, she complained to the principal about me again, and the next day they held a class meeting where Dudina said that I didn't let her teach properly because I was smiling skeptically while she explained the lesson to us. Of course, that wasn't true, but the history teacher who was the chief of the school Communist Party division and a very unpleasant person, supported her. He said that my behavior was nothing else than the Trotskyist theory and I was a Trotsky 25 follower.

It was in 1937, in the heat of the reprisals and such an accusation was very dangerous for me. But I wasn't sitting on my hands waiting for my arrest. I was in good repute with the regional Komsomol committee, so I went there, told them about the meeting and asked them to transfer me to a suburban school, otherwise that couple would just eat me up. They reassured me at the regional committee and helped me to be moved to the only Russian class of our school where Dudina didn't teach. The Russian language and literature were taught there by another teacher, and I never had any disputes with her. However, Dudina was the teacher who examined me in literature during my graduation, and she gave me a 'good,' not an 'excellent' mark. Because of that, I failed to get a diploma with honors; but I didn't consider it very important: I was sure I would easily pass entrance exams to the institute.

During my school studies, I took up military training like many boys did at the time. There were many paramilitary circles. At first I joined the glider school and tried to fly. But nothing came out of

it: when we were through with the theory and were about to start flying, the glider broke. Naturally, I attended the shooting circle. Every boy was eager to shoot real rifles; besides we were given special badges for good shooting. Certainly, we didn't hope to participate in real battles: we were brought up with the idea of our army being the strongest and invincible; we thought that no one would dare to attack us. We didn't doubt it.

Besides, Volchansk was an unusual town, it was a garrison town. It was not big, but there always were some troops deployed: a cavalry regiment, or an infantry regiment, or an air force corps. We loved our army, perhaps it was in the boys' blood. At that time conscription was looked upon in a different way than it is now: it was a matter of pride, we couldn't wait to be enlisted.

Reprisals that started in the middle of the 1930s affected our family, too. My uncle Beniamin, an old communist, lived in Dnepropetrovsk. He and his wife worked at a garment factory. His wife Manya had relatives in the USA who once sent her USD 5. My uncle didn't spend any of this money and immediately took it to the Defense Foundation.

After that both my uncle and aunt were expelled from the Party for having relatives abroad. It was a shock for them, a disaster beyond any comparison. Beniamin went to Moscow to the Central Committee of the Communist Party. He wanted to speak to a Central Committee officer and complain about the injustice. But they didn't even let him come in; a sentry told him to write an application and mail it.

My uncle's feelings were hurt very much: what is the Central Committee for if a party member cannot come there? He did write and mail the application, though without any effect. True, both of them remained free, which was of no small importance in those years.

Every day we learnt about new arrests. People whose names symbolized the Soviet power itself: major military leaders, high-ranking party officials and statesmen, became 'enemies of the people' 26. I couldn't believe that. Neither could I believe that the Soviet power appeared to have so many enemies all of a sudden. I thought: if there had been a conspiracy, it was aimed specifically at eliminating as many people devoted to the Soviet power as possible. Though I couldn't understand who needed that and what for. At least, my attitude was critical.

- **During the war**

We knew that in Germany Hitler had come to power; we knew about Nazi outrages and persecutions of Jews. In our movie theaters they showed anti- fascist films: 'Professor Mamlock' 27, 'The Oppenheim Family', and news- reels about the latest events in Germany. [Editor's note: 'The Oppenheim Family' devoted to the tragic fate of a Jewish family in the Nazi Germany was shot by Russian film director Grigoriy Roshal and released in 1939.] We believed that fascism would be defeated. But we didn't expect a war; we didn't think that this country would take part in it.

When I was still at school, the Volchansk Komsomol leader called me to the regional Komsomol committee and told me that young people were being recruited to the air force and the regional Komsomol committee had decided to send me to air-force courses. Of course, I agreed immediately. Right after finishing school I went to Kharkov. I went together with five other young men from our area. We came to the Culture Center of the Kharkov machine-building factory where the medical board was working.

All the doctors examined us and I was told that my anthropometry parameters didn't meet the requirements. I didn't weigh enough, and my weight deficiency was considerable. I was told that they would give me a recommendation for the military technical air-force school. I went home and started waiting for the invitation, but a month later I got a letter where they refused to admit me.

Entrance examinations in higher educational institutions were already under way, and I had to enter at least somewhere, so I went back to Kharkov. I tried to enter the military economics academy. I passed all the first exams; there were two days left before the last one, an exam in chemistry. I decided to go home for these two days and didn't have enough time to get ready for it. I got only 'satisfactory' in chemistry and I didn't have enough scores to enter the academy. I took my documents away from there.

In the street I saw a notice about admission to the Textile Institute. They took me considering the results of the exams I had passed at the academy. Thus, quite by chance, I became a textile-worker. I was given a place in the dormitory and on 1st September 1938 I started my studies.

There were quite a number of Jewish students in my group and at the institute. Others were very well disposed towards us. I studied well, studies were easy for me. I was considered a good student.

In 1939 Germany attacked Poland. After the involvement of the Soviet troops that war was over very soon; Hitler and Stalin began the partition of Poland [see Invasion of Poland] 28. The USSR got the western areas of Ukraine and a part of Belarus. I considered it right as I believed that the USSR had liberated the oppressed people of these countries. But I was surprised, like many people were, when after that the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact 29 was signed and Germany changed from being our enemy to being our friend and ally. Though, I realized that it was just a political act: politics are made not to implement lofty ideas but to achieve practical goals. The pact must have been beneficial for the USSR...

When the war with Finland broke out [see Soviet-Finnish War] 30 I found myself a volunteer. It happened like this: one day when I came to the dorm my roommates told me that I had been enlisted as a volunteer to go to the Finnish front because I was a good skier. Since I couldn't ski at all I thought it was a joke. But the next day, in the institute entrance hall, I saw a poster reading 'Greetings to our Komsomol members who volunteered...' with a list of names including mine. I couldn't go to the Komsomol Committee and argue that I didn't know how to ski. I was too proud for that.

This happened during the midyear examinations. We had already passed three exams and had three more to take. All of us, volunteers, got excellent scores for the three other exams without even taking them. Then the institute rector organized a splendid farewell ceremony for us, with drinks and dances with a band.

After that we went to the recruiting office. We spent all day long there, and then we were told that everything was canceled and we could go home. And after the winter vacations nobody remembered about sending us to the front. The war in Finland somehow shook my belief in the invincibility of our army. I felt awkward about our army's great losses inflicted by a small country.

My sister also went to Kharkov after finishing school. She entered the Library Institute. I sometimes met with her; we used to go to theaters and museums. One day a Jewish theater from Lvov region came to Kharkov. My sister and I went there to watch a play, and I interpreted for her as she didn't know Yiddish.

When the Great Patriotic War broke out I was in Moscow. I had just finished my fourth year; we were sent to Moscow for a practical training. We learnt about the war from Molotov's 31 speech on the radio. Our practical training was over and we didn't know what to do: either to go back to Kharkov or to go home for vacations. But the main thing was to get out of Moscow. I came to Volchansk and at first began to wait for call-up papers from the recruiting office, but then I decided to go to Kharkov. They had arranged a military hospital at our institute, but the institute administration was still there. The head of the military registration office told me that nearly all of my co-students had volunteered for the front. At the recruiting office I was told that if I had no health problems I was to come to the assembly place the next day.

There were 23 people from our institute and a friend of mine from the Construction Institute. We were entrained and brought to Mariupol. I was enrolled in a special battalion of the 49th reserve rifle regiment. Guys with a secondary education or institute students were selected for that battalion, 1,200 people altogether. The battalion commander was a captain, and platoons were under the command of junior commanders, sergeants. Our training started. In the morning they woke us up and sent us for a run; they didn't even let us use the toilet. Then we washed ourselves, had breakfast and proceeded to combat training and line training. Our regiment commander hated us and we paid him back in his own coin. But he had more resources than we did and he punished us all the time. Extra duties came one after another.

On 1st October 1941 we were sent marching to a place over 100 kilometers away from Mariupol. Germans were approaching Mariupol and we were sent to dig trenches. We spent about a week there, and then we were ordered to come back to the camp. In Mariupol we were told that the next morning we were to leave, so we had to get ready: to take down our tents and to pack the equipment. After that we went, again on foot, but not to the front. We went northward, towards Donetsk. In the town of Sergo we stopped; we were quartered at a school. We spent a week there doing absolutely nothing.

Then we were formed up in ranks; those of us who had health problems were told to step out. They were taken somewhere; we didn't understand what it meant. We thought they would be sent home, but two days later they were formed up, given rifles and sent to the front. And we were sent eastward. At Likhaya station we were entrained and brought to Stalingrad. There they embarked us on a small steamer that took us up the Volga River, to Saratov. We disembarked on the left bank of the Volga and marched to the Volga-German Republic [see German ASSR] 32.

There we were taken on the staff of the 15th airborne brigade, the 4th parachute battalion. We were divided into platoons and our training began. We lived in the houses of the Volga Germans who had been evicted and deported to Siberia [see Forced deportation to Siberia] 33. We were quartered there in platoons. Germans had taken almost nothing with them: there were household utensils, furniture, and bed linen left in the houses; there were cows in the cattle- sheds. We slaughtered them and ate their meat; we even stored it up.

Time went by, and we still kept getting ready. Parachute training started, but there was only one parachute for the whole brigade. We were shown how to fold the parachute and then we started learning how to land after the jump. We jumped without the parachute from a height of five meters; we were explained that in that case our feet experienced the same push as during a parachute jump. We practiced every day, and time went by... It was late fall.

In late December 1941 we were put on troop-trains and brought to Moscow. We arrived in Moscow at night on 31st December. We were quartered in the Air- Force Academy on Leningradsky Avenue; we were given uniforms. And we started a totally different kind of training. Our brigade commander said that a good paratrooper must be able to cover a distance of 300 kilometers skiing. So we began training ourselves for ski marches. All of us had different training levels: I, for instance, had no idea of skiing at all. But we had to learn. We were woken up when it was still dark. For the first few days we left with our skis in the morning and came back in the evening. In the afternoon a field-kitchen came to feed us. Later we used to leave for a week; we spent nights in the wood, in the field - anywhere. We were fed two or three times a day.

The frost was bitter; in January the temperature was sometimes as low as -30°C [-22°F]. I would have never thought that I would be able to endure all that. True, we had warm clothing: wadded trousers and jackets, caps with earflaps and felt boots. But still it was cold to spend the night in the wood. We were allowed to break fir-tree branches and spread them on the snow. We used to make a fire and lie down around it, with our feet near the fire in the middle. One or two men stayed on duty to watch the fire, and then others took over from them.

When we came back we were made to wash the barracks, to clean the weapons; sometimes they took us to the movies or to an amateur concert. And then, at two or three in the morning, there came an alarm for instruction, and we had to go out, into the cold. They checked our clothing and footwear, made sure we had wrapped our feet in foot- bindings correctly, and off we went, again for a week. In April the snow began to melt and we had no more skiing.

Then we began to learn parachuting. We had already studied the parachute equipment; we knew how to fold a parachute. For jumping practice, we were given the TB-3 heavy bomber. We had to make our first jump on the ground. We were to take our seats in the plane, six people in each wing, and to jump from the plane that stood on the ground.

Our first real jump was scheduled for 6th April 1942. I was on the staff of the engineer/demolition combat platoon. We were the last to jump. We were put on board the plane; the weather was fine, with good visibility. We saw all the jumps made by the others. When the rifle company was jumping two of the riflemen had problems with their parachutes: their canopies were pulled out from the backpacks but didn't spread and couldn't hold the paratroopers. Both of them died.

Although one of them was the master sergeant who had enjoyed bullying the recruits, and the other was our former platoon commander Mamedov, the same commander who had not let us use the toilet in the morning. But all the same, when we saw their death we were not willing to get on the plane and jump ourselves. Though, it went all right, but for one thing: I lost my cap that I had forgotten to tie under my chin. I was not afraid during the jump; there was no time for fear. On the plane, I was watching the back of my mate; when the back disappeared it was my turn to jump. We had anchored parachutes. But of course, we had to pull the ring, in order to practice the skills. In this way we were trained until summer. And in summer we were sent to camps near Moscow. There

we also practiced parachuting.

In July 1942, we were formed in lines, ordered to hand in our paratrooper's equipment and sent to Moscow. By order of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, our 7th airborne corps was transformed into the 34th Guards Airborne Rifle Division. Our corps commander Gubarevich was appointed division commander. Naturally, the re-forming process started because the corps structure is different from that of the division. There were four battalions in the airborne brigade, while the rifle regiment had only three rifle battalions.

Men from one of the rifle battalions were to be distributed among the other sub-units. I was in the engineer/demolition combat platoon of the rifle battalion; together with my friends from Kharkov, I was sent to the 46th Guards separate communications company. This specialized company was to provide for the communication between the division commander and regiment commanders. Since I was not a radio operator and I had nowhere to study I became a telephone operator holding the rank of senior sergeant.

We were sent to reinforce the 28th Army of the Stalingrad Front where the Stalingrad Battle 34 was already under way. The south of the Stalingrad Front, the Lower Volga and Astrakhan, appeared to be defenseless. So our 34th Guards Rifle Division was thrown there. We set up defenses 14 kilometers from Astrakhan, from the Volga. This was the beginning of the Great Patriotic War for us. We saw the first wounded who were transported from the 107th regiment to the medical battalion in Astrakhan through our position. We fought and moved forward. We were armed with carbines. In winter of 1942-43 the Soviet army won an important victory at the Stalingrad Front. Without waiting for the total defeat of the German troops, the headquarters moved our division westwards. We had the order to aim for Rostov and Bataisk. The march across the Kalmyk steppe was very hard. All the wells were poisoned because, as they said, the Kalmyks 35 were helping the Germans. We had a very hard time with water, or, to be more precise, without water. There were lakes around but the lake water was salty and bitter. We were very thirsty and sometimes took a few sips of that water; after that we became even thirstier. There was no fighting during the march, but the lack of water seemed harder than any battle for us. We were hungry, too, because our rear units had been left behind and trucks couldn't bring us food in time. The main food we had was fish, fresh fish from the Volga, but for some reason it was boiled without salt and that is why it was next to uneatable.

I had to work hard on that march. We moved rather fast and we had to provide for the communication on the way. I used to lay the line but soon I got an order to recover it. I had to pack the telephone sets, to reel the cable and, in doing so, not to lag behind the company. True, at that time we didn't have line breaks: we had no fights and that is why there was no broken cable. Actually, to be a telephone operator is one of the toughest jobs at the front. If the enemy opens fire, infantry lies down and nobody can raise these men. When a man is in a trench he is relatively safe and it is very hard to make him leave his trench and run under the blanketing machine-gun fire, or bombing or snipers' bullets. No one wants to die.

Sometimes, in order to raise one infantryman, two or three people with pistols used to stand over him; usually they were the company commander and the political officer 36. Though both the infantryman and those who were trying to make him stand up knew that they were not going to shoot at him; it was just a way of putting pressure on him. But if they managed to raise three or

four men who ran ahead shouting 'Hurrah!' then the whole platoon followed them and there was no need to urge on each man individually. It was such a psychological phenomenon.

But as for signalmen, telephone operators, nobody stood over us threatening with pistols. They just told us, 'Communication!' and I had to take the end of the broken cable and run along the cable to find the breakdown and to fix it. That could happen anytime: during the lull or in the heat of the fight, in the sunshine or in the dark; communication had to be provided for. As a rule, breakdowns happened during the fight: the cable could be cut by a bullet or a splinter. Nobody considered us heroes; they seldom remembered about telephone operators when it came to awarding. We were just doing our work, so why award us?

We reached Bataisk, a city on the Don River, opposite Rostov. It is a big union station. Special trains with food that Hitler had sent to Stalingrad got stuck in Bataisk. They came as far as Bataisk and were stopped there. I was delayed because I had to reel the communications cable and came to Bataisk later than others. I found my comrades who had already searched the food carriages and were cooking a meal on the fire. Near Bataisk our platoon commander was wounded and sent to hospital. I learnt that the new commander had been waiting for me: he wanted me to go to the communications company at once to receive the equipment. They had found the German telephone equipment in the same carriages: cable and telephone sets.

We valued highly the German cable. Our cable was on big reels that we had to unreel while holding them in our hands. The German cable was on small drums to be carried in special mounts on one's back. They were not so heavy and the mounts made it easier to unreel and reel the cable. I was given a two-wheeled cart with a horse; the coachman was Ivan Kozlov, a friend of mine. We loaded everything we received at the company and started back. The cable mount must have slipped out of the cart on the way, because we came without it. The platoon commander went for me swearing and told me to go and look for the mount or he would shoot me. I came to the company again but there were no more mounts. I started back thinking, 'Let him shoot me.' But when I returned I discovered that the platoon had gone. While I was walking there and back the platoon rose and headed for Rostov. That meant I had to go there too.

I came to the Don River; Rostov was on the other bank. I started looking for a crossing and saw a line of soldiers lying on the bank. I asked them where they were from; they turned out to be from the 248th division. There was a fight in Rostov, our troops were trying to capture the city. The soldiers persuaded me to stay with them and to find my platoon when the battle was over. During the fight in the city it was impossible to find anybody: in the field or in the steppe one could see clearly where the Germans were and where the Russians were. But in a city, fighting took place in the streets, in the houses and it was impossible to tell who was where.

Together with that division, I crossed the ice of the frozen Don and participated in the fight for the city. At night, after the action, we came into an empty house, had dinner and went to bed. Germans had been driven out of the city and we could rest quietly. But in the morning we were woken up by shooting. We found out that a fight was going on not far from us. A wounded soldier was sitting on the stairs of our house. I looked out and saw a German near a low stone fence. I had no weapon with me; I had left it in the room. I took a carbine from the wounded soldier's hands, took aim and shot. The German fell down; I don't know whether I had killed him or not. I went out into the street holding the carbine in my hands but the fight was already far.

I came back to the house, returned the carbine to the wounded man and went to the military town major to find out where my division was at the moment. The town major told me to go with the motion picture cameramen, to do what they would tell me and after that he would let me know where my division was. The cameramen took me to the Operetta Theater, the tallest building in Rostov. I was supposed to mount a red flag on the roof, for the cameramen to film this episode. I crawled out onto the roof and somehow mounted the flag there.

The cameramen filmed it and then took me to the regional bank where the Germans had organized a labor registry office. I was to knock the German sign down with a machine carbine and to fix our flag instead of it. This was how I appeared in the news-reel, though I have never seen these shots. Only after that the film crew brought me to the town major and he told me where my division was located. I managed to find my platoon. The next day the rest of the Germans were dislodged from Rostov; we were sent from the front to be re-formed and to rest.

When we were still in Kalmykia, the natives gave us four camels. They had no horses and they gave us camels for load transportation. On the way three of the camels were killed; we had only one left. We even brought it to Rostov. The camel was a great help to us: it was able to carry any amount of load, it carried all the cables. True, it recognized only one of the signalmen as its cameleer, but it obeyed him absolutely. In August 1943, after the re-formation, we were supposed to go to Ukraine by troop trains.

The camel didn't like this idea and wouldn't get on the train at any price. We managed to bring it close to the carriage, but it jibbed and started spitting. There was a suggestion to slaughter the camel but our master sergeant refused flatly. Indeed, it was an unfailing vehicle, besides it didn't need gas and found food itself. We opened both doors of the carriage, put ropes round the camel, and all the men in our platoon pulled the camel in together. We somehow managed to get him on the train. Later when we traveled by trains the camel got accustomed to such means of transportation and took it easy.

In Zaporozhie we disembarked and headed for Tiraspol. We had to fight our way. I remember a very hard battle for the town of Apostolov? in southern Ukraine. We, telephone operators, were following the vanguard under the downpour and under the German fire. We were un-reeling the cable and laying the communication line. When we finished our work and made sure the line was in order we went back to the regiment position to dry ourselves a little. We came to a cave, lighted the stove to warm and began drying ourselves.

Suddenly there came an alarm ring which meant the cable was cut somewhere. By that time I was the communications chief. How could I send anyone out if my people were tired and cold? I had to go myself. I went out, took the cable end in my hand and went to look for the cut. Following the cable, I reached a spring across which we had laid the line, and crossed it. It was night time and it was dark. The other bank was steep. How was it possible to find the other end of the cable in the liquid dirt, under the cloudburst? And I couldn't throw the end I had in my hand because I was afraid to lose it. I rolled up my overcoat sleeves and spent a lot of time there searching in the dirt for the other end. At last I found it and joined both ends. But when I returned to our position we soon got the order to remove the line.

I also remember another case, it happened not far from Tiraspol. We laid the line across the bridge. During the fight the cable was cut somewhere by a splinter. I went to restore the line. I found the

break was right on the bridge. Then I had to strip the wire in order to join the ends. We had the most reliable tool for stripping the wire: our own teeth. Well, I started skinning the wire standing on the bridge. Our telephone sets were of the induction type in those days: to induce the current in the line one had to spin its handle.

Someone in the headquarters spun the handle right at the moment when I was holding the wire in my teeth. The electric discharge from the inductor was so strong that I lost consciousness and fell from the bridge into the water. Fortunately, it wasn't deep there, and I neither hurt myself nor drowned. I came to myself, got out of the water and continued my work.

During the wartime, every soldier had to take care of his everyday amenities himself. Sometimes, when we were sent away from the front for rest or re-formation, we were given an opportunity to go to the bath, to undergo anti-lice treatment, to get clean underwear. But during the rest of the time every soldier had to take care of himself as well as he could.

Now and then they brought us soap, but there were times when we could not even wash ourselves. It was easier in winter: we washed ourselves with snow. But in summer we didn't always have enough water even to drink; one could only dream of a washing opportunity. All of us, without exception, were lice- ridden. We had nowhere to wash our clothes, so we 'fried' them: we made a fire, took off our clothes and held them over the fire to burn out the lice that lived in the seams.

Smokers suffered worst of all. When it was possible, we were brought makhorka [poor tobacco], but that seldom happened. A confirmed smoker suffers more from the absence of tobacco than from hunger. Sometimes we managed to get some makhorka or home-made tobacco in villages. When there was no tobacco at all people used to smoke even dry foliage or grass.

I had a captured pistol produced in Czechoslovakia; it was very small, not larger than my hand. When our division was leaving Astrakhan we met another division coming from the Caucasus. For some reason, they were provided for better than us: they had tobacco; they had vodka in small bottles, while we had run even out of salt by that time. So we decided that I would go to that division and offer them my pistol in exchange for something. Frankly speaking, I'm still sorry about that pistol, though I wouldn't have been able to keep it after the war because the SMERSH 37 people took away all the captured weapons.

was given three packages of tobacco and six 100- gram bottles of vodka for my pistol. Later people from other detachments used to come to us and ask for some salt or for tobacco to make a self-made cigarette. This was how we provided for our needs. We understood that the command had no time for such everyday routine: it was wartime. We had nobody to demand from. The commanders may have had all this but we understood that they wouldn't share it with us.

Once, during battles in Ukraine, we stopped near a big grain state farm. We hadn't received food supplies for a few days and we had to go and look for food ourselves. Not far from us there was a burnt oil-mill. Next to it we saw huge heaps of sunflower seeds. The upper layer of seeds was burnt in the fire, but it was possible to find good seeds underneath if we dug in the heap. We found a German helmet in the field, tore out its inside and used it to fry the seeds on the fire. We were gnawing the seeds for days and used to tie the telephone receiver to the head to free our hands.

In 1943, at the front, I joined the Party. I cannot say I dreamt of becoming a party member, but the party leader of the regiment came up to me and said that, according to his opinion, I was ready to join the party. Of course I couldn't tell him that I didn't want to: I would have immediately drawn the attention of the SMERSH people. They were in every unit. Perhaps, in theory they were supposed to catch German spies, but, evidently, there weren't enough spies for everybody.

That is why they undertook the same functions that were typical of the NKVD 37 in the time of peace, that is, to discover people who were displeased with something. They had their informers everywhere. They tried to recruit me, too. A SMERSH officer summoned me and invited me to help him: to inform him of all the talks in the regiment. I explained that I seldom was in the regiment and very rarely met with people; I was in charge of the communication and our communications company worked separately from the others. Perhaps, because of that he lost interest in me.

I was awarded twice for taking part in action. After the fights near Rostov I got a Medal for Military Merits 38, and after the action at Nikopol I got a Medal for Valor 39.

At the beginning of 1944 we maintained defense near Tiraspol. We had just provided communication for the commander's cave. I was testing the line from the telephone set in the cave while my subordinates were fixing the cable on the ground. At that moment they brought a captive German to the commander, and the regiment commander together with the reconnaissance chief started interrogating him. There was no interpreter and they had to use a conversation book. Of course it was painstaking. I listened to the interrogation for some time and then offered my help: I had known German since my childhood when my mother made me study it with the teacher. And I started interpreting for them. When the interrogation was over and the captive was taken away the commander jumped on me: why had I not told him that I was able to interpret? He had me transferred to the headquarters and made interpreter of the regiment headquarters.

It often happened that after an interrogation, captives were shot. Most officers treated them like their mortal enemies and hated them. But that wasn't the only reason. If a captive was left alive, he was to be guarded. At the front where each man counted, a commander had to find a guard on duty who would take care of the captive till it became possible to get him to the assembly place. That is why they usually shot captives after the interrogation just to avoid extra trouble.

For some reason, I didn't hate Germans. I understood that very few of them had gone to the front because of their convictions; the majority just couldn't disobey their orders: a soldier must obey his commander. Once I saved a captive's life. When we finished interrogating him I told the headquarters' chief that I would keep an eye on the captive and if he ran away then let them shoot me. I told the German that I had staked my life on him.
And the German, until he was sent to the assembly point, kept following me everywhere and tried to be in my sight all the time. He understood everything and was grateful.

Once I took a captive. My regimental comrade and I were going to the headquarters through the village where the battle had just finished. Suddenly I heard a bullet whistling right near my ear. We thought it was a sniper. We ran into the shed and there stumbled upon a German. Because of the surprise, both he and we were taken aback. Then we ordered him, 'Hande hoch!,' and he rose his hands up. We decided to take him to the headquarters. Actually, we were supposed to get awards for the captive, but we didn't think about that at the moment: we just couldn't leave him there, otherwise he would have shot at our soldiers.

While escorting him we passed by a group of servicemen standing on the porch of a house. They shouted, 'Get him here!' and took the captive from us. In this way we were left without awards. In spite of all the things commissars told us, in spite of everything we read in the papers, I didn't feel hostile towards them. There was just one case when I felt animosity: when a German aircraft was brought down and the pilot started firing back. Why did he shoot and kill instead of giving himself up? I felt animosity towards him, but that was the only such case.

I didn't feel anti-Semitism during the war. Though my family name is typically Jewish I never experienced any anti-Semitic attacks. Probably, in extreme situations minor issues hide behind the scenes. Nobody was interested to know the ethnic background of one's comrades. There were other criteria during the war, I mean just human criteria.

I had enough work while we interrogated captives. But when we liberated Tiraspol my knowledge of German wasn't needed. We were going through Romania and I didn't understand Romanian. The Romanians were peaceful towards us. My job was to negotiate with the headman in each village about providing horses for us. I spoke with them using a conversation book and we managed to understand each other somehow.

We reached Hungary. Our officers enjoyed the Hungarian wines. Since I drank next to nothing, I had to be on duty instead of everybody else. Then, quite unexpectedly, I got a new position. Two Hungarian battalions yielded themselves prisoners to us. They laid down arms saying they didn't want to fight any more. Two battalions: that's a lot of people. It was not quite clear what should be done with them, and I was appointed chief of the POW assembly point. I had to stay in that town while our division went further; I kept in touch with them only by phone. I had to receive the prisoners, to collect their weapons and sharp things, to take their money, to provide for guarding them.

The captive Hungarians were hard to deal with. They kept demanding wine and girls, as if they had been on a vacation and not in captivity. I was given guards; I collected the captives' arms and two sacks of Hungarian money. And then the division's reconnaissance company came, I handed over the prisoners and all the stuff and went to the division headquarters. There a telegram was waiting for me, with the order to the division commander to send me to Moscow to study at the Army Institute of Foreign Languages.

Our Joint Staff was getting ready to occupy the German and Austrian territories, and, evidently, there was a lack of interpreters. So everybody who knew the language at least to some extent was sent to be trained to Moscow. I had to go through Hungary and Romania. I had no money because I had handed in everything. Officers collected some money for me; I received the travel papers at the headquarters and set off for Moscow. It was the middle of December 1944. In Hungary there still were fruits on the trees while in Moscow there was a severe winter. I was wearing my summer uniform and field cap and was freezing. Besides, right at the train station I was detained by the military patrol who asked me why I was violating the order about changing into the winter uniform. I explained what the matter was and they let me go.

I was placed at the institute dorm; there were many other guys like me. We had to pass three exams, though it was a mere formality. I got an 'excellent' for the first exam; there were a few days left before the second one. We could freely move around the city and I often found myself at the commandant's office: they picked on me because of my summer uniform. But who could have

given me a winter one? At last I was fed up with it and decided to return to the front: there I would be a respected person and not an order violator. I decided to fail the examinations in order to get back to the front. For my second exam I got a 'satisfactory' and I didn't come to take the third one at all. By that time I knew that I didn't want to study to become an interpreter and then sit in the commandant's office. But I made a mistake because they enrolled me all the same, but for the six-month courses instead four months. I studied for six months and got the rank of a junior lieutenant of administrative service, a German language interpreter.

When I was studying at the courses we were invited to the New Year's party at the Moscow Textile Institute. I decided to go. At the party I met with my former fellow students from the Kharkov Textile Institute. I learnt that when the Kharkov Institute had been evacuated they were invited to finish their studies in Moscow. We were happy to see each other.

My friends started persuading me to resume my studies at the institute: I had been taken to the army after my fourth year, so I would have to study just for one more year. I made up my mind to enter the correspondence department of the Institute after the courses. The war would be over some day and I had to think about a peaceful profession.

When I was leaving my regiment for the courses the regiment cryptographer asked me to deliver a letter to his sister in Moscow. Her husband and our cryptographer had been together at the beginning of the war, in the 7th airborne corps. When their corps was defeated, the paratroopers were distributed among different units including our division.

When I came to their place in Moscow the sister's husband, who was a lieutenant-general, was at home, too. They asked me different questions, offered me tea and when I was leaving the general told me to study and to serve and, if I ever needed help, not to hesitate to ask him.

- **Post-war**

I was still studying at the courses when the war was over. On 9th May 1945, we learnt from the radio about the complete and unconditional surrender of Germany. Those who had studied at the four-month courses were sent to the front and became interpreters at the headquarters in Germany and Austria. But for us the war was over and we got our appointments within the USSR. In June of 1945 I finished the courses with honors and was supposed to go to the Siberian Military District. I knew that in Siberia camps for captive SS- men were being created, while in the central part of Russia there were camps for captive German soldiers. Of course I didn't want to go to Siberia, so I had to ask the lieutenant-general for help. The next day I received a notice about changes in the order: I was to serve at the Moscow Military District. Certainly, it wasn't Germany or Austria, yet it wasn't Siberia.

I was sent to work as an interpreter at a captives' camp in Moscow. There were over 1000 German soldiers. The camp was called a 'separate POW working battalion'; officially it belonged to the Administration of Military Construction Works. There was an old unfinished factory near Moscow; actually, there were only walls and a chimney. The task was to prepare the site for building a factory for fixing military automobiles. The guarded Germans were led there in the morning and worked there all day long. The camp had a guards platoon, about 40 men strong. We had one civilian there: it was a representative of the Military Construction Administration; he was in charge

of the technical issues, mainly the earthwork. We started building a branch road. The engineer brought the drawings and explained what and how it should be done. The next day a captive German came up to me and said he had another idea of building the road; then he drew a section of the roadway. He said, 'It will be an eternal road.' I tried to explain to him that we probably did not need an eternal road since the chief told us to build in a different way. By the German's perplexed face I understood that our chief was not a great expert. I informed him of the captive's proposal and got refused.

But that was not the worst. When the captives switched over to a new kind of work they also needed new tools. But the tools weren't brought in time and the workers stayed idle for some time. According to the order of the camp's chief, the prisoners' ration depended on their day-work: if a man did 50 percent of his day-work he was to get 50 percent of his daily ration. Earthwork is hard in general, it is difficult to reach the output rate, and here the people were dependent on the availability of the tools. The Germans were getting less and less food which caused dystrophy. People were literally swelling with hunger: the swellings were so bad that their skin just burst. Naturally, the weakened dystrophics were unable to fulfill their day-work and their rations were cut down again. The camp chief whom I informed of the situation said he had the order and he was going to obey the order and not to pity the Germans. I had to communicate with the Germans and they always complained of hunger. I was concerned about them and tried to get at least some food for them. I tried to explain that there was famine in the USSR; I didn't consider right what was going on but I wanted to give them some moral support. The Germans began dying of starvation. They were saved only thanks to the NKVD inspection.

I witnessed their conversation with the camp chief Tuzhilov. When he mentioned the order of the Defense Ministry, the inspectors started using such bad language that even I who had heard a lot at the front was surprised. It appeared that there was an order by the NKVD, different from that of the Defense Ministry, according to which POWs were supposed to get a complete set of food products, including even fruit and cigarettes. The inspectors obliged Tuzhilov to abide by that order under the fear of shooting. From that day on, the prisoners' life drastically changed. I even asked them for a cigarette sometimes. It is just a pity it happened too late, when some of the prisoners had already died. Germans are orderly people; they buried their dead beyond the camp area and put name boards above their graves. Later those name boards disappeared somewhere.

During the war I didn't know where my relatives were. When they evacuated they didn't know themselves where they were going. After traveling across the country they settled down in Kirgizia. When Volchansk was liberated I wrote a letter to my former history teacher who had accused me of Trotskyism. After the liberation of Volchansk he became the Secretary of the party regional organization. I asked him to let me know what had happened to my family, but he never replied. But I learnt about it from the letter sent to me by our neighbor, the Ukrainian woman; she gave me their address. After the war my parents and my sister came home. Our house was occupied by the regional judge, but when my parents came back he left the house at once. My sister resumed her studies at the Library Institute in Kharkov. My parents were left alone.

In September 1946 I became a 5th-year student of the correspondence department of the Moscow Textile Institute. They sent me teaching materials by mail, but to pass the exams I had to come to Moscow. In spring I started writing my senior thesis, and I had to come to the institute once a week for consultations with my thesis supervisor. Every time I had to ask Major Tuzhilov for permission to

leave. Several times he didn't let me go explaining he couldn't do without an interpreter. When they reprimanded me at the Institute I explained my situation, and they promised to help me.

The rector wrote a letter to the personnel department of the Moscow Military District saying that the major was violating the decree of the Council of Ministers permitting students to leave for their studies. I was called to the personnel department; the department head asked me if I wanted to study. I had just two months left before defending my thesis. He left and soon came back with a letter saying, 'To the commander of the POW battalion. Send Lev Zinovievich Galper to the personnel department of the Moscow Military District for demobilization.' Demobilization took me unawares. It was a hard and hungry period, but, while in service, I got my money allowance and food ration. And when I was demobilized it was all finished. Besides, I had already been married and my wife was expecting a child. But I had no way back, and that was the end of my military career.

- **Married life**

I met my wife thanks to my fellow officer, the party leader of our battalion, Mikhail Bogomolsky. Out of the five guard officers there were two more Jews besides myself: Bogomolsky and Yuri Seriy. We were friends; Seriy and I even shared the room we rented in a village not far from the battalion. Bogomolsky lived in Lyublino, a Moscow suburb, together with his parents. One day he invited me and Seriy to his place where I met Vera Shtrom who, having graduated from the Moscow Medical Insitute, worked as a pediatrician at a Lyublino polyclinic, according to her [mandatory] job assignment 41.

Vera was born in 1923. I didn't know her parents: her mother had died before the war and her father died at the front. We started dating and soon got married. We had a very modest wedding: we got registered at the registry office, and in the evening we made a dinner to celebrate the event with our relatives and friends. My parents and my sister and our closest friends came to the wedding.

After demobilization, I found myself in a very tough situation. I hadn't got a diploma yet, so I couldn't find a job. The rector of our institute, Goldberg, a Jew and a very good man, learnt about my problems and offered me a job as an administrative rector assistant. Many students who studied by correspondence used to come to Moscow to take exams. They needed someone to provide them with lodging and with everything necessary.

That was my job. Besides, I was in charge of providing supplies for the staff: it was a hard time, the card system 42 still existed, I had to find the food and other things they needed. Having defended my diploma, I went to work to the Moscow cloth-mill as a foreman assistant. Frankly speaking, my idea of an engineer's job had been different. I wore dirty working clothes and dealt with adjustment and fixing of spinning machines. I worked like that for a year. I had no choice: I had to work and to provide for my family. In fall 1946 my son Mikhail was born.

I worked as a foreman assistant for a year. Then they summoned me to the managerial department and told me they had no right to leave me in the worker's position and offered me a post of the repairs-and-mechanics department head. Actually, my new job was no different from the previous one: I continued fixing the equipment myself. I didn't feel any anti- Semitism: workers treated me

as their equal. I was given a room in a communal apartment 43 and we moved to live there. In 1952 my second son, Vladimir, was born.

I worked at the mill for five years; then I was transferred to the weaving mill outside of Moscow. I was appointed head of the repairs-and-mechanics department and later I became the production manager. We lived in Moscow and it was very hard to get to my work by a suburban train every day. I was given a room at a dormitory near the mill but my wife refused point-blank to leave Moscow. The mill where I worked as head of the repairs-and- mechanics department wasn't big. It produced low-quality blankets that were purchased for prisons and knitted kerchiefs made of goat down.

Those kerchiefs caused me some problems. Goat down is expensive; workers constantly stole that yarn. Naturally, there was some waste in the yarn production, but they used to steal the ready yarn. By the end of the shift, right near the mill there gathered people who wanted to buy the yarn from the workers. The guards weren't interested in catching the thieves because they paid the guards. That is why the guards searched the workers only conventionally.

I decided to stop the theft. I found out who was going to take the yarn out in the evening and demanded that the guard head searched those people. The thieves were caught and fired. But their friends who still worked at the mill started being ugly with me; they wrote anonymous letters against me. Inspections came one after another to check my job. Though, each inspection admitted that I worked well, all that was annoying and interfering. I quit working at the mill and got a job at the design department of the Heavy and Light Engineering Trust. They already knew me there, so I didn't have any problems in finding a job.

I didn't feel any anti-Semitism at my new place of work either. Though, I realized that anti-Semitism in the USSR had become a usual thing. It all started in 1948, with the anti-cosmopolitan trials [see campaign against cosmopolitans] 44. These proceedings were similar to the pre-war 'enemy of the people' trials, but for one thing: all the accused were Jewish. The accusations were the same: anti-Soviet activities, espionage in favor of any capitalist country and other absurdities.

Some people were arrested or exiled to the Gulag 45, others were killed like Mikhoels 46 was killed in a simulated automobile crash. Certainly, I didn't believe those people were guilty; all those cases aroused my protest. Maybe it was a sense of kinship... I don't know how to explain it. In my childhood there was a simple exclamation, 'Ours are being beaten!' All that was not just unpleasant. I and other Jews, my friends with whom I discussed it, felt there was a danger. They start with cosmopolitans and then they will reach for Galper and his kind. We realized it very clearly.

When the Doctors' Plot 47 started in January 1953 I understood that it was just another pre-planned step before the reprisals against all Jews. I think that only Stalin's death saved us from such reprisals. People wept when he died, but for me his death wasn't grief. Though, I was unaware of the real scale of his crimes. At that time only official information was available for me: newspapers, radio. I took it critically, sifted; the former absolute faith had gone.

When Khrushchev 48 disclosed the truth about Stalin's personality cult at the Twentieth Party Congress 49 I was happy to see the triumph of the truth. I know that it is customary today to criticize Khrushchev, but I believe that his speech at the 20th congress was a deed of greatest

courage and wisdom. Though, I wasn't among the enthusiasts who expected a significant life improvement after that. But I'm grateful to Khrushchev for the truth.

In 1948 the state of Israel was founded; it was a great joy for me. I was proud that at last Jews had their own state, after thousands of years of wandering in strange and often hostile countries. And when Israel confidently defeated the Arab states, first in the Six-Day-War 50 and then in the Yom Kippur War 51, I admired the fact that Jews were able not only to create but also to defend their creations with weapons. It was a blow on the anti-Semites who said that Jews were unable to fight, that during World War II all of them had been evacuated instead of fighting in the army.

In 1960 my wife and I were divorced. Our sons, according to the Soviet laws, stayed with their mother, but I always took part in their life and met with them. But I lived alone. I met my second wife, Nina, quite by chance. I was sent on a business trip to Leningrad where, while I was waiting to be checked in at a hotel, I got to talk with two women who were from Moscow, like me, and also on a business trip in Leningrad. One of them was Nina Buyanova, my future wife. We didn't date in Leningrad; each of us was busy with his/her own work.

It happened so that I had to prolong my business trip. I ran out of money, and my company couldn't send me more money in due time. Nina offered to lend me money; we agreed to meet in Moscow for me to return the debt. On the day of our Moscow appointment I was to go to the reunion with my former fellow students. I was reluctant to go there alone, so I persuaded Nina to come with me. Then we began dating and soon got married.

Nina is Russian; she was born in Moscow in 1935. The life of her parent's family was hard, so after finishing school she had to start working. Nina got a job at the product-quality inspection of the Moscow optical-and- mechanical factory and worked there until her retirement. Before our marriage, I introduced Nina to my parents who liked her very much. We registered our marriage at the registry office; everything was very modest. I had left my apartment to my former wife and my children, and Nina had a room in a communal apartment where we started our family life.

In 1966 our only daughter Inna was born. My sons' attitude to Nina was very warm; she became their friend. They often came to see us and shared many of their secrets with her and not with me.

My elder son Mikhail, after finishing school, studied at the electrical communications faculty of the Moscow Electro-Technical Institute for Communications. After graduation he got a job at a company that dealt with security systems for banks and savings banks. Unfortunately, Mikhail got very sick with diabetes and spent more time in hospitals than at home. That is why he never had his own family and lived together with his mother. He died relatively young, in 1996.

My younger son Vladimir, after finishing school, entered the Moscow Road- Transport Institute. When in the 1970s mass Jewish emigration to Israel began Vladimir quit his studies after the fourth year and left for Israel. Later he moved to the United States, to San Francisco where he lives now with his family. Vladimir took up photography and is quite successful in this business. He married an emigre from the USSR, they have two daughters. Emily was born in 1993 and Eva was born in 2001. I keep in touch with him: we often exchange letters and talk over the phone. In summer Vladimir and his family come here to see us. My son is satisfied with his life and I'm glad things turned out well for him.

My younger sister Berta, after graduating from the Library Institute, couldn't find a job. My father's elder brother, Beniamin, who lived in Dnepropetrovsk, invited Berta to come and stay with him. He helped her to find a job at a library. Berta lived with him. In Dnepropetrovsk she met Anatoly Lyubchich, a Jew, and married him. It was Anatoly's second marriage; his children of the first marriage lived with his former wife. In 1948 Berta gave birth to her daughter Elena. When Elena finished school she entered the Dnepropetrovsk Medical Institute and after graduation worked as a pediatrician.

In 1970 my father got very ill. Berta came to Volchansk to take care of him. Father died in the same year. He was buried in the Volchansk Jewish cemetery. The funeral was common because at that time there was neither a rabbi, nor a synagogue in Volchansk. My mother was left alone in Volchansk. Berta stayed with her for some time, but then she had to return to Dnepropetrovsk. She sold the parents' house, and mother came to live with me. She lived with us till her death in 1978. We buried our mother in the Jewish plot of a Moscow cemetery. [Editor's note: In the USSR city cemeteries were territorially divided into sectors. Usually all city cemeteries have common land plots, plots for burying children, sectors for burying the titled militaries, a Jewish sector, land plots for the political leaders, etc. People were usually buried in accordance with the will of the relatives of the deceased or with the testament].

In the 1970s my sister and her family also left for Israel. They settled down in the town of Shlomi, on the border to Lebanon. Berta didn't work in Israel. She began suffering from a brain disease and was unable to work any longer. Elena couldn't work as a doctor and went to live in an agricultural kibbutz not far from Shlomi. There is a laboratory where they grow seedlings of date-palms. My niece likes this job. In Israel she married an emigre from the USSR and gave birth to her daughter Inna.

I didn't think about emigration. My wife is Russian and she didn't want to leave. And I would have never left alone, without my family. I had no grounds for emigration: I had a well-paid job; I didn't experience any oppression, besides I wasn't young. I understood quite well those who were leaving, but I wasn't going to leave myself.

We lived a life typical of many Soviet people. My wife and I worked, our daughter studied at school. At home we celebrated Soviet holidays: 1st May, 7th November [October Revolution Day] 52, Soviet Army Day 53, and Victory Day 54. On Victory Day we all used to go to the Eternal Flame and lay flowers at the Grave of the Unknown Soldier. In the evening we had guests. We also celebrated birthdays of all the family members. Neither my wife, nor I was religious.

My daughter studied well at school. She was a young Octobrist, a pioneer, a Komsomol member - like everybody else. After finishing school she entered the economics faculty of the Moscow Institute for Economics and Management. After graduation she worked as an accountant at a jewelry store for some time and then got a job at a publishing house. Now she is the editor-in- chief of the publishing house. Inna got married and took her husband's name. Her name in marriage is Yegorova. She has two daughters: Svetlana, born in 1986, and Yevgeniya, born in 1988. Inna divorced her husband and now she and her daughters live with us. Svetlana is finishing school this year and will continue her studies after school. Yevgeniya is still in high school.

In the 1970s I went to work at the Research Institute for Light and Food Industries. I was commissioned to develop a new direction in economy planning based on a completely automated

planning system. Together with my chief, we wrote a book on the economy and planning in the confectionary industry. The book was a success with professionals; a couple of years later it was republished. A few more years passed and they suggested that I should write a dissertation on the basis of this book [see Soviet/Russian doctorate degrees] 55. I combined the work on my thesis with my main job. But I never defended it.

A scientific conflict occurred at my work. There was nothing personal, just a difference of opinions with the authorities. I was in charge of developing a system of standards: standards themselves, types of resources, the list of parameters and so on. When I was defending my project in the academic council of the institute, it was criticized. It is only natural, but most of the critical comments were groundless, people just didn't have a good understanding of the matter. The academic council stated that my work was unfinished and should be completed; it was natural, too. But when the institute director demanded that I should take into account all the comments, including the wrong ones, I started arguing with him.

When I saw that he wasn't going to agree with me I decided to retire. I was already old enough and had the right to retire. Though the director didn't want to let me go, I got my way. I spent a couple of months at home and felt bored. Then I was invited to work at the Oil Research Institute: they needed an expert in standards used in their industry. I worked there for several years till I felt it became hard for me to work.
In 1986 I finally retired.

- **Perestroika**

When in the late 1980s Mikhail Gorbachev 56 started perestroika 57 in the USSR, a new party course, I was delighted at first. At the beginning the perestroika spirit was really very evident. Freedom of the press and freedom of speech emerged. The Iron Curtain 58 fell; we got an opportunity to meet with our friends and relatives from abroad, to correspond with them, to visit other countries without fear of the KGB 59 that used to cut short any contacts of the Soviet citizens with foreigners before perestroika. All this was new and very enjoyable.

At the beginning of perestroika I went to Israel to see my sister. She was in very bad shape at that time, seldom regained her consciousness and couldn't recognize anybody. But even in such a poor condition she lived a few more years and passed away in 2003.

I saw Israel with my own eyes. I admire the people of Israel who managed to create a wonderful country within a relatively short period of time. It is a country where everything is at the service of its people. Everything in Israel is made properly. I saw clean towns and settlements all buried in flowers, I saw marvelous roads, I saw happy people. I admired their attitude towards the army: for Israelis, the army service is not a burdensome necessity, like here, where people try to avoid it by all means, but a point of honor for every Israeli citizen. Indeed, the army of Israel deserves admiration: the small country surrounded with hostile Arab states on all sides, is able to defend itself.

My niece and her husband drove me around the country and showed me places of interest. Everything was exciting. Elena and her husband who works at a factory are satisfied with their life and confident of their future. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same about Russia and its citizens.

And I am indignant over the Russian policy regarding Israel. How can we sell weapons to the Arab countries? Isn't it clear how they are going to use them?

But then perestroika slowed down; and eventually all that turned into empty words and promises. And later it resulted in the disintegration of the USSR [1991]. I thought and I still think so now that it was a crime against Russia and the former constituent republics. Even now we are still suffering from the aftermath of the USSR's disintegration. Yes, there was Stalin in the USSR, and there were crimes of the Stalinist regime. But there also were a lot of good things. People were able to live on their salaries and on their pensions; there were firm social guarantees.

While now we are struggling to approach at least a little the life standards of the USSR. There was order, while now we live under the rule of lawlessness. I'm not speaking about myself: I am a war veteran and I get a good pension as compared to other people's pensions, I enjoy certain benefits. But the majority of old-age pensioners have just a scanty pension that is not enough even to subsist.

Many people are envious of Jews because we can leave this country and we are supported by numerous Jewish charity organizations. They really take good care of the old. I am a member of the Moscow Council of the Jewish War Veterans 60. True, I cannot take an active part in its work now; those who are younger work there. But when I feel well enough I always come to the meetings. Now our organization is getting ready to celebrate 60 years of the victory in the Great Patriotic War. They are going to arrange a big holiday for us, war veterans.

My family and I will go there without fail. I have not returned to the Jewish religion and traditions. Probably, I was a Communist Party member too long and now it's too late to change my convictions. But I'm happy to see the young people come to their roots and study the history and traditions of their nation.

- **Glossary:**

1 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.

2 Guild I
In tsarist Russia merchants belonged to Guild I, II or III. Merchants of Guild I were allowed to trade with foreign merchants, while the others were allowed to trade only within Russia.

3 Jewish Pale of Settlement

Certain provinces in the Russian Empire were designated for permanent Jewish residence and the Jewish population was only allowed to live in these areas. The Pale was first established by a decree by Catherine II in 1791. The regulation was in force until the Russian Revolution of 1917, although the limits of the Pale were modified several times. The Pale stretched from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, and 94% of the total Jewish population of Russia, almost 5 million people, lived there. The overwhelming majority of the Jews lived in the towns and shtetls of the Pale. Certain privileged groups of Jews, such as certain merchants, university graduates and craftsmen working in certain branches, were granted to live outside the borders of the Pale of Settlement permanently.

4 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.

5 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.

6 Engels, Friedrich (1820-1895)

Philosopher and public figure, one of the founders of Marxism and communism.

7 Luxemburg, Rosa (1871-1919)

German revolutionary and one of the founders of the Polish Socialist Party (1892). She moved to Germany in 1898 and was a leader in the German Social Democratic Party. She participated in the Revolution of 1905 in Russian Poland and was active in the Second International. She was one of the founders of the German Communist Party and she also edited its organ, Rote Fahne. Critical of

Lenin in his triumph, she foresaw his dictatorship over the proletariat becoming permanent. She was murdered in prison in Berlin.

8 Dzerzhinsky, Felix (1876-1926)

Polish communist and head of the Soviet secret police. After the Revolution of 1917 he was appointed by Lenin to organize a force to combat internal political threats, and he set up the Cheka, the Bolshevik secret police. Lenin gave the organization huge powers to combat the opposition during the Russian Civil War. At the end of the Civil War, the Cheka was changed into the GPU (State Political Directorate) a section of the NKVD, but this did not diminish Dzerzhinsky's power: from 1921-24 he was Minister of Interior, head of the Cheka and later the KGB, Minister for Communications and head of the Russian Council of National Economy.

9 Great Terror (1934-1938)

During the Great Terror, or Great Purges, which included the notorious show trials of Stalin's former Bolshevik opponents in 1936-1938 and reached its peak in 1937 and 1938, millions of innocent Soviet citizens were sent off to labor camps or killed in prison. The major targets of the Great Terror were communists. Over half of the people who were arrested were members of the party at the time of their arrest. The armed forces, the Communist Party, and the government in general were purged of all allegedly dissident persons; the victims were generally sentenced to death or to long terms of hard labor. Much of the purge was carried out in secret, and only a few cases were tried in public 'show trials'. By the time the terror subsided in 1939, Stalin had managed to bring both the Party and the public to a state of complete submission to his rule. Soviet society was so atomized and the people so fearful of reprisals that mass arrests were no longer necessary. Stalin ruled as absolute dictator of the Soviet Union until his death in March 1953.

10 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.

11 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.

12 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. There were two phases of the Revolution. February Revolution came about due to food and fuel shortages in the days of World War I 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.

13 Civil War (1918-1920)

The Civil War between the Reds (the Bolsheviks) and the Whites (the anti-Bolsheviks), which broke out in early 1918, ravaged Russia until 1920. The Whites represented all shades of anti- communist groups - Russian army units from World War I, led by anti- Bolshevik officers, by anti-Bolshevik volunteers and some Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. Several of their leaders favored setting up a military dictatorship, but few were outspoken tsarists. Atrocities were committed throughout the Civil War by both sides. The Civil War ended with Bolshevik military victory, thanks to the lack of cooperation among the various White commanders and to the reorganization of the Red forces after Trotsky became commissar for war. It was won, however, only at the price of immense sacrifice; by 1920 Russia was ruined and devastated. In 1920 industrial production was reduced to 14% and agriculture to 50% as compared to 1913.

14 Pogroms in Ukraine

In the 1920s there were many anti-Semitic gangs in Ukraine. They killed Jews and burnt their houses, they robbed their houses, raped women and killed children.

15 Petliura, Simon (1879-1926)

Ukrainian politician, member of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Working Party, one of the leaders of Centralnaya Rada (Central Council), the national government of Ukraine (1917-1918). Military units under his command killed Jews during the Civil War in Ukraine. In the Soviet-Polish war he was on the side of Poland; in 1920 he emigrated. He was killed in Paris by the Jewish nationalist Schwarzbard in revenge for the pogroms against Jews in Ukraine.

16 Gangs

During the Russian Civil War there were all kinds of gangs in the Ukraine. Their members came from all the classes of former Russia, but most of them were peasants. Their leaders used political slogans to dress their criminal acts. These gangs were anti-Soviet and anti-Semitic. They killed Jews and burnt their houses, they robbed their houses, raped women and killed children.

17 NEP

The so-called New Economic Policy of the Soviet authorities was launched by Lenin in 1921. It meant that private business was allowed on a small scale in order to save the country ruined by the Revolution of 1917 and the Russian Civil War. They allowed priority development of private capital and entrepreneurship. The NEP was gradually abandoned in the 1920s with the introduction of the planned economy.

18 Russian stove

Big stone stove stoked with wood. They were usually built in a corner of the kitchen and served to

heat the house and cook food. It had a bench that made a comfortable bed for children and adults in wintertime.

19 Tsimes
Stew made usually of carrots, parsnips, or plums with potatoes.

20 Cheka (full name Vecheka)
All-Russian Emergency Commission for struggle against counter- revolution and sabotage; the first security authority in the Soviet Union established per order of the Council of People's Commissars dated 7 December 1917. Its chief was Felix Dzerzhinsky. In 1920, after the Civil War, Lenin ordered to disband it and it became a part of the NKVD.

21 Famine in Ukraine
In 1920 a deliberate famine was introduced in Ukraine causing the death of millions of people. It was arranged in order to suppress those protesting peasants who did not want to join the collective farms. There was another dreadful deliberate famine in 1930-1934 in the Ukraine. The authorities took away the last food products from the peasants. People were dying in the streets, whole villages became deserted. The authorities arranged this specifically to suppress the rebellious peasants who did not want to accept Soviet power and join collective farms.

22 Young Octobrist
In Russian Oktyabrenok, or 'pre-pioneer', designates Soviet children of seven years or over preparing for entry into the pioneer organization.

23 All-Union pioneer organization
a communist organization for teenagers between 10 and 15 years old (cf: boy-/ girl-scouts in the US). The organization aimed at educating the young generation in accordance with the communist ideals, preparing pioneers to become members of the Komsomol and later the Communist Party. In the Soviet Union, all teenagers were pioneers.

24 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 educating people it could accept uninitiated young proletarians, whereas party members had to have at least a minimal political qualification.

25 Trotsky, Lev Davidovich (born Bronshtein) (1879-1940)
Russian revolutionary, one of the leaders of the October Revolution of 1917, an outstanding figure of the communist movement and a theorist of Marxism. Trotsky participated in the social-

democratic movement since 1894 and supported the idea of the unification of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks since 1906. In 1905 he developed the idea of the 'permanent revolution'. He was one of the leaders of the October Revolution and a founder of the Red Army. He widely applied repressive measures to support the discipline and 'bring everything into revolutionary order' at the front and the home front. The intense struggle against Stalin for the leadership ended with Trotsky's defeat. In 1924 his views were declared a petty-bourgeois deviation. In 1927 he was expelled from the Communist Party, and exiled to Kazakhstan, and in 1929 abroad. He lived in Turkey, Norway and then in Mexico. He excoriated Stalin's regime as a bureaucratic degeneration of the proletarian power. He was murdered in Mexico by an agent of Soviet special services on Stalin's order.

26 Enemy of the people

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

27 Professor Mamlock

This 1937 Soviet feature is considered the first dramatic film on the subject of Nazi anti-Semitism ever made, and the first to tell Americans that Nazis were killing Jews. Hailed in New York, and banned in Chicago, it was adapted by the German playwright Friedrich Wolf - a friend of Bertolt Brecht - from his own play, and co-directed by Herbert Rappaport, assistant to German director G.W.Pabst. The story centers on the persecution of a great German surgeon, his son's sympathy and subsequent leadership of the underground communists, and a rival's sleazy tactics to expel Mamlock from his clinic.

28 Invasion of Poland

The German attack of Poland on 1st September 1939 is widely considered the date in the West 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.

29 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.

30 Soviet-Finnish War (1939-40)
The Soviet Union attacked Finland on 30 November 1939 to seize the Karelian Isthmus. The Red Army was halted at the so-called Mannerheim line. The League of Nations expelled the USSR from its ranks. In February-March 1940 the Red Army broke through the Mannenheim line and reached Vyborg. In March 1940 a peace treaty was signed in Moscow, by which the Karelian Isthmus, and some other areas, became part of the Soviet Union.

31 Molotov, V
P. (1890-1986): Statesman and member of the Communist Party leadership. Since 1939, Minister of Foreign Affairs. On June 22, 1941 he announced the German attack on the USSR over the radio. He and Anthony Eden worked out the percentages agreement after the war, about Soviet and western spheres of influence in the new Europe.

32 German ASSR
established as Labour Commune of Volga Germans or Volga German AO within the Russian SFSR on 19th October 1918. Transformed into Volga German ASSR on 19th December 1924, abolished on 28th August 1941. The official state name was Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic of the Volga- Germans. The city of Engels is the former capital of the Volga-German Republic.

33 Forced deportation to Siberia
Stalin introduced the deportation of some nations, like Crimean Tatars or Chechens, to Siberia. Without warning, people were thrown out of their houses and into vehicles at night. The majority of them died on the way of starvation, cold and illnesses.

34 Stalingrad Battle (17 July 1942- 2 February1943) The Stalingrad, South- Western and Donskoy Fronts stopped the advance of German armies in the vicinity of Stalingrad
On 19-20 November 1942 the soviet troops undertook an offensive and encircled 22 German divisions (330 thousand people) in the vicinity of Stalingrad. The Soviet troops eliminated this German grouping. On 31 January 1943 the remains of the 6th German army headed by General Field Marshal Paulus surrendered (91 thousand people). The victory in the Stalingrad battle was of huge political, strategic and international significance.

35 Kalmyk
A nationality living on the Lower Volga in Russia. During World War II military formations set up by Kalmyk prisoners of war fought on the side of the Germans.

36 Political officer
These "commissars," as they were first called, exercised specific official and unofficial control

functions over their military command counterparts. The political officers also served to further Party interests with the masses of drafted soldiery of the USSR by indoctrination in Marxist-Leninism. The 'zampolit', or political officers, appeared at the regimental level in the army, as well as in the navy and air force, and at higher and lower levels, they had similar duties and functions. The chast (regiment) of the Soviet Army numbered 2,000-3,000 personnel, and was the lowest level of military command that doctrinally combined all arms (infantry, armor, artillery, and supporting services) and was capable of independent military missions. The regiment was commanded by a colonel, or lieutenant colonel, with a lieutenant or major as his zampolit, officially titled "deputy commander for political affairs."

37 SMERSH

Russian abbreviation for 'Smert Shpionam' meaning Death to Spies. It was a counterintelligence department in the Soviet Union formed during World War II, to secure the rear of the active Red Army, on the front to arrest 'traitors, deserters, spies, and criminal elements'. The full name of the entity was USSR People's Commissariat of Defense Chief Counterintelligence Directorate 'SMERSH'. This name for the counterintelligence division of the Red Army was introduced on 19th April 1943, and worked as a separate entity until 1946. It was headed by Viktor Abakumov. At the same time a SMERSH directorate within the People's Commissariat of the Soviet Navy and a SMERSH department of the NKVD were created. The main opponent of SMERSH in its counterintelligence activity was Abwehr, the German military foreign information and counterintelligence department. SMERSH activities also included 'filtering' the soldiers recovered from captivity and the population of the gained territories. It was also used to punish within the NKVD itself; allowed to investigate, arrest and torture, force to sign fake confessions, put on a show trial, and either send to the camps or shoot people. SMERSH would also often be sent out to find and kill defectors, double agents, etc.; also used to maintain military discipline in the Red Army by means of barrier forces, that were supposed to shoot down the Soviet troops in the cases of retreat. SMERSH was also used to hunt down 'enemies of the people' outside Soviet territory.

38 NKVD

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

39 Medal for Military Merits

awarded after 17th October 1938 to soldiers of the Soviet army, navy and frontier guard for their 'bravery in battles with the enemies of the Soviet Union' and 'defense of the immunity of the state borders' and 'struggle with diversionists, spies and other enemies of the people'.

40 Medal for Valor

established on 17th October 1938, it was awarded for 'personal courage and valor in the defense of the Motherland and the execution of military duty involving a risk to life'. The award consists of a 38mm silver medal with the inscription 'For Valor' in the center and 'USSR' at the bottom in red enamel. The inscription is separated by the image of a Soviet battle tank. At the top of the award are three Soviet fighter planes. The medal suspends from a gray pentagonal ribbon with a 2mm

blue strip on each edge. It has been awarded over 4,500,000 times.

41 Mandatory job assignment in the USSR

Graduates of higher educational institutions had to complete a mandatory 2-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.

42 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 defence 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 got 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.

43 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.

44 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 against the Jewish intelligentsia and it was the first public attack on Soviet Jews as Jews. 'Cosmopolitan' 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'.

45 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.

46 Mikhoels, Solomon (1890-1948) (born Vovsi)

Great Soviet actor, producer and pedagogue. He worked in the Moscow State Jewish Theater (and was its art director from 1929). He directed philosophical, vivid and monumental works. Mikhoels was murdered by order of the State Security Ministry.

47 Doctors' Plot

The Doctors' Plot was an alleged conspiracy of a group of Moscow doctors to murder leading government and party officials. In January 1953, the Soviet press reported that nine doctors, six of whom were Jewish, had been arrested and confessed their guilt. As Stalin died in March 1953, the trial never took place. The official paper of the Party, the Pravda, later announced that the charges against the doctors were false and their confessions obtained by torture. This case was one of the worst anti-Semitic incidents during Stalin's reign. In his secret speech at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 Khrushchev stated that Stalin had wanted to use the Plot to purge the top Soviet leadership.

48 Khrushchev, Nikita (1894-1971)

Soviet communist leader. After Stalin's death in 1953, he became first secretary of the Central Committee, in effect the head of the Communist Party of the USSR. In 1956, during the 20th Party Congress, Khrushchev took an unprecedented step and denounced Stalin and his methods. He was deposed as premier and party head in October 1964. In 1966 he was dropped from the Party's Central Committee.

49 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.

50 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.

51 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 the 6th October 1973 and ended on the 22nd October on the Syrian front and on the 26th October on the Egyptian front.

52 October Revolution Day

October 25 (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 November 7.

53 Soviet Army Day

The Russian imperial army and navy disintegrated after the outbreak of the Revolution of 1917, so the Council of the People's Commissars created the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army on a voluntary basis. The first units distinguished themselves against the Germans on February 23, 1918. This day became the 'Day of the Soviet Army' and is nowadays celebrated as 'Army Day'.

54 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.

55 Soviet/Russian doctorate degrees

Graduate school in the Soviet Union (aspirantura, or ordinatura for medical students), which usually took about 3 years and resulted in a dissertation. Students who passed were awarded a 'kandidat nauk' (lit. candidate of sciences) degree. If a person wanted to proceed with his or her research, the next step would be to apply for a doctorate degree (doktorantura). To be awarded a doctorate degree, the person had to be involved in the academia, publish consistently, and write an original dissertation. In the end he/she would be awarded a 'doctor nauk' (lit. doctor of sciences) degree.

56 Gorbachev, Mikhail (1931-)

Soviet political leader. Gorbachev joined the Communist Party in 1952 and gradually moved up in the party hierarchy. In 1970 he was elected to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, where he remained until 1990. In 1980 he joined the politburo, and in 1985 he was appointed general secretary of the party. In 1986 he embarked on a comprehensive program of political, economic, and social liberalization under the slogans of glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring). The government released political prisoners, allowed increased emigration, attacked corruption, and encouraged the critical reexamination of Soviet history. The Congress of People's Deputies, founded in 1989, voted to end the Communist Party's control over the government and elected

Gorbachev executive president. Gorbachev dissolved the Communist Party and granted the Baltic states independence. Following the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States in 1991, he resigned as president. Since 1992, Gorbachev has headed international organizations.

57 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.

58 Iron Curtain
A term popularized by Sir Winston Churchill in his speech in 1946. He used it to designate the Soviet Union's consolidation of its grip over Eastern Europe. The phrase denoted the separation of East and West during the Cold War, which placed the totalitarian states of the Soviet bloc behind an 'Iron Curtain'. The fall of the Iron Curtain corresponds to the period of perestroika in the former Soviet Union, the reunification of Germany, and the democratization of Eastern Europe beginning in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

59 KGB
The KGB or Committee for State Security was the main Soviet external security and intelligence agency, as well as the main secret police agency from 1954 to 1991.

60 Moscow Council of the Jewish War Veterans
founded in 1988 by the Moscow municipal Jewish community. The main purpose of the organization is mutual assistance as well as unification of front-line Jews, collection and publishing of recollections about the war, and arranging meetings with the public and youth.