Agnessa Margolina

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Agnessa Margolina lives alone in a standard five-storied 1970s apartment building in a new district of Uzhgorod. She has a one-bedroom apartment. Her furniture was also built back in the 1970s. Agnessa is fond of growing room plants. She has pots with plants everywhere; on the windowsill, on the table and on specially manufactured stands. Agnessa is a short, slim and very vivid woman. She looks young for her age. She wears her gray hair in a knot. Agnessa is a witty woman. She likes joking and laughing. She still finds life interesting. She has bookcases full of books in the room. Most of them are books by Russian classic writers and books by Jewish writers and poets; classics by Sholem Aleichem 1, Peretz Markish 2 and others, and modern authors. There are many photographs on the walls and on the bookshelves. Agnessa is very sociable. She spends most of her time at home, but she is constantly on the phone talking to her acquaintances and neighbors. They call to discuss the latest news or daily life matters. When Hesed opened she made many new friends. She doesn't feel lonely.

My family backgrownd

My paternal grandfather, Boruch Margolin, was born in a village in Kiev region in the 1860s. I don't know where exactly he was born. My grandfather died long before I was born. I have no information about his family either. Of all my grandfather's relatives I only met his younger sister Hana once. She lived with her husband and son in Kiev. All I know about her is that she refused to evacuate from Kiev during the Great Patriotic War 3. On 30th September 1941 she was shot in Babi Yar 4 along with many other Jews from Kiev. My paternal grandmother's name was Cherna. I don't know her maiden name. My grandmother was born in Borispol village, about 30 kilometers from Kiev, in the 1860s. After he got married my grandfather moved to Borispol. He rented a mill and worked at it. My grandmother was a housewife. I heard that my grandfather was a big tall man. My grandmother was short and slim and she was very pretty when she was young. I cannot tell you about Borispol. I've never been there and my father didn't tell me about their town or house.

There were seven children in the family. They were all born in Borispol. I don't know their dates of birth, but I can tell who was older or younger than my father. Rosa was the oldest. Then came two

daughters, Sima and Nenia. Then my father Khaskel was born and then came his brothers Peretz and Shaya. The youngest was Beila, born in 1900. I don't even know my father's correct date of birth. His documents say he was born in 1894, but my father once told me that he was significantly older than what was written in his documents. This had something to do with recruitment to the army, but I don't know any details. My father hardly ever spoke to me about his childhood. I have no information about his family life or religiosity either.

I cannot tell how my father's brothers and sister lived before the Revolution of 1917 5. I only know that during World War I my grandfather sent my father's younger brother to the USA to save him from the army. I don't know how my father began to work.

The Revolution of 1917 brought changes into the life of my father's family. Borispol isn't far from Kiev. The Civil War 6 following the Revolution came to Borispol. The power in Kiev switched from one group to another. There were gangs 7 coming to town. Once a gang came to Borispol in 1918. I don't know any details. All I know is that the family failed to hide away. Bandits came to their house demanding food and money. Before they left they shot grandfather and my father's younger brother, Shaya. My grandfather and Shaya were buried in the Jewish cemetery in Borispol. Shortly afterwards the family left Borispol. My grandmother and her daughters moved to Kiev and my father, who was already married, went to Sumy.

My father's older sister Rosa married Avraam Stoyanovski, a Jewish man from Borispol. I don't know what Avraam did for a living. Rosa was a housewife. They had three children: two daughters, Fenia and Ida, and a son, Semyon. Rosa's family moved to Kiev in 1918. That year Rosa's husband died of typhoid. She had to raise her three children alone. She worked very hard all her life. She was a seamstress in the garment factory in Kiev. Rosa's older daughter became a teacher of history and her younger daughter became a teacher of the Ukrainian language and literature. They married Jewish men and had daughters. Semyon is a sculptor. He is a laureate of a state award. During the war their family was in evacuation in Ufa where both daughters worked as teachers. They returned to Kiev in 1944. Rosa wasn't religious after the Revolution. She didn't observe any Jewish traditions. Rosa died in Kiev in the 1970s at the age of over 80. She was buried in the Jewish section of a town cemetery. Her children still live in Kiev. I keep in touch with them. They sometimes visit me.

Sima married Samuel Shevtsov, a Jewish man from Kiev. They had two children: Sarra and Boris After she got married Sarra finished medical college and worked as a speech therapist in the children's hospital. Sima's family didn't observe any Jewish traditions or celebrate Jewish holidays. Sima's son died in a car accident at the age of about seven. He was hit by a car. Sima died of malaria in evacuation in the town of Nukha, Azerbaijan, in 1942. Sara and her family live in the USA. I have no information about them.

My father's sister Nenia was a dressmaker. She was married and her last name in marriage was Freidina. Nenia's family wasn't religious after the Revolution, but they always celebrated Jewish holidays. They lived in Kiev. Nenia had two children: Ludmila and Boris. During the war they were in evacuation in Middle Asia and after the war they returned to Kiev. Aunt Nenia died in Kiev in the 1960s. I have no information about her children.

My father's younger sister Beila got married in Kiev in 1931. I don't remember what her last name in marriage was. Her older daughter, Fania, was born in 1932 and her son, Boris, was born in 1937. Beila didn't work after she got married. I don't remember her husband. Beila wasn't religious and

her family didn't celebrate Jewish holidays or observe Jewish traditions. During the war she and her children were in evacuation in Nukha with us. After the war her family returned to Kiev. In 1989 Beila emigrated to Israel with her son's family. She died there in 1995.

I didn't know my mother's parents. Her father's name was Juda Efest. As for my mother's mother I don't know anything about her. My mother's parents died during an epidemic of Spanish influenza in 1903. I don't know where my mother was born. There were many children in the family. I never met any of my mother's sisters or brothers, but I heard about them. My mother's sister Sonia and her brothers Nisl and Gersh were older than her. My mother also had a younger brother named Leib. This is all I know about them. My mother Golda was born in 1896. After their parents died the children were taken to my grandparents numerous relatives' families living in various towns.

My mother was raised in the family of my grandmother's sister Shyfra, who lived in Borispol. I met her when I was a child. She had a hard life. She married a widower that had children. Grandmother Shyfra didn't have children of her own. She raised stepchildren. Grandmother Shyfra was a very kind and caring woman. She also looked after me later. She died in 1928. I don't know anything about my mother's childhood. I was too small to ask questions and when I grew up there was nobody to ask.

My parents lived in the same street in Borispol and knew each other since childhood. They got married in 1917. I don't know whether they had a traditional Jewish wedding. They were both beautiful. My father had a small thoroughly trimmed beard. He didn't have payes. He wore dark suits, light shirts and ties. He wore a hat outside and a yarmulka at home. My mother didn't wear a wig and she didn't wear a shawl either. She had beautiful thick hair that she wore in a knot. She wore common clothes. My parents lived with Grandmother Shyfra and her husband in their house in Borispol. Their children had their own families at that time and left their parents' home. I never met any of them.

After bandits attacked them and killed my grandfather and my father's brother Shaya my parents didn't want to stay in Borispol and moved to Sumy, a town in the northeast of Ukraine,about 350 kilometers from Kiev. They decided for Sumy since some relatives of my mother lived in this town, but I didn't know any of them. I cannot say what my father did for a living in Sumy, either. I was born in Sumy on 17th November 1920. At birth I was named Gnesia and this is the name written in my documents. When I went to school everybody began to call me Agnessa, a Russian name [common name] 8. My family spoke Yiddish at home, I said my first words in Yiddish as well. I can vaguely remember my mother. When I was a bit over three years old she died at childbirth. This happened on 6th April 1924. The baby was stillborn. They were both buried in the Jewish cemetery in Sumy.

I stayed in our neighbor's home during the funeral and thus cannot say anything about the funeral itself. My father's older sister Sima came to Sumy to take us to Kiev. I was taken to Cherna, my father's mother. She lived in a big four-storied building on Kontraktovaya Square in Podol 9, an old district of Kiev. My grandmother lived in a room in a crowded communal apartment 10 on the fourth floor and Aunt Rosa and her family lived on the second floor of this building. My father didn't live with us. Nobody told me where he lived and I still don't know where he lived all this time. I lived with my grandmother for a whole year without seeing my father. Nobody told me that my mother had died and I kept crying asking them to take me to my mother.

I remember my grandmother Cherna. She was a short woman. She didn't wear a wig or a shawl. She had thick curly hair. It was gray. She wore casual clothes in the fashion of that time. She liked dark skirts and white blouses with laces or embroidery. The only language my grandmother spoke was Yiddish and I never heard her say one word in Russian.

A year passed and then my father's sister Nenia took me to my father, who lived in Brovary, in the suburbs of Kiev. Nenia told me that I would have a new mother. That way I found out that my father had remarried. His second wife's name was Rasia. I don't remember her maiden name. Rasia was much younger than my father. She was born in 1902. Later I got to know that my grandmother Cherna, who was Rasia's mother's distant relative, arranged for them to meet. My father and Rasia had a Jewish wedding. Brovary was a small provincial town and there was no synagogue there. My father and Rasia had their wedding in the synagogue on Schekavitskaya Street in Podol, Kiev.

They settled down in the big two-storied brick house of Rasia's parents. There were ten rooms in the house. There was a stove for heating the house. There was no running water and the water was fetched from a well in the street. There was a small backyard with two apple trees, and a toilet made from planks. Rasia had four sisters and two brothers. The brothers were married and lived with their families elsewhere. The sisters were single. They lived in their parents' house. We had two rooms: one bigger room with a table, a wardrobe, two armchairs, a sofa where I slept and a smaller room that served as my father and Rasia's bedroom.

We lived from hand-to-mouth. My father was an accountant at the district consumer union, but he probably earned very little there. My stepmother had to go to work. She worked for a shop making gloves. She took work home. She had a sewing machine and she made these gloves working from morning till night. It was hard work and she rubbed her hands sore with that rough cloth. Neither my father nor stepmother had time to spend with me.

I remember Grandfather Avraam, Rasia's father, very well. He was very old and very kind. Adults didn't treat me like somebody important and always commented, 'She is just a child', while my grandfather understood that I was lonely and sad. He always had time and a kind word for me. I always tried to be where he was and he was very pleased that I could speak Yiddish. In the family of my stepmother only her parents spoke Yiddish. Rasia, her brothers and her sisters spoke Ukrainian. My grandfather began to teach me how to read and write in Yiddish and I learned a few letters. My grandfather wore a big black silk yarmulka and a black woolen hat when going out. He had a small gray beard, but no payes. He died in his sleep in 1926. He was buried in accordance with Jewish rules in the Jewish section of the town cemetery. I wasn't allowed to go to the cemetery since it was located rather far away and I was too small to walk there. I remember that my grandfather was lying covered with a sheet on some straw on the floor in a room. My grandmother and the daughters wore black gowns were sitting around him and lamenting. My grandfather was taken to the cemetery on a horse-driven cart. That's all I remember.

My father was religious. At that time Soviet authorities began to persecute religion [11]. Propagandists came to houses to tell religious people that there was no God and that before the Revolution religion helped rich people to exploit the poor by promising them paradise after death. People like my father, who worked in state institutions, weren't allowed to go to synagogues or churches. They could even lose their jobs if they did. My father continued observing Jewish traditions regardless. He went to the synagogue on Jewish holidays or on the date of my mother's

death. He prayed at home every day. I remember that I sometimes asked my stepmother where my father was and she said that he wasn't to be bothered since he was praying. Rasia didn't approve of his religiosity. She thought that if they lived during the Soviet regime they were to follow its rules.

I don't remember whether we celebrated Sabbath at home, but we celebrated Jewish holidays; that I remember well. Those were hard years and I remember holidays since we could eat more delicious food than ever. Rasia's mother took responsibility for the preparations for holidays. On Pesach the house was always thoroughly cleaned and washed. Window frames and doors were painted. I was to look for breadcrumbs in the house that were then burned. Before Pesach my grandmother and her daughters made matzah. There was always a lot of matzah made to last throughout Pesach. On the first day of Pesach all my grandmother's children got together in her home. Married sons brought their families with them. The oldest son conducted the seder. There were silver wine glasses for adults and little cups for children on the table. Everybody, even children, drank wine this evening. There was an extra glass with wine in the center of the table. My father explained to me that it was a glass for Elijah the Prophet 12, who came to each Jewish home that evening. I remember my cousins and I waited for Elijah to come to the house. Sometimes it even seemed that the wine stirred a little in the glass. I also remember Yom Kippur when children and adults fasted for 24 hours. My grandmother baked hamantashen on Purim. I learned the story of Purim from Rasia's father, my grandfather. The heroes of the story are Esther, a beautiful young Jewish woman living in Persia, and her cousin Mordecai, who saved the Jewish people, Ahasuerus, King of Persia, and evil Haman, the arrogant, egotistical advisor to the king.

I also liked Chanukkah for getting some money from all visitors on this day. Later I bought fruit drops and sunflower seeds for this money. I don't remember other holidays. Probably, there were no celebrations on other holidays.

My brother Boris was born in 1926. His Jewish name was Boruch. He was named after my grandfather, who was killed by bandits. My younger brother, Shaya, named after my father's younger brother, who was also killed, was born in 1928. They were circumcised on the eight day after their birth. I remember that quite a few old Jews with long beards and wearing black clothes and black hats attended this ritual. I think they were my father and stepmother's relatives from other towns. After the ritual they had a meal in a big room. A rabbi from Kiev sat at the head of the table.

Even after my brothers were born my stepmother still had to go to work. My father became rather sickly and often missed work. My stepmother actually was the breadwinner in the family. I became a baby-sitter for my brothers at the age of six. I was looking after them doing everything necessary. Both brothers called their mother 'Aunt Rasia' like I did. I'm used to calling them 'kids' and even now it's hard for me to call them 'brothers'. They are my 'kids'. I can't say that I didn't get along with my stepmother, but my childhood was very hard. I felt lack of motherly love and care and Rasia either didn't want or couldn't give these to me. She treated me like a servant that had to work off the food that she ate.

I went to the first grade at the age of eight. There was no Jewish school in Brovary and I went to a Ukrainian elementary school. I don't remember whether there were Jewish children in our class. At that time the national policy of the USSR propagated that there were no nationalities in the Soviet

Union. There was only one nation: Soviet people. The issue of nationality was of no significance. I don't remember any anti-Semitism. I had no problems studying in a Ukrainian school since I was used to talking Ukrainian with my stepmother.

Growing up

I finished my first year at school in Brovary. In 1929 my father got a job as an accountant at the knitwear factory in Kiev and we moved there. My father got two rooms in a communal apartment in an old two-storied house in Kurenyovka, a workers' district in Kiev. Six other families lived in this apartment. Three of them were Jewish families. All tenants got along well and tried to support and help each other. Children played together in the yard. There was a common kitchen with primus stoves on tables, stools and windowsill. There was always the smell of kerosene in the kitchen. There was a long hallway with many doors to all rooms. There was no running water in the apartment and we fetched water from a pump in the yard. There was a toilet in the yard. The rooms were heated with wood-stoked stoves because wood was less expensive than coal. There was a tiled stove in each room. There were dim bulbs with cloth shades. We moved our furniture into this apartment from Brovary.

My stepmother went to work at a garment shop located near the house. The shop made working clothes. My stepmother brought cuts to put them together at home. She worked at the sewing machine from morning till night. My father also worked a lot and came home late at night. I had to look after my brothers again since there was nobody else to do it. When I had to go to school my brothers went to kindergarten and elementary school. I went to the Ukrainian lower secondary school in the house next to ours. Almost half of my classmates were Jewish. There were also Jewish teachers. I had no opportunity to do homework at home. After classes I had work to do: take my brothers from elementary school and kindergarten, give them lunch and look after them. I also had to wash dishes and clean the apartment. There was hardly any time left to do homework.

I liked literature at school. We didn't have books at home and I borrowed some from the school library. I also liked mathematics. I studied well at school. I was a sociable girl and had many friends. I didn't chose my friends according to their nationality, but somehow most of my friends happened to be Jewish. I liked singing and joined the school choir when I was in the 2nd grade. We learned songs praising the Party and Stalin, in which children thanked them for our happy childhood. These songs called Lenin and Stalin 'Grannies'. We sincerely believed in all this. When I was in the 4th grade I went to a dance club. We danced Russian, Ukrainian, Moldavian and Polish folk dances.

I became a pioneer in the 4th grade. I was very excited about it. I was afraid they wouldn't admit me since I wasn't among the best in our studies. However, we were all admitted. I remember the ceremony. We were lined up in the schoolyard and the senior pioneer tutor recited the oath of young Leninists that we repeated after her. Then Komsomol [13] members tied red neckties on us and gave each of us a book. I got a 'Pioneer Hero' book about a pioneer that saved kolkhoz crops from fire.

When I became a pioneer I began to conduct anti-religious propaganda at home. At school we were told that we had to teach our retrograde parents that there was no God and that all about him was a fantasy. My father came home late from work and I waited for him on purpose to explain to him how wrong he was. My father got angry and argued with me, but since then he stopped praying at

home or he did it when I didn't see. Now with regret and shame I can say that we, pioneers, were taught to be informers. Our idol was Pavlik Morozov 14. Perhaps, my father was just afraid that I would tell someone at school about his religiosity and he would have problems at work. We didn't celebrate Jewish holidays at home any more. We celebrated Soviet holidays at school. On 1st May and 7th November [October Revolution Day] 15 schoolchildren and the school administration went to a parade in the morning and then came back to school. We prepared a concert to which we invited our parents and relatives. We tried to perform as best as we could.

My grandmother Cherna celebrated Jewish holidays at home. Although her daughters, who lived in Kiev, didn't celebrate any Jewish holidays at home and were far from observing Jewish traditions they visited my grandmother with their families on Jewish holidays. Only Nenia was religious. I remember my brothers and me visiting my grandmother on Pesach when she treated us to matzah. I didn't eat it and didn't allow my brothers to eat matzah. I explained to them that it was a religious holiday and Soviet schoolchildren weren't supposed to participate in it. I was an extremist, maybe because of my age.

My brothers went to a Jewish school in Podol that had just opened then. It was far from where we lived, but we could take a tram to get there. The language of teaching was Yiddish, but that was the only difference to any other Soviet school. The school curriculum was the same for all schools. My brothers studied well. They had time to do their homework, which I didn't. They had almost all excellent marks in their school record book. At home we spoke Ukrainian.

I remember the famine in 1932-33 16. My father worked at the factory where employees often received food packages. My stepmother also got food instead of money as payment for her work. The food stores were empty. Even when they were selling something there were long lines to get food. Villagers came to Kiev looking for jobs and food. People were dying in the streets. I remember once standing in line for bread. A woman standing before me fell. I tried to support her, but saw that she had stopped breathing. Many people died, but our family managed through this time somehow.

In summer 1934 I finished the 7th grade. I didn't have an opportunity to continue my studies since I had to take care of my brothers. I went to work as an accounting clerk at a shop making sheepskin coats. It was in Darnitsa, in the left bank district in Kiev. Commuting there was difficult especially in winter. I didn't have proper clothes and got cold. I worked there for three years until the father of my friend Feldman, who was the director of the Leather and Shoe Technical School at the shoe factory, offered me work at the factory. He said I could study at the school in the evening. I was eager to study and I went to work as an apprentice to a worker preparing raw work pieces. Employees of the factory could enter school without exams and I entered the Faculty of Shoe Production. There were many Jewish employees in the factory and many Jewish students in the school. I made friends at school. I rarely met with my former schoolmates. Many of them studied in colleges. They had new friends and new interests in life.

I joined the Komsomol League at the Technical School. I was a good student and a good employee. The Komsomol committee of the factory gave me a recommendation and I obtained my Komsomol membership certificate at the district Komsomol committee. I believed that since I had become a Komsomol member I had to improve my studies and work.

My family didn't suffer during the period of arrests that began in 1936 and lasted until the war began [the so-called Great Terror] 17. However, I couldn't help noticing that some of our neighbors and some of my colleagues disappeared, but we didn't discuss any of these subjects at home. The moment someone mentioned that somebody was arrested my stepmother cut off the discussion. She was afraid that our neighbors might hear.

I somehow didn't give a thought to Hitler's rise to power. I was probably not smart enough to understand what it meant. Later I heard that Hitler was exterminating Jews in Germany. My friends and I often went to the cinema where they often showed films about fascism in Germany. There was a film called Professor Mamlock 18. I don't remember any details, but I remember that it was about the persecution of Jews. I had some idea of what was going on. When Hitler attacked Poland we began to have military training at work. We were taught how to use gas masks, provide first aid to the wounded and take necessary measures during a chemical attack. However, I didn't think that a war could come to our country. We often got together at my colleague Ida Ginsburg's home. There were Jewish guys in this group of about 20-22 years of age. They often said that the war was inevitable and I was trying to convince them that our army was the strongest in the world and Hitler wouldn't dare to attack us. I was sure that it was true; I didn't have the slightest idea what a war was like.

My father got very ill in 1938. He couldn't go to work. He had severe heart problems. He died in 1939. My grandmother Cherna insisted that he was buried in Lukianovka Jewish cemetery 19 in Kiev in accordance with Jewish traditions. Nenia's husband recited the Kaddish for him. Nobody sat shivah for my father. In the 1960s this cemetery was closed and a TV tower was built on the site. We moved my father's ashes to the Jewish section of a new town cemetery.

During the war

In June 1941 I passed my last exams at the Technical School. On 30th June we were to have the ceremony of receiving diplomas, and a prom. My brothers were on vacation. Boris finished the 7th grade and Shaya the 6th grade at school. On Sunday morning, 22nd June 1941, my friend and I went to the cinema. The film had just started when all lights went out. We thought this was due to a technical problem, but over a loud speaker they announced that Kiev was being bombed by the Germans. We were asked to go home and listen to the news on the radio. I don't remember how I managed to get home. I heard the roar of explosions in the distance. There was only one radio in an apartment in our house. All tenants got together in this apartment. At noon we heard the speech by Molotov 20. He announced that fascist Germany had started to attack the Soviet Union without declaring a war. Then Stalin spoke. He said that we would win and we were convinced that it would be so.

Panic began on the first days of the war. People bought up all products in stores. There were long lines in all stores. I kept going to work. Our factory began to manufacture boots for the front. My brothers joined a pioneer unit. Pioneers patrolled streets taking people to bomb shelters during air raids. I was very concerned about my brothers. We didn't think about evacuation. We believed that our army would beat the enemy in the near future: we were raised this way and that's what we were told all the time. In late July there were rumors that evacuation would begin in Kiev. Then there were announcements on posts which said that those that weren't evacuating with their enterprises were to receive evacuation papers in their residential agencies. I stood in line a whole

day to receive an evacuation paper for our family: it was on a cigarette paper and we could hardly read our names.

In August 1941 enterprises began to evacuate. They evacuated their employees and equipment. We went into evacuation by ourselves. Grandmother Cherna, my father's sisters Sima and Beila and their three children were going with us. We couldn't take much luggage with us, but some food. Boris, Beila's younger son, was just four years old. I carried him and my stepmother carried a suitcase with clothes. My brothers had some textbooks for their next year at school. We boarded a cattle freight train at the railway station. There were three-tier plank beds along the walls in the carriage. People crowded in the passage and on the platform. There were no toilets. When we were leaving Kiev was being bombed. We were bombed on the way, too. Then the train stopped and people scattered around hiding under carriages. When the planes left we returned to our carriages and the train moved on. Some people got killed and wounded during air raids.

We didn't know our point of destination. When the train stopped at stations we could get off to get some water or go to the toilet. We were scared to get off the train not knowing when it was going to move again. Sometimes we could buy some food from locals at stations. I don't remember how long our trip lasted, but it was very long. We reached Krasnodar [a town about 1,000 km from Kiev]. We were accommodated in the evacuation office of a school building. There were mattresses on the floor where people slept side by side. We got a meal twice a day: some soup and cereal. We were glad to get at least this miserable food. All of us, except for old people and children, were taken to work in a nearby kolkhoz 21. It was harvest season and grain had to be removed so that Germans wouldn't get it. We worked very hard. 50-kilo-bags of grain were loaded at the threshing floor and we had to carry them over a distance of about 200 meters where they were loaded onto trucks. My stepmother, brothers and aunts went to work. My grandmother and the little ones stayed in the evacuation office.

When the harvesting was over I went to work as an attendant in a hospital. Hospitals for the badly wounded were usually based in the rear. I believed that it was my duty as a Komsomol member to help the wounded. I washed and fed the patients and read books to them. I begged them to eat and it was like feeding little children. Sometimes I was given a piece of bread that I took home to the children. We stayed there for over a year. Then we were told that Germans were approaching Krasnodar and we had to move on. It was March 1942. I remember the train going past trains with wounded people. When our train stopped we often got some bread or a bowl of soup from a sanitary train. They didn't have enough food themselves, but they wanted to share it with poor refugees. We got to Makhachkala, a town in Azerbaijan [about 2000 km from Kiev] and from there we went to Nukha town, about 150 kilometers from Makhachkala by boat, across the Caspian Sea. We stayed there until 1944.

Nukha was a small town at the Caspian Sea. The local population was Azerbaijani and there were a few Russians. There were no Jews. There was a silk and garment factory. The local population was poor. There were small plots of land near their the houses, but since the soil was salty they could hardly grow anything. Drinking water from wells was also a bit salty. Although locals were forced to give accommodation to those that came into evacuation, they were sympathetic and friendly with us. I don't remember one single case of anti-Semitism or rude or irritable attitudes throughout the whole time of our life in Nukha. Local people tried to help and support us. They shared with us whatever little they had.

As soon as we got off the boat in Nukha we were sent to a sauna. Our clothes were disinfected. Perhaps this helped to avoid typhoid in Nukha. My grandmother, my father's sisters and their children and we got accommodation in the house of a local woman. She had an airbrick house [bricks made from cut straw mixed with clay and dried in the sun]. She gave us two small rooms: one for my stepmother, my grandmother, my brothers and me and another one for Sima and Beila and their children. The owner of the house gave us what she could. There was a clay floor in the house. She gave us woven rugs to put on the floor, bed sheets and some crockery. We got planks at the evacuation agency and made trestle beds, stools and a table. We didn't have any warm clothes with us. We were lucky that winters in Nukha were mild. We got jobs at the evacuation office. They asked me whether I could count. I thought they were asking about mathematics that we had studied at school and said that I could. I was sent to work at the accounting office of the local silk factory. Their employee - a man - received a call-up from a military registry office. He was allowed to train a replacement at work for two months before going to the front. I had to work and learn simultaneously. Of course, I made mistakes since I had never dealt with accounting before, but I grasped things quickly and two months later I became chief accountant.

My older brother, Boris, went to work as a weaver in this factory and my younger brother, Shaya, was a courier for the director of the factory. He had problems sometimes since the director of the factory didn't speak a word of Russian while we didn't know Azerbaijani. Shaya had to ask a secretary to help him. She spoke a little Russian. We picked up some Azerbaijani soon, though. A local sovkhoz bred silkworms and supplied cocoons to the factory. They were dipped in special solutions in shops to get a thin silk thread from them. These threads were woven and the silk fabric was taken to a garment factory where they made underwear for pilots that was light and warm. Therefore, the factory was on the list of military enterprises. We received bread coupons at the factory and got a hot meal at the canteen. We got some soup and cereal. Sometimes we got a 50-gram cube of bread, as big as half a matchbox. My brothers and I tried to save this bread for my stepmother and grandmother. I also took my soup home. My stepmother couldn't get a job. She stayed at home looking after our grandmother and the little ones. We didn't observe any Jewish traditions in evacuation. We didn't celebrate any Jewish holidays and following the kashrut was out of the question considering the circumstances. We ate what we could get. We didn't celebrate Soviet holidays either.

In the evening when I came home I was almost dead on my feet. Sima and Beila got a job in a kolkhoz, 50 kilometers from town. They worked six days a week and had a day off on Sunday. They received food as payment for their work. My stepmother decided to go to the kolkhoz. She took my younger brother Shaya with her. The kolkhoz was located in a swampy lowland area. There were many malaria mosquitoes and the death rate from malaria was very high. After a couple of months my stepmother and Shaya fell ill with malaria. I heard about it and went to the kolkhoz to take them home. The chairman of the kolkhoz gave me a donkey-driven cart to take them back to Nukha. They were taken to the local hospital. My stepmother died within a week, in October 1942. My father's sister Sima contracted malaria. She died ten days after my stepmother died and a week later my grandmother passed away. There was no Jewish cemetery in Nukha since there was no local Jewish population in the town. The leader of the party unit of the factory, he was a Muslim, told me that he knew prayers and that Jews and Muslims had similar rituals. He conducted the funerals of my stepmother, Sima and my grandmother. I don't know what prayers he recited since he did it in Azerbaijani. Beila kept Sima's children. 22 years ago, in 1980, my brother Shaya was on

a business trip in Azerbaijan. He went to Nukha to go to the cemetery. Local residents helped him to find the house where we had lived during evacuation. The owner of the house recognized my brother and invited him to come in. It turned out that he and his family had been looking after the graves of our dear ones throughout all these years.

My brother was the only survivor of all members of our family that had malaria. He was very ill and had a high fever. I came to hospital after work and stayed there overnight. My brother was afraid of being alone. I was very happy that he survived. Unfortunately, this illness had a severe impact on his health condition. Malaria affected his heart. Shaya was often ill and had heart problems lateron. He was sickly and physically weak.

There was only an Azerbaijani school in Nukha when we arrived there. Later, when so many people came into evacuation, the town administration opened a Russian lower secondary school. My brothers went to school in the evening and in June 1944 they finished lower secondary school.

In August 1944 we heard that Soviet troops had liberated Kiev. We decided to go home. We didn't have money to buy tickets. We traveled on the roof of a carriage. There were seven of us: my brothers and I and Beila with three children. Before our departure the owner of the house where we lived went hunting and brought a deer home. His wife fried meat and gave it to us preserved in fat. This was our food during the trip. It was a cold fall. I found a worn and torn military coat and it served us as a blanket and coat for a long time.

When we arrived Kiev we stayed at the railway station overnight. Our house was ruined. In the morning I told my brothers to go to medical school. They wanted to become doctors, but since they only had lower secondary education they couldn't enter Medical College. My brothers met with Ivan Pevtsov, the deputy director of the school. They were admitted without exams. They returned and told me to go see Pevtsov as well. He asked me what I could do. When he heard that I had worked as an accountant he offered me a job at his accounting office.

We received two small rooms: four and two square meters. They were a former shower and restrooms. There was a steel bed in the bigger room where we slept. We had one blanket for the three of us. We received bread coupons. Shaya went to get bread on the first day and somebody stole it from him. We didn't have any food whatsoever. We tried to move as little as possible staying in bed exhausted. When Pevtsov found out that I didn't come to work he came to see me. He lost his leg after he had been wounded at the front. When we told him about what had happened he gave us his bread coupon and some money. I got 400 grams of millet and we were happy about it. We picked potato peels from a garbage bin near the canteen. In the daytime we went to see where they were and in the evening, when it got dark, we went to pick them. This saved us from starvation. In September 1944 school began and my brothers were happy to study.

I met my future husband at the home of my former school friend. I bumped into her on the street in 1944. I was very glad to see her again. I came to see her after work sometimes. On one of those evenings she introduced me to Israel Katz, a Jew and student at the Military Medical Academy. Israel was born in the town of Krasnoye, Vinnitsa region [about 200 kilometers from Kiev] in 1921. His father, Solomon Katz, was a member of the Party and an NKVD 22 officer. During the Civil War he volunteered to the Red Army and went to the front. When the Civil War was over he was offered to work with the NKVD. His mother's name was Maria. Israel's younger brother, Grigori, was born in 1924. When Israel was ten his mother left the family. Solomon was never at home and she got tired

of it. Solomon remarried and had two daughters with his second wife, but Israel never talked about them. When the war began Solomon went to the army and perished during the defense of Kiev in 1941.

In 1939 after finishing school Israel entered Kiev Military Medical Academy. When the Great Patriotic War began the academy evacuated to Middle Asia. Israel was there, too. The Academy returned to Kiev in 1944 and so did Israel.

After the war

Israel finished the academy in February 1945. We got married a few days before he graduated. We just had a civil ceremony in a registry office. My husband got a job assignment as a military doctor in a division in Budapest. He left. I couldn't follow him since my brothers hadn't finished school and I didn't want to leave them. My older brother, Boris, was rather sickly after evacuation. I stayed with my brothers. My husband came to see me about twice a year. My brothers finished school in May 1946 and received their [mandatory] job assignments 23 in Uzhgorod, where they were to work as assistant doctors. My brothers left there. They got accommodation in a room in a hostel.

My husband wrote me that their regiment was moving to Kiev. A few people from that regiment came to Kiev to make accommodation arrangements for officers. They brought me a letter from my husband and a food parcel. Later they told me that my husband's regiment reached the Soviet border from where it was sent back to Budapest. My husband's friends were going back to join their regiment and I decided to go with them. In Chop, a town on the border with Hungary, I had to get off the train. I stayed in the waiting room at the railway station. My husband came to pick me up after two days. He was transferred to Austria. He had an invitation letter for me to serve as an official permit. I only needed to have it stamped in Uzhgorod. I was glad to have this opportunity to see my brothers in Uzhgorod. In Uzhgorod we went to the military office and it turned out that on that day they received an order forbidding military officers to take their wives abroad with them. We were late. We walked in the town and I was crying. We were to be separated again. We went to see my brothers in the hostel. They were very happy to see me. I was like a mother for them. We lived in my brothers' room in the hostel for a week before my husband left. When he left I thought that I didn't want to go back to Kiev. My brothers were in Uzhgorod and in Kiev I was alone. I stayed in Uzhgorod.

Uzhgorod is a very beautiful town: it's clean and nice. There are beautiful houses in town. People in Uzhgorod are nice and friendly. There was a Hungarian, Ukrainian, Czech and Jewish population in Uzhgorod. The Jewish population was numerous. People were tolerant and friendly. There was a synagogue and a Jewish school. Neither my brothers nor I were religious. It was the way we were raised, but I liked it when religious people could go to the synagogue freely and celebrate Jewish holidays openly without hiding like my father had to.

I began to look for a job. I got an offer: there was a vacancy of an accountant at the forestry office. I was happy to get this job. I lived with my brothers in their room in the hostel. In January 1947 my son Semyon was born. After he was born my brothers and I moved to a small dark room in a communal apartment that we received from the health department. We repaired and refurbished it. There was a kitchen, bathroom, running water and toilet in the apartment that we were very happy about. I corresponded with my husband.

Two months after my son was born I had to go back to work. I got a job as a nurse in the same nursery where my two-month-old son went. When my son went to kindergarten I got a job as an accountant at the canteen there and later I became the director of this canteen. When my son went to school I went to work at the accounting office of a printing house. I worked there until I retired. Many of my colleagues were Jewish. I never faced any anti-Semitism at work.

I led a closed life. I had few friends and they were my Jewish colleagues for the most part. After work I rushed home where my son and brothers waited for me. We were rather hard up. We couldn't afford any entertainment. We didn't celebrate Jewish holidays. We only celebrated our birthdays at home. We had celebrations at work on Soviet holidays.

My marriage failed. My husband was on military service abroad and couldn't visit me often. I couldn't go to see him either. We met twice a year maximum. After a few years he suggested that we should divorce. I was so used to my status of a loner that I agreed. We got divorced. He supported me sending money until our son grew up. He sometimes came to see our son. That's all I can tell about him. I don't know what happened to him afterwards. I don't even know if he's still alive. It's sad, but what can one do about things...

My brothers completed their mandatory two-year assignment and entered the Medical Faculty of Uzhgorod University in 1948. They graduated from there successfully. My younger brother was the best student in his group; the older one had problems. He was often ill and missed classes. My younger brother's professor wanted him to continue his studies at the post-graduate school. Shaya was to receive a 'red diploma' [diploma with a red cover issued to graduates that had all excellent marks. Other diplomas had a blue cover]. After passing his state exams he went to the dean's office where he signed up for the receipt of a red diploma and then, a few hours later, he received a diploma in a blue cover at the ceremony. Someone in the management didn't like the idea of a Jewish post-graduate student. I remember Shaya coming home that evening. He threw his diploma on the table angrily. This was one of the very few cases in my life when I faced anti- Semitism. Both of my brothers received a job assignment in Subcarpathia: my older brother was to work in Uzhgorod and my younger brother in Irshava town, 120 kilometers from Uzhgorod.

My brother Boris died in Uzhgorod on 30th May 1955 at the age of 29. He died of a heart attack. He had a weak heart due to the malaria that he had in evacuation. We buried him in the Jewish section of the town cemetery. His colleagues and former fellow students came to the funeral.

My younger brother, Shaya, lived his life in Irshava. He was a well-known and respected doctor. Shaya married Galia Bezuglaya, a local Ukrainian girl, in 1957. I was very upset that my brother was marrying a non-Jewish girl. I was afraid that if there was an argument, which wasn't an unusual thing in a family, my brother's wife might say an anti-Semitic word. Fortunately, it didn't happen. My wife's brother and I became very close in the flow of years. Their son Boris, named after Shaya's older brother, was born in 1960. After finishing school Boris decided to become a doctor. He finished a Medical College in Uzhgorod. He works as a doctor in Irshava. Boris is married and has a wonderful daughter. For his achievements in healthcare Shaya was awarded the order of the Red Labor Banner. He died in Irshava in 1992. Shaya was buried in the common cemetery in Irshava. I keep in touch with his wife and his son's family. They sometimes visit me.

In January 1953 the time of the Doctors' Plot 24 began. This was the first time in my life when I doubted that officials were telling us the truth. I lived in a communal apartment. One of our

neighbors was a military man and his family. We were the same age and they were our friends. My son and their daughters were also friends. When the Doctors' Plot began he came home one evening and had a long discussion with his wife. When she came to the kitchen she said, 'These Jewish doctors should have been smothered in their mother's wombs'. They knew that I was a Jew and we got along well with them and I was surprised to hear from her that doctors would poison Stalin. Even a bigger surprise for me was that she emphasized that they were Jewish doctors. They were friendly as usual, but my attitude changed. This phrase was like a splinter in my memory and I couldn't forget it. I couldn't believe in their sincerity any more. I didn't believe what newspapers wrote about doctors, but I couldn't even imagine that this lie was one of Stalin's doings. He had been an idol for me since I was a child.

On 5th March 1953 Stalin died. I remember those horrible days. People cried without trying to hide their tears. I also cried after him like I didn't cry after my close ones. Everybody said the same: how we were going to live when he wasn't there and what was going to happen to the country and people. It took me some time to believe what Khrushchev 25 said about Stalin at the Twentieth Party Congress 26. At first I thought it was slander that Khrushchev needed to stand out and he chose this way to do it. I lived with this conviction many years. Only during perestroika 27 when many books, films and performances about that time were published I came to understanding many things. Many years had to pass before I began to understand.

My son Semyon studied at a secondary school and a music school. He was good at music, but he lost interest in what he was doing quickly. I had to force him to play. He finished seven years of music school with honors and seven years of secondary school. Semyon went in for sports. He was a candidate for a master of sports in gymnastics. I wished he went to study at a medical school, but he had no interest in medicine. After finishing a higher secondary school he entered the extramural department of Lvov Road College. By the end of his studies he became chief engineer of the regional road transport department. Upon graduation Semyon went to the army in the rank of an officer. After his service in the army he returned to Uzhgorod and went to work.

My son married Nina Mirmelshtein, a Jewish girl, in 1976. She was born in Uzhgorod in 1950. Her parents are doctors. She graduated from the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics at Uzhgorod University and went to work in a village, 150 kilometers from Uzhgorod. She was a teacher at school. Upon completion of her two-year assignment Nina returned to Uzhgorod. She couldn't find work at school and went to work as an economist at the Machine Building Plant. My son didn't have a Jewish wedding.

My older granddaughter, Julia, was born in 1977, and the younger one, Evgenia, in 1981. My son and his family came to see me. I was so happy to see my granddaughters. I helped my daughter-in-law with what I could. The girls had many interests in life. They were healthy girls. My older granddaughter was learning to play chess. In 1989 she took the first place among schoolchildren of Subcarpathia. My younger granddaughter was fond of sports. They also studied music and foreign languages.

After my son got married I received a one-bedroom apartment in a new house that the printing house built for its employees. We came to work at the construction site at weekends to do some cleaning. My son and his wife also received a two-bedroom apartment. I have a one-bedroom apartment with all comforts and a telephone.

I never joined the Communist Party, but I was a Soviet person with a Soviet mentality. When Jews began to move to Israel in the 1970s I was indignant about it. Of course, I didn't even consider this option. I couldn't understand my acquaintances or friends that submitted their documents to obtain a permit for departure. I didn't know how they could leave their country to go to Israel where everything was so different.

I also felt negative about perestroika. I thought it was wrong and that private entrepreneurship was not a good idea and there could be no capitalism in our country. Later a change for the better became obvious. The fall of the Iron Curtain 28, which separated the USSR from the rest of the world, was one example of such improvement.

My son and his family decided to move to Israel in 1990. Nina's parents were going with them. My son tried to convince me to go with them, but I decided to stay here. I was 70 and this wasn't the age to start a new life. Semyon settled down in Ramla. My son and his wife work twelve hours a day, but they are happy. My older granddaughter, Julia, went to the army after finishing school. After her military service she returned home and entered the Faculty of Mathematics at Tel Aviv University. The younger one, Evgenia, finished school and is in the army now. I visited them in 1995 and in 2000. I liked Israel, though I felt a little constraint without speaking Ivrit. It's a beautiful country. My heart sinks when I think that there is a war and people die. I liked the young people in Israel. They are so different from us. They are so free and self-confident. They love their country and are proud that their fathers and grandfathers built it. My granddaughters took me around. We went to other towns, museums and theaters. I enjoyed these trips, but even after I visited Israel, I didn't want to move there. I'm 80 already. It isn't the age to begin a new life.

In 1999 Hesed was established in Uzhgorod. This organization supports the revival of the Jewish way of life in Ukraine. We, old people, are very happy about it. When we retire we have to face loneliness and helplessness. We suffer much about lack of communication. Hesed has changed this situation. Volunteers visit old people and talk to them. They deliver delicious food to us. There are clubs in Hesed. They have interesting programs and we can get together there. Every Sunday we attend performances of the drama studio of Hesed. They stage Sholem Aleichem plays. I like theater and enjoy every performance to the utmost. We celebrate Jewish traditions in Hesed. I've become closer to Jewish traditions and am happy about it. I speak Yiddish with my new friends at Hesed. It's very pleasant for me. I'm very much interested in such things. I have a visiting nurse at home. She's become close to me. She brings me Jewish newspapers and magazines from Hesed. I have new friends and my life has become full, thanks to Hesed.

Glossary

1 Sholem Aleichem (pen name of Shalom Rabinovich (1859-1916)
Yiddish author and humorist, a prolific writer of novels, stories, feuilletons, critical reviews, and poem in Yiddish, Hebrew and Russian. He also contributed regularly to Yiddish dailies and weeklies. In his writings he described the life of Jews in Russia, creating a gallery of bright characters. His creative work is an alloy of humor and lyricism, accurate psychological and details of everyday life. He founded a literary Yiddish annual called Di Yidishe Folksbibliotek (The Popular Jewish Library), with which he wanted to raise the despised Yiddish literature from its mean status and at the same time to fight authors of trash literature, who dragged Yiddish literature to the lowest popular level.

The first volume was a turning point in the history of modern Yiddish literature. Sholem Aleichem died in New York in 1916. His popularity increased beyond the Yiddish-speaking public after his death. Some of his writings have been translated into most European languages and his plays and dramatic versions of his stories have been performed in many countries. The dramatic version of Tevye the Dairyman became an international hit as a musical (Fiddler on the Roof) in the 1960s.

2 Markish, Peretz (1895-1952)
Yiddish writer and poet, arrested and shot dead together with several other Yiddish writers, rehabilitated posthumously.

3 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.

4 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.

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

6 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.

7 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.

8 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.

9 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.

10 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.

11 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.

12 Elijah the Prophet

According to Jewish legend the prophet Elijah visits every home on the first day of Pesach and drinks from the cup that has been poured for him. He is invisible but he can see everything in the

house. The door is kept open for the prophet to come in and honor the holiday with his presence.

13 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.

14 Morozov, Pavlik (1918-1932)

Pioneer, organizer and leader of the first pioneer unit in Gerasimovka village. His father, who was a wealthy peasant, hid some grain crop for his family during collectivization. Pavlik betrayed his father to the representatives of the emergency committee and he was executed. Local farmers then killed Pavlik in revenge for the betrayal of his father. The Soviets made Pavlik a hero, saying that he had done a heroic deed. He was used as an example to pioneers, as their love of Soviet power had to be stronger than their love for their parents. Pavlik Morozov became a common name for children who betrayed their parents.

15 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.

16 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.

17 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.

18 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.

19 Lukianovka Jewish cemetery

It was opened on the outskirts of Kiev in the late 1890s and functioned until 1941. Many monuments and tombs were destroyed during the German occupation of the town in 1941-1943. In 1961 the municipal authorities closed the cemetery and Jewish families had to rebury their relatives in the Jewish sections of a new city cemetery within half a year. A TV Center was built on the site of the former Lukianovka cemetery.

20 Molotov, V

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

21 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.

22 NKVD

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

23 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.

24 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 wanted to use the Plot to purge the top Soviet leadership.

25 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.

26 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.

27 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.

28 Iron Curtain

A term popularized by Sir Winston Churchill in a 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.