Deborah Averbukh

Deborah Averbukh
Kiev
Ukraine
Interviewer: Ella Orlikova
Date of interview: December 2001

Family background

My name is Deborah Yakovlevna Averbukh. I was born on 19th July 1921 in the urban-type community Medjibozh, which was a Jewish shtetl. Today it is in Khmelnitski region. My parents lived in Yekaterinoslav at the time. But those were the times of military communism and my parents were in great need, starving, especially my mother when she was pregnant with me. Two sisters of my father lived in Medjibozh, and it was easier to live in the province, so at the beginning of summer 1921 my parents moved there, and in July 1921 I was born.

The hotel, where I was born, was located at the corner of the main street and the street where the theater was. Later, when I visited Medjibozh, there was a cinema there. The hotel was across the street from the two- storied brick house of my father's sister Tuba Fishman. My father's other sister, the older one, Serl, lived in a different house, and its back was facing the grave of Baal Shem-Tov. I was shown this grave when I visited Medjibozh at the age of seven and eleven.

I remember my uncles and aunts would take me out of town to welcome the daughter of the local rabbi. Since the closest train station was far away, she had to take a phaeton to get to our town. When her phaeton reached the town, young local men stopped it, unhamessed the horses and pulled the phaeton themselves. They brought her and the rabbis' wife to the rabbi's house. In the evening there was a big reception with traditional Jewish meals there.

I can remember myself at a very young age. I remember my parents held me in front of a mirror and I would point at myself in the reflection and say, 'Ni, ni...' Since then people began to call me Nina and they still call me so today.

When I was six months old, my parents took me and moved back to Yekaterinoslav, which later became Dnepropetrovsk. I wasn't the only child in the family - I had a brother, who was four years older than me, Israel Yakovlevich Averbukh, born in 1917. He was born in Yekaterinoslav shortly after the February Revolution [see Russian Revolution of 1917] 1. When my parents' friends came to congratulate them on the birth of their son, everyone wore red rosettes in their buttonholes and

everyone was happy that a democratic regime would finally replace the Russian Empire.

When I was approximately one and a half years old, my family moved to Kiev because my father's younger brother lived there and worked as a doctor, so he was wealthier than my parents. By that time my father had lost his job as the director of the Yekaterinoslav yeshivah, because at that time the Bolsheviks closed all religious educational institutions. Today, the Yekaterinoslav yeshivah is the only Jewish religious institution of higher learning in Ukraine.

My father, Yakov Abramovich Averbukh, was born in 1887 in the town of Novokonstantinov. He was born into a very religious family. He had an exceptionally good knowledge of Judaism and kept every religious tradition and holidays up until his very death in Babi Yar 2. In our home we always kept kosher laws and observed traditional Jewish holidays. Even though we were extremely poor, we had one or two needy Jewish students from the synagogue, who received monthly support from us, according to the Jewish tradition. To our holiday table on Friday evening and during Pesach seders we always invited Jews who were visiting from other cities and who had no place to celebrate.

My father came directly from the line of Baal Shem-Tov 3, the founder of Hasidism 4, in the sixth generation. His father, Avrum Arns Averbukh, was the father of three sons and three daughters. One of the sons, Aron, born in 1890, was a very famous doctor in Kiev. He was always ready to help our family.

My father's older brother, Beresh, born in 1885, lived near Korosten, Zhytomyr region. He organized Jewish collective farms 5 in the Crimea in the 1930s. Then he and his family moved to Birobidzhan 6, but before the war they returned to Korosten. He had seven children: four sons, who all died during the Holocaust, and three daughters, who live in Israel now.

My grandfather's oldest daughter, Dvoira, born in 1882, died of some disease in 1921. His next daughter, Serl Liberzon, nee Averbukh, born in 1884, lived in Medjibozh with her husband and died there in the ghetto in 1941. They had no children. The third daughter, Tuba Fishman, nee Averbukh, born in 1886, had a grocery store in Medjibozh. She died in Babi Yar in Kiev in 1941, along with her son Grisha.

Grandfather Avrum was a businessman. He made and sold wine in large quantities. On my grandfather's orders, my father used to go to Austria and Germany until 1910 to purchase grapes and to trade in wine.

My paternal grandmother's name was Leah. I never met her, only saw her pictures - she was a typical Jewish grandmother and wore a headscarf. My grandparents died before my birth, so I know nothing personally about them. I only know that my father's grandfather, the great-grandson of Baal Shem- Tov, was physically very strong. According to the family legend, during a particularly dangerous storm he swam around 7,000 feet across the Southern Bug River. I don't remember whether he had made a bet with someone or had another reason for doing so. He had 18 children: twelve from his first wife and six from his second wife. That's all I know about my parents' ancestors.

There is a legend of the origin of our family name: In the 15th century there was a town called Averbakh in Germany. At that time family names began to be given to all people, so one of the

Jewish families there was given that family name. Later it changed to Averbukh.

My father was highly educated. Until the very outbreak of the Second World War we had a wonderful library in Hebrew. Even though he was a very young man, he was appointed director of the yeshivah. Being the son of very religious parents, he certainly couldn't get any secular education, but we had the following encyclopedias at home: School At Home and University At Home, both published before the October Revolution. The letters my father wrote to me at the beginning of the war were written in surprisingly good Russian. He learned to play the violin without the instruction of any teachers. He finished correspondence courses and got an accountant diploma. After the Revolution, when he could no longer work in his main professional job, he worked as an accountant for some time. He also had a diploma of a penman. And as far as I can remember, from the age of 40-45, he was a member of the arbitration court of the Kiev synagogue. He perished in Babi Yar at the age of 54.

With each other and with our senior relatives - and we regularly had relatives from every little village of Ukraine as guests - my parents always spoke Yiddish, while with my brother and me they only spoke Russian. I could understand Yiddish, though.

My father knew Hebrew perfectly and spoke Russian with a strong accent. However, his accent wasn't caused by poor knowledge of the language, but by some phonetic changes in his throat, I think. Besides, he was quite fluent in German, which he had to learn during his trips to Austria and Germany. When my father was the director of the Yekaterinoslav yeshivah, the well- known classic poet Byalik [7] taught Hebrew literature there. My father kept corresponding with him in Hebrew up until the middle of the 1920s. I still remember those letters. My father also had Rabbi Gelman, the city rabbi of Yekaterinoslav, teach at the yeshivah, and my grandfather on my mother's side, whose family were refugees to Yekaterinoslav, from around 1916 to 1919. His appearance was so biblical that he was very popular among the students; every time he entered the room his students would say, 'Oh, look, Moshe Rabeinu came to us'. My father was the director of the yeshivah and taught Hebrew. The yeshivah was big and famous all over Ukraine. I don't remember any more details about it because I was very young back then.

My mother, Rakhil Osipovna, Gorovits-Vaisbrot, was born in the town of Zamos, Lublin province, in 1891. Her father was an official rabbi in Zamos. This town was located in Poland, but at the time it was part of the Russian Empire. My mother finished Russian secondary school without attending every class because being a religious Jew and the daughter of a rabbi she couldn't go to school on Saturdays. Nevertheless, she finished the Russian school with a gold medal, that is all excellent marks.

She met my father at the wedding of their relatives in 1911: my father's niece and my mother's cousin got married. After meeting at the wedding my parents kept up a very active correspondence over the course of three years. We kept those letters at home in two stacks tied with ribbons until the war. All their letters were written in Yiddish. I glanced through them often, not understanding what they said, but judging from the dates they exchanged letters practically every day. They got married in spring 1914.

Immediately after the wedding they went to live in Kamenets-Podolsk, where my father wanted to buy a printing shop because he was a professional linotypist. But two or three months later World War I began. So, they moved to Yekaterinoslav. At the same time, my grandfather's family came

there: my mother's parents with two of their children: their daughter Iokhevid and their son Leibele.

My mother's father had a total of four names. I remember one of them: Shloma. My grandmother's name was Sarah. Sarah became a widow in early 1920. After finishing school Jewish girls would come to her to learn needlework and Yiddish. They had a good time with her. I also know that her cousin lived in St. Petersburg; he was Baron Ginzburg, a famous patron of the arts, banker and manufacturer. That's the family my grandmother came from.

The family name of my mother's father was Gorovits. My mother's stepsister Mina left for Germany at the end of the 19th century along with Rosa Luxemburg 8. They both wanted to advance the Revolution. Of course, my grandfather renounced her. In Germany she married a Swiss communist, who was a Christian. She also joined the Communist Party there. They lived near Zurich and communicated with Vladimir Lenin when he was in Zurich. Later she was an active member of Comintern [Communist International]. Aunt Mina died in Switzerland not so long ago.

My grandfather had two or three sons, and his daughter Mina from his first wife. His sons were lost during World War I and the Civil War 9. Two sons from his second wife also died during the Civil War, somewhere near Yekaterinoslav, as far as I remember from my mother's stories. Besides my mother, there was her older sister Hannah, and Klara, who was named Keila in Yiddish. In Israel she took on the name Hadassah and the pseudonym Israeli. She left for Israel in 1922. She was one of the founders of a famous kibbutz. She died at the age of 96. She was actively involved in charity. People say that at the age of 80, during the Six-Day-War 10, she went to the front line to feed Israeli boys who fought there because they missed homemade food.

My grandfather, as I mentioned earlier on, was a rabbi. After his death, my grandmother was paid a state pension as the widow of a rabbi. All their children were given education. They were raised in Spartan style. My mother told me that in winter they walked barefoot on the snow. Throughout her life my mother took ice showers every morning.

My mother had a younger sister by the name of Iokhevid, born in 1905. She was a highly educated woman. She lived with my grandmother. In the early 1930s she married a Polish Jew, a very rich widower, who owned a house and several stores in Warsaw. They lived on the main street of Warsaw in their own five-storied house, in which one of his stores was situated. His family name was Eidelman. I read publications on the Warsaw ghetto 11 later, and there was a lot of information about Eidelman in there. Iokhevid, her husband and son died in the Warsaw ghetto.

My mother also had a younger brother, who was just known as Leibele. He was born in Yekaterinoslav in 1909 and lived with my grandparents during World War I. Then they returned to Zamos. In 1935 he moved to Palestine, he escaped from Pilsudsky's persecution. Uncle Leibele worked as an unskilled worker and fought for the independence of Israel. He assisted Begin 12 a lot. When Israel became independent, my uncle returned and took on the name of Yehuda, so officially he is called Yehuda Gorovits, even though at home we always refered to him as Uncle Leibele.

My grandfather Gorovits changed his last name to Vaisbrot around 1867. In order for their sons to avoid the tsarist army, some Jewish families gave their sons the family names of their childless relatives because there was a law saying that if a family only had one son, he didn't have to serve

in the army. Later, my grandfather had a double surname - Gorovits-Vaisbrot.

The name Gorovits is very ancient. This line comes from Yehuda Geronti, who was a medieval poet and philosopher serving at the court of a Mauritanian sovereign of Spain in the 11th century. His works are well known all over the world; he wrote in Arabic, Hebrew, and Spanish. During the Spanish inquisition, his family moved to Holland, then to Czechia, and in the Czech town of Gorovits they were given this name. People say the line of Karl Marx is also related to our line.

Growing up

The yeshivah in Dnepropetrovsk, where my father worked, was closed in 1922, and he was left without a job. But there was something like a wine-making company, where my father began to work. However, there wasn't enough work. My father's older brother, Aron, was working in Kiev as a doctor and my parents decided to move to Kiev. At the beginning we lived on 55, Zhilyanskaya Street, on the second floor, but only for a short time. It was there, where we must have celebrated my second birthday. The adults sat around one table, while the children were seated around a children's wicker table in little wicker chairs. On the second floor there was a porch with a wooden staircase. I didn't like one of the boys who was my guest so I pushed him down the staircase from the second floor. I remember that very well. I also recall that it was raining. I went downstairs and my neighbors treated me to lobster. Lobster isn't kosher, so I knew I shouldn't eat it, but I still tried it.

In 1923 we moved to 18, Sovskaya Street, which is now Fizkulturnaya Street. It was a big house, or actually two houses: on the street there was a one- storied brick house on the left, while on the right there was a two-and-a- half-storied house with a basement where a shoemaker, a dressmaker, and a street-cleaner, a Jew, whose name was Yefremchik, lived. A Polish family of intellectuals by the name of Dobrolej lived on the second floor. The family of Rozanovy lived in the one-storied brick house. They were also good people. Their daughter was a pianist. When I turned six, my parents wanted me to learn play the piano, and I had to practice in their apartment because we had no piano of our own. They also had a son who was successful in life; I believe he was an engineer.

In the yard stood another one-storied house, in which a very poor Jewish family from the province lived. They had two daughters. The younger daughter was called Bronya; she dated a very handsome young man by the name of Abrasha. Several times he came there by car, which was unique at the time. Later they got married. Today his son, Vladimir Avrumovich Polyachenko, is the director of Ukraine's biggest building company, Kievgorstroy. We also had a small open barn in the yard, so these two young girl as well as the Rozanovys and Dobrolejes staged plays there. They sold tickets for these plays and donated the money to charity. I also played in those charity performances: I would recite poems by Lermontov 13 and dance lezghinka [a fast folk dance, which originated in the Northern Caucasus and was very popular all over the Soviet Union].

We lived in the two-storied brick house in the yard. The landowner lived on the second floor. Apart from owning a house, he also owned carts and horses because this was during the NEP 14 in Russia, when private property was still allowed. We had a special circle in our yard where the horses were trained. That's why since my childhood I love horses a lot.

We rented a three-bedroom apartment on the first floor. We had a toilet there, but no bathroom. I don't remember living in all three rooms because very soon the biggest room, where we, children, used to sleep, was taken away from us and given to the family of Sergeyev. They came from Odessa. Sergeyev was an engine machinist. Apart from a single lock, nothing else separated our room from the room were the Sergeyevs lived, so along with the Russian language I often heard classical swearing language that the father used to talk to with his family. He was a guerilla in the Red Army and a communist. They also had a big dog. During the famine 15, their whole family had food due to this dog because dogs were provided with special meat by-products. They would always boil this offal in the kitchen and I still remember its disgusting smell.

We were very poor. My father couldn't work anywhere due to his religious beliefs. He couldn't find a job in Kiev that would allow him to stay home on Saturdays and Jewish holidays. He had several part-time jobs. I remember once he brought some dirty press home and I helped him stamp out point- protectors for pencils on that press. At that time, there were special point-protectors on pencils, so we made those. We could do this kind of work at home.

I had no toys in my childhood. The first time I got a celluloid toy doll, I was ten years old. I was so happy to have it that I wrapped it in a piece of blanket and went outside, to the gates, singing as if putting it to sleep. People mistakenly took my doll for a real baby and said my mother had given birth to the third child. When I was seven, my brother brought me skates, 'Nurmis', tied them to my shoes, and I began to go skating. At the age of 14 I could already skate race. I'm 80 years old now, but I still go skate racing at the Ice Stadium in Kiev.

Between themselves my parents spoke Yiddish, but with us only Russian. My mother spoke Russian very well. I believe she knew Russian better than me. She also knew Polish very well. When the first Polish refugees arrived in Kiev in 1939, my mother could communicate with them easily. My mother also spoke German fluently.

There were families of many nationalities in our yard. For some time, we were the only Jews in our block or maybe even on entire Sovskaya Street. Our house was always open; we lived on the first floor and kept the windows open at all times. On Pesach, Sabbath and other Jewish holidays that were celebrated with strict observance of all Orthodox traditions, we always sang Jewish songs. I still remember our neighbors standing by our windows and enjoying our singing; I don't recall a single hint of any offence from them.

My father was highly respected by the people who lived on our street; when he was walking the street, men would lift their hats. My mother was always called Madam Averbukh, and all young girls tried to dress just like Madam Averbukh. Here is how she dressed: she sewed a jacket for my brother from an old overcoat, then made from it rags for polishing the floor. But later, mother washed it, excuse me, in urine, bought some faille de Chine and sewed a dress for herself - and everyone admired it! My mother was a wonderful needlewoman despite the fact that her forefinger on the right hand was defected due to sepsis right after my birth. The disease started with her right hand and doctors wanted to amputate it, but my mother refused to have her hand amputated. She said she could never survive with two children without a hand. She would rather die and have her husband marry another woman who would take good care of her children. Such was my mother's character.

We often invited my brother's Christian friends or my mother's Christian colleagues to our Pesach seder - and they enjoyed watching it. My father had a broad outlook, so when his friends would gather around the Jewish holiday table, he could, for instance, start a dispute on some philosophical questions with my brother's closest friend, the oldest son of academician Paton. My mother and brother read a lot; they got all kinds of different interesting books. I liked reading them when I was eight years old, too.

My mother loved the theater very much. She had the opportunity to watch plays because she sold tickets for a theater and therefore received free tickets. As long as I can remember, my mother always took me to watch plays with her. I think I was six years old when I was taken to the premises of today's Operetta Theater during the last tour of the famous actress Klara Yung. She was 70 at the time. I remember her dancing and singing in Yiddish; it was very interesting. We often went to the Jewish theater and I could see Mikhoels 16, Zuskin 17 and other actors many times.

In the beginning my mother was a housewife, raising two children. By the way, she brought up her children in a Spartan manner, just the way she was raised herself. We always took part in work around the house: we prepared wood for the winter, and I still remember my brother and I sawing big branches.

My mother was a highly educated person with absolutely no profession. For a long time she was registered at the employment agency, but in vain. One time she was sent to collect strawberries far away, outside Irpen. This work certainly brought no income. In fact, this work happened very seldom. But finally she got lucky. There was a woodworking company on our street: a saw worked under the sky and my mother helped out there. It was July; my mother suffered a sunstroke and luckily just passed out. The director of the company felt pity for her and made her a cleaner at the company, so that she wouldn't have to work outside any more. It was certainly very good, but her salary was very low. She was a very smart woman and was made a courier. It meant that she had to go around the city and even outside the city to deliver bureaucratic documents, sign journals of registration, take receipts back. She was given money for transportation, but she almost always went on foot in order to save that money.

She also continued working as a cleaner. During the day she worked as a courier and in the evenings I helped her clean the office: she washed the floor and I washed the tables. Some time later she was made a cashier collector as she was officially registered. She had to daily register financial documents at the bank, which was located where the Central Bank is located now. She also had to issue salaries to the workers of her company. But people worked in Puscha-Voditsa, Svyatoshino, Kurenyovka, Podol 18, and then the main office moved to Nizhny Val. The distances between these places were big. My mother would carry money in a purse to Puscha-Voditsa, for instance. She came back late at night, with some money that was left. It was wild because public transportation was bad before the war. At the same time, we had an ideal order at home. My mother had to work in order to feed a family of four people and cook practically from nothing.

My brother Israel went to the 5th grade. Prior to that he had private teachers who taught him the Torah and Hebrew. Several times we had the police come to try and fine my parents for teaching religion. My brother had no gift for languages, but he was a wonderful technician. He didn't join the pioneers, while I did, but I didn't join the Komsomol 19. I still don't know how I managed to do that.

After finishing seven years of school, my brother entered the Technical Communications College, which still exists on Leontovich Street. But the college was soon - in 1931 or 1932 - moved to Kharkov, and he, a 14-year- old boy, left for Kharkov and lived there in a dormitory. I remember one of his letters from there. He made my mother rejoice by saying that he washed his socks because he knew that she worried a lot about him keeping his hygiene there. In 1934 he came back from Kharkov with the diploma of a communications technician. But since he couldn't find a job according to his profession, he went to work at the same company where my mother worked at the age of 17. He made spring beds. He learned that kind of work very quickly and other workers praised him a lot. Later he found a job at the radio laboratory of Kiev Polytechnic Institute. From there, on 6th or 7th July 1941, he went to fight in the army as a volunteer. By that time he had finished the first year. We never saw him again. He was killed during the war.

In the hardest time in 1931 my father got ill. He spent almost two years in bed and we warmed his back with sand and hot irons. He had inflammation of the sciatic nerve. After he recovered he could find no more work in Kiev. He went to Yagotin and worked in the winemaking business. I remember him bringing 'makukhah cake' from there. Makukhah cake is a stone-like by- product of oil-making. It looked and tasted just like a 'millstone'. So, my father brought me a piece of that and I ate it with my milk teeth. It was then that I wrote to my grandmother in Poland that we had no bread in Kiev. When my mother saw my letter she was very angry with me; she forbid me to send this letter because my grandmother, she said, was a widow who had to survive on her pension, and I was to do my best not to upset her.

I remember the famine very well. I would go to school and see people swollen from starvation along with dead bodies lying on our street. I also remember huge furnaces and a lot of homeless children gathered around them. I, a young girl, would pass by them without any fear.

I also remember that my father brought us real handmade sackcloth made from hemp thread from Ovruch. I think I'm so healthy because in childhood I slept on such sheets. I also remember that my aunts from Medjibozh sent us some aid. And all the time in my childhood - before and after the war - my feet were always wet.

I was a very active and good student at school. In all my ten years of studies at school I had only excellent marks. In our family both my parents and we, children, viewed the Soviet power absolutely negatively. My father said that the Red Army was as bad as Petliura's 20 and Makhno's 21 gangs. My parents would crack anti-Soviet jokes and express their ideas openly at home, without any fear that their children would betray them.

There was a time during the Soviet rule, around 1929 and 1933, when most Jewish families - and probably not only Jewish ones - were forced to give away their gold and precious stones. My family didn't suffer from this because the Bolsheviks knew very well that we had absolutely nothing at home. My mother had a wedding ring, which she sold to a special store that was called Torgsin store 22 and for the money she got for it, she bought rye flour, which was the cheapest of all. In reality this store never traded in anything with foreigners, but it was a special place where Soviet citizens could bring their wedding and other rings, decorations, golden teeth, gold coins and buy some food and clothes in return.

During this time we always had some famous rich Jews, who lived in our house and gave us some food in return because they knew they could hide from arrest at our place. They usually spent

whole days just lying on the sofa under the blanket. I have the impression that our neighbors knew all about it, but nobody ever betrayed us. So, some of these rich Jews stayed for six months with us. Their wives and children would come and visit them. In 1936 and 1937 [during the so-called Great Terror] 23 my mother was summoned to the KGB 24 several times because she was born in Poland. She was kept there for days. These were the most terrible days of my life. I would hide under the blanket in my room and just hope I would wake up and see my mother at home!

My mother later told me that she was made to stand in the corridor of a KGB office. She wasn't allowed to lean against the wall, even though she had terrible gout and her feet hurt a lot. Neither was she allowed to sit down. Thus she had to wait for hours for interrogations. The main question during the interrogations was: when did your relatives leave to live abroad? It was impossible to explain to those 'lawyers' that they had left before 1914, when it was still the Russian Empire, that in summer 1914 World War I began, and that Poland was separated and it was impossible for their family to reunite.

My brother and I were best friends. Since my mother worked a lot and my father was never home, my brother became very independent. My mother never worried whether I was coming home late or not because my brother always accompanied me. Sometimes he simply had to take me with him because there was nobody who could sit at home with me. All the games and competitions I took part in I had my brother on my side.

Right before the war an extremely beautiful Jewish girl came to Kiev from Kharkov. Her name was Sima. My brother was also very handsome and elegant. They had a serious relationship, but it went nowhere because the war broke out.

My brother was 24 then. He earned a lot of money because apart from holding a good post at the Polytechnic Institute he also fixed radios from all over the city. It was never possible to eat at our dinner table because it was full of spare radio parts. My borther had a very expensive racing bike, which he gave to me when I went into evacuation. He told me if I had to walk on foot from Kiev I could put my luggage on it. I left it at Kharkov train station when I got on a train to Saratov. Approximately one year before the war he also bought a Harley Davidson motorbike.

Prior to the war I wasn't interested in politics. I was mostly interested in school, university, studies, sports and folk dances. Our dancing club came in first at the republican competition of amateur arts. It was a club of common dances; we didn't learn dances of any special nation, but sometimes we would learn some Jewish dances as well. Alexander Berdovsky, a famous opera singer, led our club. In one of our performances, 'Jewish Wedding', which won a prize, I played the bride. I made myself a dress from my mother's white voile dress and half-rotten white window curtains. I also went skating every evening. I had a lot of other interests and hobbies. I wore my father's old winter coat and my mother's party blouse.

During the war

I remember 22nd June 1941 [the beginning of the so-called Great Patriotic War] 25 very well. At around 4 o'clock in the morning we woke up because of what sounded like bombing. My father wasn't home, he was in Ovruch. My brother said, 'What, training maneuvers start again!?', but my mother answered, 'No, this is no training'. She had experienced World War I, so she knew. The former Red Stadium was to open on 22nd June and I had two tickets for the opening ceremony. I

still have one of those tickets, but the other one I think I gave to the Olympic Stadium museum on its 40th anniversary. So, I dressed up and went to the stadium, but we already knew then that war had broken out. The atmosphere was scary, worrisome. We immediately began to dig holes and shelters in the yard. On Monday I was to have a mathematics exam. So, at 8 o'clock in the morning when I was ready to go to my exam, there was a raid. I didn't go to the shelter, but was standing at the entrance to my house, counting the planes.

On 6th July 1941 my brother went to the military enlistment committee as a volunteer to fight and was immediately sent to the front. We never saw him again. He must have been killed in 1942. I could get no information about him despite my numerous inquiries to various institutions. He had to go - he was healthy and strong.

My father said we didn't have to evacuate because the Germans were highly civilized people; he remembered them from the occupation in 1918. Besides, he thought he knew them well from his trips to Germany. He was going to move us to the left bank. Despite his anti-Soviet convictions, he said, 'The Bolsheviks will never let the Germans cross the Dneper".

Evacuation was well organized. But there was no organized evacuation from the company my mother worked for. At my father's work in Ovruch somebody stole all the money they had and left. So it was impossible to leave in any organized way. My father's younger brother, Doctor Averbukh, was called up to the army and worked as the chief doctor of Sumy hospital. We tried to get in touch with my uncle for help in evacuation, but we failed to get a hold of him.

I didn't want to go to Middle Asia with my university, which was evacuated there. My brother's friend Sergey Arkadyevich Barbar worked in the repairs battalion of the tank unit. They served in the rear and were allowed to take their families into evacuation with them. He registered his marriage with my friend Bella, while I was registered as his sister-in-law, and we went together. In the morning, my mother went to work. We said goodbye to each other. My mother was an extremely strong person; it was amazing. I don't remember her crying when my brother left, neither do I remember her crying when she said goodbye to me. This was on 19th July. My father bid me farewell on the staircase, somewhere between the third and the fourth floor. He was crying. The only phrase he told me in Yiddish was, 'Only marry a Jewish man'. And we left.

For many days we went around Ukraine in trucks. Then we found ourselves in Kharkov on the territory of a military unit. On one side was the Kharkov Tractor Plant, on the other a military anti-aircraft unit. That's where they deployed their workshops as well.

In Kharkov I received the last postcard from my parents dated 10th September. The Germans entered Kiev on 21st September. In Kharkov I also received the only postcard from my brother. On 20th September Sergey put Bella and me on a train to go further eastward. Bella's stepfather was a big boss in Vladivostok, so we planned to settle with him. On the train a lot of people died, I think, around 40. I had a small basket with my bed sheets, blanket and garlic. Throughout the two weeks of our journey I sat on this basket on the train, with my knees touching my face.

Around two weeks later, at the end of October, our train stopped in the middle of the night in a field, in the south, in Saratov region. We all had to get off. It was snowing. There, for the first time in my life, I saw a camel. With great difficulties we reached Saratov. It was amazing to see a city with lights, full of lamps. We found my parents' friends who gave Bella and me shelter. We stayed

there for two weeks.

I changed my mind and decided to move to Middle Asia and continue my studies, but nobody was any longer allowed there; people were sent to Siberia because too many refugees had already moved to Middle Asia. I went to the evacuation unit. It was a horrible scene: on the ground, in the snow, lay dirty starving men, women and children. They were given one loaf of bread per family. I went directly to the chief; he looked at me, and probably due to the expression in my face, he gave me his consent. Bella got on a train that went to the Far East, while I went to Middle Asia.

I was young, healthy and very optimistic. I had a goal: to reach Tashkent and continue my studies at Kiev Polytechnic Institute that had been evacuated there from Kiev. On a terrible train I reached Tashkent. We weren't allowed to go to Tashkent because no refugees were allowed to Middle Asia at all. So, while the train still moved, we took our belongings and jumped off. Somehow, on foot, I reached Tashkent train station. There I found out about the university. I wasn't very lucky - two days before my arrival the university had merged with the Middle-Asian Industrial Institute, so I couldn't restore my documents and continue to study at a university that no longer existed. I had no documents with me. Nobody would allow me to stay in a dormitory. On the steps of the institute I met Professor Tetelbaum, who gave me a job as a laboratory assistant in the institute. Apart from this, I also helped do official calculations in the canteen, for which they fed me in return. But I still had nowhere to stay. Every night I stayed in different dormitories, fearing police raids. Then my friend, the son of the famous actor Gnat Yura 26, paid for me and I was restored to my university.

In spring 1944 I got a postcard from a boy who had been my neighbor in Kiev. In it, he told me that my parents had been shot in 1941. Only later I found out that the place where they were killed was called Babi Yar.

I received this postcard on a Saturday after the end of my working day. I read it at the post office and then returned to the university. I thought I shouldn't let people know about my feelings because this kind of thing didn't only happen to me; many other people probably received similar news during the war. But my chief, Professor Tetelbaum, asked me, 'What happened?'. I said, 'Nothing happened' and ran out of the laboratory. He ran after me, caught up with me in a minute and asked again, 'What happened?' I couldn't keep it to myself any longer; I cried. I told him what had happened. Despite the fact that the next day was a Sunday, he told me to come to work the next morning. I was very upset with this, because he was usually a very kind and warm person, who treated me very well, but this time he apparently showed no sympathy towards me and said there was a lot of work to do so I had to come on Sunday. I came to work the next day, but there was no work. Only Semen Isaacovich Tetelbaum came. He took me to the dormitory and told me in a kind voice, 'I understand your condition and I don't want you to get caught in it forever'. He tried to distract me in other ways, too. When I went back to the dormitory - there were twelve girls in our room - I didn't tell anyone what had happened, but I had a terrible case of twisted bowels because of my nervous condition.

In summer 1944, the re-evacuation of the Kiev Polytechnic Institute began, but I didn't want to study there, in the ruins, so I sent my documents to the Moscow Energy Institute. My colleagues, however, insisted on my return to Kiev. I had no place to stay. Our house was destroyed. The parents of one of my brother's friends, Volodya Tyutyun, met me at the train station and took me to stay with them. They let me have one room for myself - they had a total of four rooms and they

lived on the second floor of a private house. That was one year before the war ended. They grew cabbages, cooked pork, made pork sausages and sold them to private traders in 'Yevbaz' - the Jewish Market [Yevbaz is the acronym of the Russian/Ukrainian 'yevreiskiy bazar'], which was located on today's Victory Square. Volodya's mother was a big woman, a typical Ukrainian, but for some reason everyone called her 'Greek'. Her son's nickname was 'Ofenis'. Everyone believed I was her daughter because I helped her around the house and at the market. I stayed with them until Volodya returned from the army.

I continued to study and work. The topic of my diploma project was very serious, concerning secret weapon developments. But two months before I had to defend my thesis I was denied access to the secret files because my aunt Hannah sent me a parcel from Palestine through Joint 27, which was said to be the very evil of the Zionist movements. For some reason her parcel came to me via London. It contained 500 grams of egg powder and 500 grams of pea powder. The fact that I received a parcel from abroad compromised me in the eyes of the faculty of my university, and they denied me access to secret work.

This meant that I could no longer work - and thus earn my living - and I could no longer defend my own diploma project. And again, I received help from kind people, first of all, Semen Isaacovich Tetelbaum. During his next business trip to Moscow, where he took the articles developed by us, he went to the People's Commissariat, or NKVD 28, and managed to persuade them to let me defend my diploma project. So, I worked in the institute up until 1948, that is, practically two years after I graduated from it, and was finally fired during this country's campaign against 'cosmopolitans' 29.

Post-war

After the war, the term 'cosmopolitan' in the Soviet Union meant almost the same as 'traitor of the Soviet Union'. Usually it was the Jews that were called 'cosmopolitans'. Anyway, so I was fired in June 1948. On 1st September 1948 I found a job as a senior laboratory assistant of the theoretical elements of electrical engineering lab at the Kiev Institute of Film Engineers. My salary was 600 rubles, 400 of which I had to pay for my 'corner'. The 'corner' was a place in the room that I rented from a large family, where my bed stood and where I could only sleep. I also spent 60 rubles on public transportation to get to work and back. Thus, I had 140 rubles for the rest of my necessities.

I worked in that institute until 1951. Since I couldn't expect help from anyone else and it was impossible to survive with my salary only, I had to sew a lot for myself. Soon, other students were asking me to sew things for them in return for payment. Thus I began to earn some extra money and very soon this turned into big money. I slept very little because I was studying and working at the same time. Simultaneously, I learned the profession of a typist, and hence I became a very well-to-do person because while I was still a student I stayed in the laboratory in the evenings and typed dissertations, textbooks and other papers for the faculty; I also edited them.

The atmosphere around was awful. Every time there were German-sounding Jewish names in special books, for instance, the name Lents, those names were officially accompanied by full titles of their owners, for instance, 'This formula was developed by Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences of USSR Lents'. This was done in order to avoid any impression that we might quote a western scientist. These efforts were called 'fight against worshiping the West'. Of course, when people spoke privately, they often laughed about such measures.

In summer 1951, at the end of the school year, 14 Jews were fired from the institute I was working at. Not all the Jews were fired: only lecturers, while professors could stay. In my labor book I read 'fired in connection with decreased work load'. I was fired on 1st July, and on 1st September of the same year my job was given to the sister of the secretary of the Komsomol Committee of that institute. By the way, among those 14 who were fired was a brother of academician Tetelbaum - Alexander Isaacovich Tetelbaum. But on the other hand, the chief of the Marxism-Leninism chair was also fired. She was an intolerable communist and, I believe, the greatest anti-Semite in the whole institute. But she was also Jewish, so she was fired. Those news about her felt like a good revenge that immensely satisfied me back then.

So, I was jobless. I had no apartment. I was registered in one of the rooms of the institute and after I was fired from the institute I could no longer be registered there. According to the law, if I spent one month without registration in Kiev, I would lose my right to live in Kiev in general.

Finally, through some friends of mine, I found a Ukrainian woman with a large family - an old father, a daughter and a granddaughter - in a communal apartment 30. They had two little rooms and she agreed to let me rent a part of her apartment. Her father was officially registered as the owner of the flat. He had a lot of trust in me. When he was warned that I would immediately throw him out as soon as I was registered in his apartment, he said, 'No, I make out people well. She will never do such a thing'. He gave me a written permission to get registered in their apartment. But this permission had to be signed by the chairman of the district executive committee.

It was 1951. The leadership, all administration workers and officials worked at night because they said Stalin always worked at night, too. Finally, at 2 o'clock in the morning, I was received by the chairman of the executive committee. He told me that he could never give me permission to get registered in that apartment because I by no means could be a relative of those Ukrainians, and only relatives were allowed registration. When I heard those words, I grabbed his inkpot, hit it against the table, broke it and told him, 'Then please register me at Babi Yar, for all my relatives were killed there, apart from my brother, who was killed while fighting at the front'. Immediately after I had said that he gave me permission to get registered in that apartment.

I lived with that family, behind their dresser, for three years, until 1954. Then I rented a 'corner' with the family of an old Jewish couple. They didn't allow me to come home after 10pm, although I had to work in the evening. They didn't allow me to use electricity in the evening, so I couldn't read and had to sew by candlelight. One time I came home at 11pm and they didn't let me in, so I had to spend the night in the street. Thank God it was autumn and not winter.

Only after all these difficulties I found myself with Yevgenia Semenovna Ilyevich. I couldn't find any decent job at the time. With great difficulties I finally got a job at the Giprokommunenergo Research Institute, where many former students of Professor Tetelbaum worked. In order to get permission for hiring me, Professor Tetelbaum had to turn to the deputy minister. I worked in that institute until I retired in 1978. For all these years I had no apartment to live in.

In 1954, after three years of working there, I was given part of a room in the institute's dormitory. It wasn't a common dormitory, but a four-bedroom apartment with twelve young and old women. I was given a 12-square meter room in 1957. I was working as a senior engineer by that time. Since I had no proper dwelling I was always willing to go on business trips. My trips usually concerned designing electrical grids and substations in Ukraine, which was ruined after the war. I worked as

the vice chief of the department.

When our high officials were choosing somebody to organize the corrosion department, they immediately told me that I wouldn't qualify for three reasons. I just asked them, 'What are the other two?'. They told me, 'You are not a Communist Party member and you are not a Ph.D.' So, I began to work on my dissertation. I knew I could never change the two other reasons. But I'm always critical about things. So, as I was running from one job to another, I was thinking, 'How many decades have to pass in order for people to hear the truth?'

And then, one day, a secret party meeting was held and people were told about Stalin's crimes. A very active party member, Abram Gurin, was absolutely delighted to inform me on our way to work how exactly Stalin's cult was uncovered. I told him, 'How come your attitude has changed in only one night?' I don't remember exactly under what circumstances we all learned the truth about Stalin. But I have impressions of some other events. A week after the 'uncrowning' of Stalin, I went to Tbilisi. His body was thrown out of the mausoleum, and on Rustaveli Prospect 200 young boys were shot [see 7th March 1956 in Tbilisi] 31. I stayed in the hotel opposite the post office where the shooting took place, and the hotel was covered in bullet holes. The Georgians told me all about it.

I defended my dissertation in 1971 and was confirmed in my office in 1972, although it was a unique case in those times. For instance, nobody wanted me to take exams at their institutions - neither Kiev Polytechnic Institute, where everyone knew me, nor in the Construction Institute - only because I was Jewish!

I went to many places: Tajikistan, Armenia, the Baltic countries, Uzbekistan. I went there on interesting business trips and met the most interesting people. Among my hobbies were theater, literature, and sports. At the age of 62 I tried mountain skiing for the first time - and I still do it often.

Not long before my retirement I bought a Zhiguli car. It was very hard to buy a car in those times, almost impossible. I had to wait for decades, get special letters of recommendation from my boss, from the Communist Party committee and the trade union committee, but I went through it all.

I don't like talking about my private life. I'm single and have never been married. And now my life is better than ever before; I have nothing to worry about. I retired early, at the age of 57, and for many years I continued to travel around the USSR holding lectures in my field. Since life has taught me to be very economical and do everything on my own, I live according to my capacities. I enjoy reading Jewish publications, going to concerts and keeping up active correspondence with my relatives in Israel.

Jewish life in Kiev is very different now. It is wonderful that we have Hesed, synagogues and Jewish youth organizations. I certainly don't want to pretend: I'm not religious and will never be, but I'm still very interested in everything about Jewish life. Sometimes I think that we have lost something in our lives due to the degree of our assimilation and being far from the Jewish way of life. But it isn't our fault - it is rather our trouble.

That's why I'm really happy about the revival of the Jewish way of life, it's so nice that young people have plunged so deeply into it, in the form of various Jewish organizations. They will not miss what being real Jewish is all about.

Glossary

1 Russian Revolution of 1917
Revolution in which the tsarist regime was overthrown in the Russian Empire and, under Lenin, was replaced by the Bolshevik rule. The two phases of the Revolution were: February Revolution, which came about due to food and fuel shortages during World War I, and during which the tsar abdicated and a provisional government took over. The second phase took place in the form of a coup led by Lenin in October/November (October Revolution) and saw the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks.

2 Babi Yar
Babi Yar is the site of the first mass shooting of Jews that was carried out openly by fascists. On 29th and 30th September 1941 33,771 Jews were shot there by a special SS unit and Ukrainian militia men. During the Nazi occupation of Kiev between 1941 and 1943 over a 100,000 people were killed in Babi Yar, most of whom were Jewish. The Germans tried in vain to efface the traces of the mass grave in August 1943 and the Soviet public learnt about mass murder after World War II.

3 Baal Shem Tov (The Besht) (1698-1760)
The founder of the Jewish mystic movement called Hasidism. Born in Okup, a small village in Western Ukraine, he was orphaned at the age of 5 and was raised by the local community. He would often spend his time in the fields, woods and mountains instead of school. He worked as a school aid and later as a shammash. He got married and settled in the Carpathean mountains not far from Brody. He studied alone for seven years and began to reveal himself in 1734. Moving to Talust, he gained a reputation as a miracle worker and soul master. Then he moved to Medzhibozh in Western Ukraine where he lived and taught for the remainder of his life. His teachings were preserved by his disciple Yakov Yosef of Polonoye.

4 Hasidism (Hasidic)
Jewish mystic movement founded in the 18th century that reacted against Talmudic learning and maintained that God's presence was in all of one's surroundings and that one should serve God in one's every deed and word. The movement provided spiritual hope and uplifted the common people. There were large branches of Hasidic movements and schools throughout Eastern Europe before World War II, each following the teachings of famous scholars and thinkers. Most had their own customs, rituals and life styles. Today there are substantial Hasidic communities in New York, London, Israel and Antwerp.

5 Collective farm (in Russian kolkhoz)
In the Soviet Union the policy of gradual and voluntary collectivization of agriculture was adopted in 1927 to encourage food production while freeing labor and capital for industrial development. In 1929, with only 4% of farms in kolkhozes, Stalin ordered the confiscation of peasants' land, tools, and animals; the kolkhoz replaced the family farm.

6 Birobidzhan

Formed in 1928 to give Soviet Jews a home territory and to increase settlement along the vulnerable borders of the Soviet Far East, the area was raised to the status of an autonomous region in 1934. Influenced by an effective propaganda campaign, and starvation in the east, 41,000 Soviet Jews relocated to the area between the late 1920s and early 1930s. But, by 1938 28,000 of them had fled the regions harsh conditions, There were Jewish schools and synagogues up until the 1940s, when there was a resurgence of religious repression after World War II. The Soviet government wanted the forced deportation of all Jews to Birobidzhan to be completed by the middle of the 1950s. But in 1953 Stalin died and the deportation was cancelled. Despite some remaining Yiddish influences - including a Yiddish newspaper - Jewish cultural activity in the region has declined enormously since Stalin's anti-cosmopolitanism campaigns and since the liberalization of Jewish emigration in the 1970s. Jews now make up less than 2% of the region's population.

7 Bialik, Chaim Nachman

(1873-1934): One of the greatest Hebrew poets. He was also an essayist, writer, translator and editor. Born in Rady, Volhynia, Ukraine, he received a traditional education in cheder and yeshivah. His first collection of poetry appeared in 1901 in Warsaw. He established a Hebrew publishing house in Odessa, where he lived but after the Revolution of 1917 Bialik's activity for Hebrew culture was viewed by the communist authorities with suspicion and the publishing house was closed. In 1921 Bialik emigrated to Germany and in 1924 to Palestine where he became a celebrated literary figure. Bialik's poems occupy an important place in modern Israeli culture and education.

8 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.

9 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.

10 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.

11 Warsaw Ghetto

A separate residential district for Jews in Warsaw created over several months in 1940. On 16th November 1940 138,000 people were enclosed behind its walls. Over the following months the population of the ghetto increased as more people were relocated from the small towns surrounding the city. By March 1941 445,000 people were living in the ghetto. Subsequently, the number of the ghetto's inhabitants began to fall sharply as a result of disease, hunger, deportation, persecution and liquidation. The ghetto was also systematically reduced in size. The internal administrative body was the Jewish Council (Judenrat). The Warsaw ghetto ceased to exist on 15th May 1943, when the Germans pronounced the failure of the uprising, staged by the Jewish soldiers, and razed the area to the ground.

12 Begin, Menachem (1913-1992)

6th Prime Minister of Israel, born in Poland. In 1932 he became head of the Organization Department of Betar for Poland. He organized groups of Betar members who went to Palestine as illegal immigrants, and in 1939 became the head of the movement in Poland. On the outbreak of World War II, he was arrested by the Russian authorities and in 1940-41 was confined in concentration camps in Siberia and elsewhere, but was released under the terms of the Stalin-Sikorski agreement. In 1943, he assumed command of the Irgun Zvati Leumi (National Military Organization), known by the initials of its Hebrew name as "Etzel". In this capacity he directed Etzel's operations against the British, and lived in disguise in Tel Aviv to avoid arrest. After the establishment of the State of Israel, he founded the Herut Movement and headed the party's list of candidates for the Knesset. In 1967 Begin joined the Government of National Unity in which he served as Minister without Portfolio until 1970. In 1977, Begin, head of the Likud party - after having won the Knesset elections - became Prime Minister of Israel.

13 Lermontov, Mikhail, (1814-1841)

Russian poet and novelist. His poetic reputation, second in Russia only to Pushkin's, rests upon the lyric and narrative works of his last five years. Lermontov, who had sought a position in fashionable society, became enormously critical of it. His novel, A Hero of Our Time (1840), is partly autobiographical. It consists of five tales about Pechorin, a disenchanted and bored nobleman. The novel is considered a classic of Russian psychological realism.

14 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.

15 Famine in Ukraine

In 1920 a deliberate famine was introduced in the 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.

16 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.

17 Zuskin, Benjamin (1899-1952)

one of the leading actors of the Moscow Jewish Chamber Theater. A close friend of Solomon Mikhoels, he headed the theater for the last few years of its existence. In 1949 came the Party order to liquidate the theater, and Zuskin was arrested along with other members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. He was tortured and died in prison.

18 Podol

The lower section of Kiev. It has always been viewed as the Jewish region of Kiev. In tsarist Russia Jews were only allowed to live in Podol, which was the poorest part of the city. Before World War II 90% of the Jews of Kiev lived there.

19 Komsomol

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

20 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.

21 Makhno, Nestor (1888-1934)

Ukrainian anarchist and leader of an insurrectionist army of peasants which fought Ukrainian nationalists, the Whites, and the Bolsheviks during the Civil War. His troops, which numbered 500 to 35 thousand members, marched under the slogans of 'state without power' and 'free soviets'. The Red Army put an end to the Makhnovist movement in the Ukraine in 1919 and Makhno emigrated in 1921.

22 Torgsin stores

Special retail stores, which were established in larger Russian cities in the 1920s with the purpose of selling goods to foreigners. Torgsins sold commodities that were in short supply for hard currency or exchanged them for gold and jewelry, accepting old coins as well. The real aim of this economic experiment that lasted for two years was to swindle out all gold and valuables from the population for the industrial development of the country.

23 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.

24 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.

25 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.

26 Yura, Gnat (Ignatiy) Petrovich (1887-1966)
Ukrainian Soviet actor, producer, People's Actor of the USSR. A talented comedian, he started his career as an actor in 1907 and worked in many different theaters of Ukraine. Yura is especially credited with developing the Ukrainian national theater.

27 Joint (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee)
The Joint was formed in 1914 with the fusion of three American Jewish committees of assistance, which were alarmed by the suffering of Jews during World War I. In late 1944, the Joint entered Europe's liberated areas and organized a massive relief operation. It provided food for Jewish survivors all over Europe, it supplied clothing, books and school supplies for children. It supported cultural amenities and brought religious supplies for the Jewish communities. The Joint also operated DP camps, in which it organized retraining programs to help people learn trades that would enable them to earn a living, while its cultural and religious activities helped re- establish Jewish life. The Joint was also closely involved in helping Jews to emigrate from Europe and from Muslim countries. The Joint was expelled from East Central Europe for decades during the Cold War and it has only come back to many of these countries after the fall of communism. Today the Joint provides social welfare programs for elderly Holocaust survivors and encourages Jewish renewal and communal development.

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

29 Campaign against 'cosmopolitans'
The campaign against 'cosmopolitans', i.e. Jews, was initiated in articles in the central organs of the Communist Party in 1949. The campaign was directed primarily at the Jewish intelligentsia and it was the first public attack on Soviet Jews as Jews. 'Cosmopolitans' writers were accused of hating the Russian people, of supporting Zionism, etc. Many Yiddish writers as well as the leaders of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee were arrested in November 1948 on charges that they maintained ties with Zionism and with American 'imperialism'. They were executed secretly in 1952. The anti-Semitic Doctors' Plot was launched in January 1953. A wave of anti-Semitism spread through the USSR. Jews were removed from their positions, and rumors of an imminent mass deportation of Jews to the eastern part of the USSR began to spread. Stalin's death in March 1953 put an end to the campaign against 'cosmopolitans'.

30 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.

31 7th March 1956 in Tbilisi

a mass demonstration was held which coincided with the third anniversary of Stalin's death. On 4th March the Georgian Central Committee received the secret report of Khrushchev about Stalin's cult of personality, and the next day Georgian newspapers did not publish the usual articles praising the leader. Several thousand university and high school students held a spontaneous demonstration on Rustaveli Prospekt, accusing Russians and Khrushchev of desecrating the memory of the great leader and thereby insulting the Georgian people. By 9th March the city was completely paralyzed: transport and stores did not operate, people sang songs about Stalin. At night tanks entered the city, dozens of demonstrators were killed, hundreds injured. By 12th March the revolt was suppressed, many participants were sentenced to imprisonment, students expelled from universities. Among then was Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the future dissident and first president of independent Georgia.