Sarra Shpitalnik

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Kishinev
Moldova
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Sarra Shpitalnik is an intelligent and gentle lady of average height. She has a nice low voice and wears her hair in a knot. During our conversation she looks at me intently through her glasses. I enjoyed talking to her very much. Sarra is a wonderful story teller. She willingly answered my questions. She is a person of great erudition. Sarra lives in one half of a one-storied house in Bayukany, a district of private cottages in Kishinev. There is a small garden near the house and a few fruit trees, which had been planted by Sarra's husband Moisey Shpitalnik. Sarra's husband died about a year ago, in 2003. Bianka, a sweet little dog, keeps Sarra company. The dog is infinitely devoted to her mistress. There are two rooms and a kitchen in the house. One room serves as a living room. There are bookcases, a TV, a small sofa and a table by the window. There is a collection of dolls in national costumes, which Sarra and her husband collected, in two huge glassed stands in the room. Sarra and her husband bought some of them on their trips and their friends gave them some as well. Sarra treats me to sweet cherries from her garden.

My family background

My maternal grandfather, Srul Orentlikher, came from the town of Starokonstantinov in Ukraine [a district town in Volyn province; according to the census of 1897 it had 16,300 residents and 9212 of them were Jews]. I even have a document confirming that he was a common citizen of Starokonstantinov. Grandfather Srul finished a private Russian gymnasium as an external student and was a private teacher of the Russian language. My mother told me that my grandfather was a follower of Baal Shem Tov 1. When my grandmother was pregnant with my mother, my grandfather perished during the Russian-Japanese war in 1905. He only left a message to call the baby Beila, if it were to be a girl.

My grandmother, Hava Orentlikher, daughter of Shmuel Brick, was born in Bessarabia 2, in Kishinev, in 1878. She had many brothers and sisters, but I only knew two of them: sister Sura-Feiga and brother Srul Brick. Srul suffered from diabetes and had his arms and legs amputated. I remember my father carrying him on his back. He died, when I was a young girl. Srul had a son, who was an actor of the Jewish theater. He lived in Dnepropetrovsk [today Ukraine] in the USSR.

My grandmother's older sister Sura-Feiga Zilberman had a dairy farm near Kishinev. During a pogrom in 1905 the pogrom-makers drowned their cows in the Byk River [this river flows in

Kishinev] which was deep at that time. [Editor's note: a lot of pogroms took place all over the western provinces of Russia after 1905. When the Kishinev pogrom broke out in October, the first Jewish self-defense groups [see Jewish self-defense movement] 3 stood up to pogrom-makers.] Afterward, Sura-Feiga moved in with her daughters, whose names I didn't know, in Odessa. However, this wasn't the end of her misfortunes. Her daughters died during some epidemic. Sura-Feiga returned to Kishinev. One winter day she fell on the street and died. It must have been a heart attack. Sura-Feiga had many children, but I didn't know them. Her daughter Sonia was very close to our family. My mother loved her like her own sister.

I don't know how my grandparents met. I think they took things closer to heart in their time. When my grandfather perished, my grandmother lost her hair and forgot how to read and write: she suffered so much. She already had a son and was pregnant again. The tsarist government paid her a pension of three rubles. After Sura-Feiga died, she entered into a marriage of convenience with Zilberman, who worked at the slaughter house Beit-ha- Shkhita on Popovskaya Street, present-day Tsyrelson Lane; this building no longer exists. This is what my mother told me, I don't know any details about this marriage. All I know is that my grandmother didn't change her surname. Zilberman helped my grandmother to get a job as a cashier in the slaughter house. She lived in a two-bedroom apartment in the slaughter house which the community gave her.

My mother's older brother Haim was born in 1897. At the age of 17 Haim moved to Palestine. He secretly took a train to Constanza and from there took a boat to Palestine where the British drafted him into the army. He was to fight against strikers, but he couldn't fight against his own people and from there he escaped to France. He married Fira, a Jewish girl, who had come from Odessa. He changed his name to Philip. In 1928 his son Serge, who was a few months younger than me, was born. I've never seen any of them, but I remember that in 1937 my grandmother Hava visited Philip in Paris: there was a world exhibition there at the time. I was nine years old and remember this well.

My mother, Beila Molchanskaya [nee Orentlikher], was born in Kishinev in 1905. Since she had lost her father she was entitled to free education. At first, she finished an elementary Jewish school and then studied at the Skomorovskaya private gymnasium. They studied in Russian, but there was Jewish history and Jewish traditions taught at the school. My mother spoke Yiddish at home. Old Zilberman loved my mother more than his own children as she was a very kind and sweet child. My mother returned his feeling. During her exams to the eighth grade at the gymnasium she signed her first written work with the surname of Zilberman. Unfortunately, she failed her exams and didn't take other exams and so it happened that she finished only seven grades of the gymnasium.

My mother got a job as a cashier in a store. She was very sociable and had many friends. My grandmother leased one room to make ends meet. Once, a young provincial man came in. He wanted to rent a room. At first he didn't quite like the room with its ground floor, a trestle bed covered with a clean white sheet, and plain curtains on the window. He left, but returned some time later: something drew him back to this house. He was my father, Shlomo Molchanskiy.

My paternal grandfather, Meir Molchanskiy, was born in Bessarabia in 1854: I don't know the exact location. He lived in the Jewish farming colony in Dombroveni [Jewish farming settlement in Soroki district, founded in 1836. They grew tobacco and sheep. According to the census in 1897 there were 1,815 residents, of them 1,726 were Jews]. My grandfather Meir rented and later purchased a

plot of land. I don't know any details of their everyday life, but I know that Grandfather Meir was deeply religious. When he visited us in Kishinev I always went to the prayer house in the yard of our house to call him for dinner. He prayed there with his head and shoulders covered with a tallit and had a tefillin on. He wore a long black tunic and a cap on his head. My grandfather had a big white beard and a moustache. His sons studied in cheder. I think that my grandmother, Haya Molchanskaya [nee Tsukerman], was the head of the family.

My grandmother Haya was born in Vertyuzhany near Dombroveni in 1860. She observed Jewish traditions and wore a wig. I remember when Grandmother Haya visited us in Kishinev, she used to press her hands to her cheeks while she watched Grandmother Hava and my mother do the housework, and she would say, 'Women, women, how you live and how I live' She had a very hard life: cooking, washing and fixing her husband and sons' clothes. My grandmother came to Kishinev wearing her only velvet dress. She also said when she died and the Lord asked her, 'Haya, what did you do on Earth?' she would say, 'Before the potatoes got cooked my sons ate them and when I baked loaves of bread, they were gone before I put them on the table.'

I visited Dombroveni twice when I was a child. My grandparents lived in a big village house with a big yard and a well in the yard. There were trestle beds covered with Moldovan hand-woven rugs. There was a good library of Jewish books in Dombroveni. Some residents were advanced readers in Yiddish and they almost arranged readers' conferences. I remember playing with other children there. I don't know whether there was a synagogue, but there was a cheder and a rabbi. His name was Steinberg and he perished during the Holocaust. Grandmother Haya died in 1939. She had problems with her liver, perhaps, it was cancer. My father went to see her in Dombroveni before she died.

My father had six brothers. They were farmers like their father. In the 1920s four of them moved to America. Srul lived in Pittsburgh in the United States. Brothers Velvel and Shmuel moved to Argentina. Leizer, the youngest one, lived in Sao Paulo in Brazil. I know little about them. Leizer made his way in life, but the others were very poor. Srul bought a house in Pittsburgh, but failed to pay for it and lost it. He was the only one who found us after World War II, and sent parcels with clothes and food through the Red Cross.

Haim, the oldest son, and his wife Montia lived in Dombroveni with my grandparents. They had five children: Iosl, Leib, Huna, Shyfra and Perl. In the late 1930s Iosl illegally crossed the Dnestr [the border between Romania and USSR] to the USSR and we didn't hear from him for a long time. My father's brother Avrum and his wife Golda lived in Vertyuzhany. I don't know what Avrum did for a living. He had eight children. The family was very poor. Rachil, one of his daughters, also moved to the USSR in the late 1930s. Grandmother Haya tried to help them and sometimes she even sold a piece of land.

My father, Shlomo Molchanskiy, was born in Dombroveni in 1897. My father was a very interesting person. He wanted to study instead of farming. He went to cheder where his teacher was Steinberg. At the age of eleven he became an atheist based on some conclusions that he made after studying some discrepancies in the Tanakh. His teacher Steinberg use to say that even if such a decent person was an atheist, it was alright. My father's brothers were against my father's intentions to continue his studies. He had a conflict with them and moved to the neighboring village where he taught Hebrew, the Torah and prayers that he already knew. He stayed one week

with one family, and the next week with another, having meals with them. He was paid little, as one year later he visited home with just a bag of prunes and two new shirts.

Later, my father moved to Soroki and entered a Jewish gymnasium there. He rented a room from the Kerchman family. Mr. Kerchman owned a mill. My father told me that this mill was damaged during a flood. He had an affair with one of his landlord's daughters. My father didn't like to talk about it, but I know that this girl, I think her name was Mina, was a communist and an underground activist. She involved him in studying Marxism. In Vertyuzhany and Dombroveni there was a teacher. His name was Samuel Abramovich Magin and he came from Kherson, and propagated Marxism. He and his wife, Liya Isaacovna, were popular people in this area. My father remained life-long friends with them.

In 1918 Romanian forces came to Bessarabia. [see Annexation of Bessarabia to Romania] 4 Some were marauders. One soldier took away a watch and some other belongings from the Kerchmans, but my father remembered him and when he saw this soldier on a military parade in Soroki, he pointed out this soldier to the officer: 'This soldier robbed my landlords.' I don't know what happened to the soldier, but the officer told my father, 'You must leave Soroki within 24 hours.' My father came to Kishinev with no money, but he found his fellow countrymen there and they helped him. One of them was Samuel Abramovich Magin, who was living in Kishinev. He was an official in the EKO 5 Jewish colonization association funded from London. Samuel Abramovich hired my father to teach his sons, Dodik and Nyuka, Hebrew. He had always wanted to be a teacher and enjoyed teaching the boys, but to be able to earn more he took up a course in accounting. He hated accounting, but worked as an accountant till he died.

Growing up

Shortly after he rented a room from Grandmother Hava, my parents fell in love with each other and got married in 1927. When I was born in 1928, my parents rented an apartment in the house across the street from where my grandmother lived on the corner of Tsyrelson Lane and Oktavian Gog Street. This house belonged to former Russian aristocrats: the Meche-Nikolaevichs. Maria Petrovna Meche-Nikolaevich liked our family, and I was her favorite. She had two good-for-nothing sons. Though I was only three years old, I remember how adults said that one was gay and the other one a card gambler. To cut a long story short, they brought their mother to bankruptcy. Fleshel, a Jewish man, bought this house and the annex in the yard. We lived there till I turned seven.

Those were happy years. There was a neglected garden near the house where our neighbors' children and I played Indians and made a great wigwam in the bushes. There was also beautiful 'bull-de-neige' in the garden [decorative bushes with ball-shaped white flowers], very rare in Kishinev. In the backyard there was a big scary dog on the chain. When I was two I once wandered there alone and the dog bit me on my cheek. My mother and her friend, who also rented a part of the house, soaked my cheek with a wet towel while they waited for the doctor. The doctor was everybody's favorite in Kishinev, Doctor Slissel, he said, 'Great that you didn't call for me at once, or I would have seamed the injury and she would have a scar, but now it will heal all right'. My father always tried to raise me as a brave child. Since the doctors told my mother that she could have no more children, he saw in me all of his unborn children: he loved children. For example, he put me on a two-wheel bicycle in my early childhood. By the way, I never learned to ride a bicycle.

Well, my father wanted me to get rid of this fear of the dog and about a year later he took me to the back yard: 'Don't fear this dog, it's a good dog and you might have just slipped on the chain.' Well, then the dog almost tore off my father's lip and this time the doctor had to seam it.

I was a rather capricious and naughty child. I gave my mother a hard time and she sent me to various children's institutions. I went to a Jewish kindergarten for a year: for some reason it was called a 'Hebrew' kindergarten. All I learned there was counting to four. There was no Hebrew there. They taught us music. Once I conducted a noise orchestra where the children played various wooden trinkets on the stage of a club. I had a lovely marquisette dress on, which was pinned. Well, I gesticulated so hard that it got unpinned and fell off me leaving me in my panties in front of everyone. They drew the curtain, but I was so distressed about all the shame, particularly in front of the boys whom I liked: Boria Fleshel, our landlord's son and his friend, Syoma Leiderman.

My mother's health condition was very poor. She had problems with my birth: she suffered three days before the doctors pulled me out with forceps. As a result of this hard delivery she almost lost her sight. She took treatment in the Tumarkin private eye clinic. Doctor Faina Chegorskaya gave her injections in her eye: they were very rare at the time. To distract my mother's attention she told her various stories. She became a friend of our family. The doctors in Kishinev advised my mother to go to Vienna with her sight problems. My father somehow managed to get some money and we all went there and stayed there for a few weeks. I was five then.

I remember Schonbrunn [palace], Prater [amusement park in Vienna], and the bed of Maria Theresa [Austrian Archduchess (1717-1780) of the Habsburg family] in a museum. My parents went to the Vienna Opera House and I stayed in the hotel room. I remembered Vienna very well. When we went to Chernovtsy after the war I said right away that it resembled Vienna a lot: and this was true since it was an Austro-Hungarian town, too. In Vienna my mother was told that she could continue her treatment with doctor Chegorskaya, who went to Vienna for annual trainings.

My father worked as an accountant in a few offices to make ends meet. He also took part in public activities and worked for a number of Jewish organizations: he was a member of ORT 6, and worked for the League of Culture - Kulturliga [Jewish Kulturliga in Kishinev - public organization. It was spreading modern enlightenment among Jews.] My father had some ties with the communist underground movement. He wasn't a member of the communist party, but he supported communists: they used to type some communist posters on the hectograph in the slaughter house. It was said at home that even Anna Pauker [one of the leaders of the Romanian communist movement, Jewish] was hiding in the slaughter house.

My father also had some contacts with Zionists. He subscribed to a Zionist newspaper in Yiddish in Kishinev, 'Unzere Zeit' [Our time]: it was a must in each Jewish house to have it. We spoke Yiddish and Russian at home. I also remember that my father always somehow got the 'Izvestiya' [News, daily communist newspaper issued in Moscow]. I learned to read from this newspaper asking him, 'Which is this letter? And this one?' At the age of three I could read in Russian. My father was a sociable man. When we took a walk in the town, every minute someone stopped to talk to him. Somehow all kinds of people, craftsmen or very educated people, knew him. Our acquaintances from Dombroveni and Vertyuzhany always knew that they would find food and accommodation in our home. Our home was like a caravanserai.

My mother was very kind and found good in all people. If someone called another a complete fool, she commented, 'Right, but how nicely he treats his wife's relatives.' She never felt jealous or angry. I called her a 'Tolstoy follower' because she was so fond of Tolstoy 7. My mother was five when Tolstoy died and she remembered that day for the rest of her life. All the people in Kishinev repeated, 'Tolstoy died, Tolstoy died.' She didn't know then who he was, but remembered this. Despite her poor sight she used to reread his work, 'War and Peace,' and knew various extracts by heart. She was also fond of Galsworthy [John (1867-1933): English novelist and playwright, best known for his novel series, 'The Forsyte Saga'] and 'Jane Eyre' by Charlotte Bronte. My mother was a kind and jolly woman. She used to burst into a loud laughter which sometimes grew almost into hysterics. She and my father had a smooth loving relationship. I think if somebody had hurt my mother, my father would have killed him. Grandmother Hava treated her son-in-law with respect. In general, we were respectful towards each other in the family.

At the age of six I went to a Romanian elementary school. I had a very good first teacher. Her name was Yelena Bogos and I think she belonged to the local Russian aristocrats. On the first day she called my mother to school and indicated to her that the only thing I could say in Romanian was a greeting. My mother replied, 'Let her stay and then we shall see. Unfortunately, I can't help her since I don't know Romanian, and her father has no time to teach her.' People in smaller towns knew only Moldovan. Grandmother Hava knew Moldovan, but my mother didn't. However, I picked up the language promptly. I was much better at languages than my mother. After finishing the first grade I was awarded for being the best pupil.

By that time my father was earning well. When I was seven, we bought an apartment in the building in the yard connecting Yekaterininskaya Street and Chasovennyi Lane. There was running water, electricity and gas in the house. There were 26 apartments in the building and all tenants were Jews by some coincidence. It was a whole Jewish settlement: a real eshuv. There were all classes of Jews: from one who married a prostitute to very intelligent educated families. They spoke Yiddish, but knew Russian and many spoke Romanian. We had an apartment on the second floor which comprised four rooms: two had windows on the ceiling, always dirty. My grandmother, who worked and lived with us, had her own room, my parents had a bedroom and there was a living room. I slept in the living room, and had a desk covered with green cloth in my parents' bedroom. One of our relatives, who later perished during the Holocaust, had made this desk. My parents had a nickel-plated bed decorated with shining balls. The rest of the furniture was plain. We had many books in Russian and Yiddish at home. I had my own collection of books in Romanian and Yiddish.

My mother's cousin sister Sonia Gerstein, nee Zilberman, her husband and sons lived on the first floor. Her husband Haim was a bookbinder. Her sons Shmuel and Ershl were much older than me. Aunt Sonia was a housewife. She was a cheerful and charming dame. She and her husband took no interest in politics whatsoever. The Gersteins liked parties, guests and playing poker. We celebrated Jewish holidays together and were friends before and after the war. In late 1930, when Hitler came to power a depressing atmosphere settled all over Europe. There were fascists in Romania. Anti-Jewish laws were issued: Jews could only work for Jews, Jews couldn't have Christian servants and there were other restrictions. We heard about what was going on in Europe. We knew that Mr. Baron, the owner of the hotel in which we stayed in Vienna committed suicide before the deportation of Jews. Then my father said we had to move closer to the Gersteins.

At first, the Cuzists 8 failed with their first putsch. On our way to the gymnasium we saw dead bodies of Iron Guard 9 members, on the corner of Pushkin and Alexandrovskaya Streets. There was also a poster with the inscription threatening that this was what was to happen to all traitors. We were very inspired thinking that this was the end of fascism, but unfortunately, it wasn't. My parents' friends had continuous political discussions, debates and arguments at home. Some were anglophiles and some Zionists, but all of them liked the USSR and believed it to be the country of happiness. Most of our friends were Jewish. The Goldstein family was the closest to us. Zalman Goldstein was a printer and an active underground communist. In 1928 he took part in the trial of 114 that started in Cluj on 10th September. He and other prisoners went on a 45-day-long hunger strike to get amnesty. One of the political prisoners, Haya Lifshitz, starved to death. After the war, when I grew up, I asked Zalman, 'Why were there so many Jews among the communists?' and he replied, 'We just involved our friends in this underground movement, but there were Romanians and Russians there, too'.

Though my father was an atheist, he knew and honored Jewish traditions. He was a real Jew deep in his heart. He had a good conduct of Hebrew and Yiddish and was interested in everything Jewish. He read books mainly in Yiddish: Mendele Moiher Sforim 10, Sholem Aleichem 11, [Itshack Leibush] Perez 12. My father was friends with Yakov Sternberg, a wonderful Jewish poet, who lived in Bucharest [today Romania]. Yakov Sternberg was born in Lipkany, and so were other writers and poets like Eliezer Steinberg, Moshe Altman. Bialik 13 called this group 'Lipkany Olympus.' Yakov Sternberg was also one of the founders of the Jewish [State] Theater in Bucharest 14. He visited us whenever he came to Kishinev. I remember how he taught my mother to make coffee the Romanian way.

We celebrated Jewish holidays at home, though my father didn't go to the synagogue. Grandmother Hava played an important role here. She was very religious and observed all Jewish traditions: she followed the kashrut and didn't work on Sabbath. The rest of the family didn't follow the kashrut. We ate treyf food. On Jewish holidays my grandmother went to the choral synagogue. She fasted on Yom Kippur and spent a whole day at the synagogue. I would run there to see how she was feeling. My mother also fasted.

On Pesach we always had matzah at home and celebrated seder with the Gersteins. Aunt Sonia's husband, Haim Gerstein, conducted seder according to the rules: He read the Haggadah; his sons Shmuel and Ershel posed the four questions [mah nishtanah] and searched for the afikoman. I remember my father muttering that Haim messed it all up on our way back home. I also remember learning these four questions in Yiddish, I remember I had asked them somewhere, but I can't remember the place.

We celebrated Rosh Hashanah. My parents had many friends, they visited us for a meal and then we went to the town park. This was the season of nuts and grapes. We drank freshly squeezed grape juice. It foamed and was wonderfully delicious.

We also celebrated Chanukkah with Aunt Sonia: this was her birthday. I don't remember money, but Grandmother Hava always made latkes and dumplings filled with cottage cheese and potatoes.

On Purim we made shelakhmones, filled baskets with hamantashen, and other sweets, to take them to our relatives and acquaintances, but there were no performances.

I also remember Khamishoser bishvat, called Tu bi-Shevat at present. We always had Israel fruit on this holiday: raisins, dates, almonds, figs and horn tree pods. Pods had a divine taste, and they looked like acacia pods.

My grandmother and mother cooked delicious food: clear soups, borsch [a traditional Ukrainian beet soup], green soup, dumplings and of course, gefilte fish. My grandmother went to the market, but my mother went to the shops and took me with her. I remember the posh Fishman's store on Alexandrovskaya Street where we bought two sardines for my sandwich. We also bought sausages and I enjoyed watching them slice it. Alexandrovskaya Street changed its name several times. Now it is Stefan cel Mare Street [named after Stephan the Great, the ruler of the Moldova principality between 1457-1504. He conducted the policy of centralization]. In Moldova and Bessarabia everything changed with the arrival of new leaders: names of streets, leaders, regime and the country.

There was a big shoe store of Lapshuk on Alexandrovskaya Street. On Pushkin Street, Karaims [followers of the sect of Judaism founded in the 8th century] owned a 'Pamona' store, which sold citrus and other exotic fruits. There were smaller stores in the lower tower i.e. the haberdashery store of Matracht owned by Lukstick, and another store owned by Leiderman. There were excellent confectioneries in Kishinev. There was one owned by Gohman near where we lived. This building still stands on the corner. They served orange juice and Italian 'tutti-frutti' wrapped in aluminum foil, and also chocolate chestnuts. We went there occasionally, but I didn't have a sweet tooth. I liked bananas, which were expensive, but my parents used to buy me one banana.

There were horse-drawn carts and trams in Kishinev. Only wealthy plant owners like Shor had cars. Shor, a Jew, owned a distillery. There were a few libraries in the town: a municipal library in primaria, the Moldovan National Library was based in it. There is a rare books department in it. There was a Russian library of clerks on Mikhailovskaya Street: I used to read books in Russian there, when studying at the gymnasium. There were school libraries. There were two vocational Jewish schools for girls and many Jewish schools for boys: and all of them had libraries. People read a lot due to lack of other entertainment. There were two big cinema theaters: Odeon and another cinema; I don't remember the name. We even watched Soviet movies during the Romanian rule, 'Merry guys', 'Alexandr Nevskiy' and 'Happiness hunters' [(1936), about the establishment of Birobidzhan 15 in the Far East] that was shown under the title of 'Emigrants'.

In my childhood I used to spend my free time in the park near our house where there was a Christian church. We played 'one tsar gave another soldiers', and 'geese, geese, come home.' We also went to the town garden where there is a monument of Pushkin 16, but after 1938 it became dangerous for Jews, as young Romanian fascists, and Cuzist followers, had gatherings there. They were aggressive. Theaters from other towns came on tours to Kishinev: for example, the 'Vilner Truppe' from Vilnius. My parents went there, but I stayed at home. Jews lived everywhere in the town, but there were many in the lower part: the poorer part of town. Wealthier Jews resided uptown.

After finishing the fourth grade I entered Regina Maria, a Romanian gymnasium. We had good teachers. 25 percent Jewish children were allowed. There were 100 students in our 'A' and 'B' classes and among them, twelve Jewish girls in the A class and 13 in the B. We had strajer 17 uniforms. Strajeria was a student movement, something like boy-scouts. We wore dark blue

culottes which were knee-length, white blouses and dark blue sweaters, belts with steel badges like the military had and many other badges: the Romanian emblem, etc. Every morning my grandmother helped with my clothes: pinning the badges and muttering in Yiddish 'noch a zwod, noch a zwod': 'one more nail and another one'.

We had religious classes. Christian girls had their own classes, one Catholic girl had a Catholic teacher and we, Jewish girls, studied prayers with a rabbi. We studied double Italian accounting from the first grade. Boys studied Latin and Ancient Greek, but we didn't. We studied French from the first grade and German from the third grade. In 1940 my father decided I had to study Hebrew. Since he had no time to teach me my parents hired a private teacher. Her name was Hana Levina. I often recall her. When my parents asked her how talented I was she replied, 'She has no special talents, but she is a very intelligent child.' I studied the Hebrew alphabet, but soon we had to terminate our classes. In summer 1940 the Soviets came to power. [see Annexation of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union] 18

During the War

In 1940 the Jewish population of Kishinev increased significantly: many Bessarabians working in Romania returned to Bessarabia and many arrived from Transylvania 19. We had to share our apartment with Jews from Transylvania. They spoke Hungarian and didn't know a word in Yiddish and my mother couldn't talk to them. Many Jews arrived from Russia [then USSR] and from Tiraspol, Odessa [today Ukraine]. We had no fear of the Soviet power: we were rather sympathetic. My father's acquaintances used to say a long time before this happened, 'Ours will be here soon,' and some tradesmen thought, 'when ours will come, we will become clerks in our stores.' However, my father got disappointed with the Soviet power pretty soon. He went to work in the Glavlessbyt timber sale office. When his new boss saw his new ball pen that Uncle Philip had sent him from Paris, he took it away saying, 'Is this a ball-point pen? It used to be yours, but now it is ours'. My father found this very strange.

Then arrests began. Our acquaintance Milstein, a tradesman, was arrested. The main cause of his arrest was that the new authorities liked his mansion. My father was a brave man. He went to the NKVD 20 office and said that Melstein had contributed money to the communist party, but they responded, 'Just be grateful that you are free and take your good leave.' About 60 years later a French-speaking man came to the Jewish library where I worked. He introduced himself: 'I am the artist Milstein.' He turned out to be the son of this man that my father had stood up for. He lives in Paris and recently sent me an album of his pictures.

Everything was new in 1940. Adults talked in whispers and the kids were like Pavlik Morozov 21 seeing kulaks 22 in all people. Our gymnasium like all others became a school. Students who finished the second grade of the gymnasium went to study in the sixth grade. I made one mistake in my first Russian dictation: I wrote the Russian word 'redka' ['turnip'] with a 't'. I got an 'excellent' mark. The teaching switched to the Russian language. Our French teacher moved to France, as she said: for religious motives. Some teachers arrived from the USSR. I was eleven and a half and I fell in love with our teacher of history, Pyotr Demianovich, from the USSR. He taught ancient history: it was fabulous; it's hard to describe his classes.

In 1941 the war began [see Great Patriotic War] 23. My father wasn't subject to recruitment any longer. Grandmother Hava, my parents and I decided to evacuate. At first we went to Vadul lui

Voda with our luggage, but we had no passes and weren't allowed there. Then my father stood in line to obtain these passes that nobody ever looked at. I need to mention here that it was possible to evacuate from Kishinev. Only those who remembered World War I and thought that the Germans weren't going to do any harm stayed there. Many others were confused by receiving letters from Romania where their acquaintances wrote, 'We get along well with our new neighbors.' Many of my classmates stayed and perished with their families. After the war I only met two or three of them: Zlata Tkach, nee Berehman, from the parallel class, she is a composer in Kishinev, and Tova Nemirovskaya, nee Kalekstein, she lives in Los Angeles and calls me every second week since I became a widow.

Well, we evacuated. At first we stopped in Tiraspol where my father's office gave him his last salary and then we started on our long journey to the Northern Caucasus, literally under the falling bombs. We got to Ordzhonikidze, present Stavropol Krai. We stayed in a village in the house of very nice people, whose son was at the front. They gave us food saying, 'Perhaps, somebody will help our son as well.' We stayed with them for a month, but my parents didn't want to overburden them: 'We have to support ourselves.' And we went to a sovkhoz 24. There was a possibility to go to work. My father and grandmother worked in a field. My mother did the housework and I went to school, but then the front line approached and we moved on. From Makhachkala [today Russia] we took a boat across the Caspian Sea and farther to Uzbekistan from the coast.

We spent the winter in Fergana. My father worked as a loader at a plant. We rented an apartment from a Moldovan family. There were many Moldovan people there [Editor's note: nationality in the European part of Russia, Orthodox Christians]. My mother fell ill with pneumonia, but since they had icons in the house they didn't allow her to do her toilet in the house and having high fever she had to go outside. In spring, we found out that the Gersteins were in Bukhara and we moved there. We rented a room in the women's part of an Uzbek house, and our landlords moved to the men's part. The Gersteins lived in another room. My father was recruited to the Labor army and sent to the railroad construction in Cheliabinsk region [today Russia]. He sold his bread ration and sent us this money to support us. He ate his potato ration. My mother went to work as a cook in an office where she received white flour and no food products. We made noodles and 'zatirukha' [water added to flour cooked in the frying pan] from this flour.

My father respected my grandmother a lot and believed her to be a strong woman. He sent her a letter in Yiddish: 'Please take care of my family.' Grandmother Hava was very weak at the time. She was a diabetic like her older brother Srul. She had gangrene and then dysentery. She looked terrible and had lice, but she still gave us her bread ration which she was given in hospital. My grandmother died in 1942, we buried her in the Jewish cemetery before Yom Kippur. During the season of rain we found my mother's cousin brother, my grandmother's brother Srul Brick's son. He was an actor at the Jewish Theater in Dnepropetrovsk [today Ukraine]. He had a beautiful wife, also a Jewish actress, and a daughter of my age, but she was so arrogant that I couldn't be friends with her. I believe the subject of her pride was that they were wealthier than us.

I studied in a Russian school during evacuation. Our teachers were either evacuated or those who had been exiled in the 1930s, [during the Great Terror] 25, which wasn't to be mentioned aloud. There were local and evacuated children. I made close friends with Salomeya Kapor, a Jewish girl from Kaunas [today Lithuania]. Her parents were doctors. She was very talented and intelligent. Twenty years after the war my husband and I met with her in Kaunas. Salomeya was a good

pianist. Her husband was Lithuanian and they had a son. Several years later Salomeya moved to England and I never heard from her again. I also remember my classmate Sima Zhytomirskaya. They were Ashkenazi Jews, but had lived in Bukhara for a long time. There was also a group of Bukhara Jews 26.

I also remember a very pretty girl, whose last name was Dolidze. Her mother was Georgian and her father was a German, who had been deported from the European part of Russia during the war. I don't know whether anti-Semitism existed in Uzbekistan at the time. Of course, some boys ran after my grandmother shouting 'zhydovka' [abusive word for Jewish females]. This might have happened, but generally one needs to understand that the locals gave us accommodation and food. I think they were rather loyal and tolerant. As for school, almost all the teachers and students were Jewish, so there was no question of anti-Semitism. I joined the Komsomol 27 in Bukhara.

The death rate in Bukhara was high. At one time I worked as a statistics operator in Bukhara. Each morning I received information about the number of people who died of typhus or enteric fever. I was only 15 years old and I couldn't bear to work there. It was hard to know this. My father returned to Bukhara in 1945, after the victory. He was sent to work as a manager for straw stocks for the front at a station in the Bukhara region where the trains stopped for one minute. I worked for him as an assistant accountant and there were two Uzbeks pressing straw. Our friend Doctor Bregman sent us an invitation permit to go back to Kishinev and we went home. The town was ruined: one could walk across yards from the railway station to Alexandrovskaya Street. The uptown was in better condition, but the lower part, which was a ghetto during the war, looked awful [see Kishinev Ghetto] 28. Our house had been torn apart. We stayed at Doctor Bregman's hospital at first, but it was impossible to live like that much longer.

My father got information about his relatives. Grandfather Meir was 80 when the Great Patriotic War began and he refused to evacuate. He said to his older son Haim, 'Whether one is poor or dead doesn't matter. I will stay.' We don't know any details about how my grandfather perished. The whole population was Jewish and all local residents were killed. Haim, his wife Montia and their younger daughter Perl left Dombroveni with a horse-drawn cart, but the Germans captured them. Our neighbors said they made them dig their own graves. Leib and Huna perished at the front near Stalingrad. Iosl perished in the Gulag 29. His daughter lives in Bochum in Germany. Haim's daughter Shyfra lives in New York.

Avrum and his wife perished. Only three of their eight children survived. Rachil was taken to jail in Tiraspol and sent to the Gulag. In the Gulag a Jewish doctor employed her as an attendant at the hospital and thus saved her life. Rachil got married in exile and had two daughters: Sofa and Muza. Rachil is 90 now. She lives in Israel, in the town of Ashdod. Avrum's daughter Ida lived in Kurgan in the Urals where she worked at a mine. This is all I know about her. Efraim moved to Israel in the late 1940s. He has passed away already. After the war the sovkhoz board moved into my grandfather's house in Dombroveni. Everybody told my father, 'You are an heir: go get what is yours,' but he replied, 'I don't want to go there, when there is no one there.'

The fate of our relatives in France during World War II was also tragic. Uncle Philip took part in the Resistance. His wife Fira perished in Auschwitz, her English citizenship didn't save her. They left their son Serge with a French man and he survived. Philip married a French woman who was in the movement with him after the war. We didn't know her. They lived in the south of France. Philip died

in the 1960s. His son Serge lived with his mother's sister. After his father died they moved to America where he left the Orent part of his surname. I know that he lives in New Jersey State, and he is married with three children. He is a computer manager. My mother died 15 years ago, and Serge and I have lost contact since then.

Post-war

In 1946 I finished the tenth grade and wanted to study languages. I entered the French department of the Philological Faculty of Chernovtsy University. My parents and I moved to Chernovtsy. At the end of the war many Ukrainian families left the town following the retreating Germans and there were vacant apartments available. After the liberation of Transnistria 30, Jews from the ghetto rushed to Chernovtsy: we were a little late having stayed in Kishinev for a year. Those who came there in 1945 lived in nice apartments. Chernovtsy is a beautiful town. Our faculty resided in the former Metropolitan's residence, in the beautiful building of red bricks.

I lived the best years of my life when I was a student. We were divided into two groups. I was in a stronger group where all students were Jews and only two Ukrainians. Almost all students in our group were either veterans of the war or former inmates of ghettos in Transnistria. The political situation was rather severe: there were Bandera 31 gangs in the area. One day we went to the university and got to know that all third-year students had been arrested. The authorities had found out that they had Bandera flyers. At this time the campaign against 'cosmopolitans' 32 began. Ilia Gordon, a Jewish lecturer on foreign literature was sent away from Kiev [today Ukraine] to work in our town. The Party Bureau taped his lectures to review them later. We felt sorry for him and did our best to study his subject and obtain good marks in it.

Another demonstration of state anti-Semitism was that they closed the Jewish Theater in Chernovtsy. Actually, this was the Kiev Theater [founded in 1928], but after the war they weren't allowed to return to the capital and had to move to Chernovtsy. They were always sold out since Chernovtsy was a Jewish town then. Some actors went to work in Russian and Ukrainian theaters, but many lost their jobs after it had been closed down. I also remember another incident: the university announced a party for local young people. I thought since I was a Bessarabian girl I was to be a local resident, but they didn't let me in, or any Jew for that matter. Only Ukrainians were allowed to attend it. However, there wasn't much impact of this kind on our studies. Our group was very close. We often had parties, celebrated birthdays, went to the theater and cinema. Our groups welcomed the establishment of Israel. We were ready to move to Israel as volunteers. Our co-student Anatoliy Kogan, who later became a writer in Kishinev, could play the piano very well. He occasionally played the 'Hatikva' 33: there was a piano in the corridor of our faculty. Of course, we were a little afraid, but we were young and we were happy about Israel. Later, twelve former students of our group moved to Israel. Four still live there.

When I was in my fifth year of studies I went to Kishinev on vacation. I stayed with my aunt Sonia Gerstein. When I visited my acquaintance, I met a fifth-year student of the Agricultural College, who rented a room from her. His name was Moisey Shpitalnik. We liked each other and began to correspond. Moisey finished his college: students of the Agricultural College had graduate exams before we did since they were to do seeding in the fields, and received a job assignment to Floreshty [see mandatory job assignment in the USSR] 34. He came to Chernovtsy and said we had to get married immediately, so that I could get my job assignment in the same town. So we did.

My husband's father, Girsh Shpitalnik, was the manager of a timber storage in Rybnitsa; he was a high-skilled specialist in the woodworking industry. His mother, Sura Shpitalnik, was a housewife. Moisey's older brother, Israel, born in 1919, finished the Railroad College in Dnepropetrovsk. In May 1941 he got married, and in June the war began. Israel was a lieutenant during the war, taken into captivity and executed. His wife Tania and his parents were taken to a ghetto. My husband's sister Hana was born in Rybnitsa in 1922. My husband was born in Rybnitsa in 1928. Moisey went to a Jewish school. In 1937 the school was closed down and its director was arrested. The children were taken to a Ukrainian school. During the war the family made an effort to evacuate. They moved on foot and had a cow with them. Near Balty in Odessa region, they got in encirclement and were taken to a ghetto with other Jews where they were kept until 1944.

My husband told me that once Romanians beat him hard for having dropped a beam that was too heavy for him. He stuttered for a long time afterward. Later, he worked in a shop where they made valenki boots [traditional Russian winter felt boots]. He had a trophic ulcer from the sulfuric acid used for valenki making. Moisey said there were underground activists, who made valenki in such a manner that they fell apart promptly in the frost, but the Germans couldn't tell the difference. Israel's wife Tania died from typhus in the ghetto and the rest of them survived. Moisey's mother died in 1948 and his father died in 1955. His father came to our wedding with his second wife: she was a relative, who survived in the Odessa ghetto, while her family perished in the ghetto. Moisey's sister, Hana Vapniar, lived in Rybnitsa and worked as a medical nurse. She had no children. Hana died in 2001.

We got married in 1951 and moved to Floreshty where we lived for five years. I was a French teacher at school and my husband was a senior agronomist. There were 90 Jewish families in Floreshty at that time: a significant number considering that this was the postwar period. In our Moldovan school almost all the teachers were Jews: Lev Shoichet, mathematics teacher, he had graduated from a university in Bukhara, Shapiro - the Russian language and literature teacher, Schwartzman - biology teacher, Riva Chamelis - chemistry teacher, and Liya Darkhova - history teacher. Only one Moldovan teacher and a history teacher in the senior classes were non-Jewish. I don't think that I was a good pedagog: my students walked over me. When writing my diploma thesis in our university library, I got acquainted with bibliography and I started thinking about it. After I went to Floreshty my parents returned to Kishinev. At first, they stayed in a through room in their relatives' apartment, but later they collected some money. I translated the novel by Polevoy, Boris 35, 'Gold', into Moldovan and received a significant fee for this work. We paid this money to the owner of an unfinished house in Bayukany, as he needed money to finish the construction, and we bought half of this house from him.

We lived in Floreshty, when in 1953 the Doctors' Plot 36 began. However, it wasn't so severe in Moldova. Brezhnev 37, secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Moldova at that time, was rather mild. There were a few arrests, but they resulted from actual medical mistakes. Though the general atmosphere was depressing, it was still not as severe as in Moscow and Leningrad. However, there appeared rumors that Jews were to be taken to live in barracks in Siberia and Altayskiy Krai. When Stalin died in spring 1953, there was a meeting in Floreshty and I cried, of course. We were very concerned about our future. We knew a lot about 1937 and we weren't so shocked, when in 1956 the Twentieth Party Congress 38 took place and Khrushchev's 39 report was published afterward, though of course, it brought us hope for a better life and more

democracy.

In 1956 my husband and I moved to Kishinev, to my parents. I had a higher education, five-year teaching experience and I also finished an extramural course in English. I went to district education departments, but they refused to employ me due to my nationality [see Item 5] 40. They just replied that they had no vacancies, even though they did have them. Then a friend of mine who worked at the Medical College, called me: 'You know they need a person who knows foreign languages in our library.' The Kishinev Medical College was founded on the basis of the Leningrad Medical College that had evacuated to Piatigorsk during the war. After the war they weren't allowed to return to Leningrad. The college functioned during the German occupation for half a year, and then the authorities blamed its employees for this. It moved to Kishinev.

This library had a good collection of foreign books that the college partially received as part of German reparations: a significant part of it belonged to Richard Koch, a Jewish doctor, who got political asylum in the USSR before World War II and lived in Piatigorsk. When I went to see the human resources manager, he got indignant, 'Who is this you've brought in here? Israel has attacked Egypt' [After Egypt entered into a military pact with Syria and Jordan for aggression against Israel, on 29th October 1956 Israeli forces attacked the Egyptian positions on the Sinai Peninsula]. Can you imagine any links between me and the Israeli attack on Egypt? However, he employed me, as he didn't have an alternative because I knew French and English, and had a rather good conduct of German. Later, I was sent to a two-year extramural training course for librarians and after finishing it began to work as a bibliographer.

We lived with my parents and I built up my marital life: my husband and I were friends. We managed to provide for ourselves and we remembered about 'cutting your coat according to your cloth.' In the late 1950s the situation with food was bad: I remember bread with peas. My husband worked as an agronomist in a sovkhoz in Gratieshty where he could buy cheap vegetables and fruits. My father worked as an accountant in hospitals or kindergartens. I worked and received additional income for my knowledge of foreign languages. We were given our first television as a housewarming party gift in 1958; it had a lens.

My husband and I were fond of classical music and had season tickets to the Philharmonic. When the opera theater opened in Kishinev we went to all the premieres. We also went to drama performances and the cinema. My husband and I often went on vacations together to Northern Caucasus, Poland, the Volga and to Pushkin's places. We particularly enjoyed this tour since we were both very fond of Pushkin. My husband was rather a prosaic man, but there he couldn't help reciting poems. This was at the time when Geichenko was director of the Pushkin preservation and he organized everything in the best way. We visited Mikhaylovskoye and Trigorskoye, the Sviatogorsk monastery where Pushkin was buried. This tour ended with spending ten days in Leningrad. Our friends in Kishinev comprised about ten Jewish couples. Moisey and I were the youngest in this company. We were more Soviet-minded while the others came from former Zionist organizations during the Romanian rule: Betar 41, Gordonia 42.

We often got together, celebrated birthdays, Jewish holidays and the European New Year. We always followed the events in Israel closely on television and radio. I remember when the Six-Day-War 43 began, my father turned 70 and we wanted to celebrate this birthday, but he said, 'Not while this is happening in Israel.' We were very concerned and couldn't believe that a small country

like Israel could win. When all of a sudden victory came! Our friends got together in our home without any pre-arrangements and we had a feast. Moisey was quite a phenomenon in this respect: he could lay the table within 15 minutes and there was plenty of food on it. Moisey was very good at making great cakes. Our friends called one of his cakes 'shpitalnyi' [Shpitalnik's cake] after him. His gefilte fish was particularly popular. I wasn't as good in the kitchen as he was. In the circle of our friends we often said that when we move to Israel, Moisey would be a chef there, but he replied, 'I only like to cook for my friends.'

My father died in 1970. This happened on 22nd April, on the 100th anniversary of Lenin's birthday. My father fell very ill and we sent him to hospital where he died on the night of 1st May. We buried him in the Jewish cemetery. When in the 1970s Jews began to move to Israel, most of our friends left. At that time I was the director of the bibliographic department and I was so fond of the Medical College that I couldn't even think of quitting. Moisey couldn't leave his sovkhoz, and my mother didn't want to leave home. She used to say, 'I won't have sufficient space there.' Why did she say so, when she hardly ever went out at all? There was no logic in it, but her point of view was important for us and we decided to stay.

I worked at the Medical College for 34 years as director of the bibliographic department and I also held the position of junior employee translating articles from foreign magazines after work. I was good at foreign languages, and even translated from Dutch. One of my friends in college used to say, 'She knows everything, but Hungarian.' Many lecturers in the college are still very grateful to me: many candidates and doctor dissertations [see Soviet/Russian doctorate degrees] 44 went through my hands. I remember one of them: he suddenly bumped into a medical book in Japanese and somebody told him, 'Well, why don't you talk to Sarra Shpitalnik.' My reputation was working for me.

I liked literature and often conducted reviews of literary works in senior groups of students: curators of groups invited me. Most often I spoke on the subject of 'The character of doctors in fiction.' Later, I prepared and issued an annotated guide: 'Medical workers in fiction literature.' My second big bibliographic work in the Medical College was: 'Writers-doctors' about Russian, Soviet and foreign writers, who were doctors. Later, I published articles about fiction literature, medical workers during the Great Patriotic War in the 'Medical worker' the institute paper, articles in our professional magazine, 'Sovetskaya bibliografiya': 'Soviet bibliography' [published in Moscow since 1933] and other periodicals. I liked my work. It distracted me from thinking about our problem: we had no children.

We were a team in the library and there was no anti-Semitism. We celebrated birthdays and Soviet holidays together. The library wasn't far from my house and I walked to work. There was an affiliate of our library in Malaya Malina, a distant district. Once someone told me that our director said, 'We shall send this zhydovka to Malaya Malina and get rid of her.' She worked in my bibliographic department at first and was a party member and when the director of the library retired she replaced her. She was a little jealous that all the lecturers addressed me with their problems: just because I knew medical definitions, and languages. When she said, 'Sarra, you will go to work in Malaya Malina', I was prepared and replied, 'Great, there is bus 9 stopping by my house: it goes straight there,' and she was discouraged. Later, I returned to the central department and retired from there.

In 1984 I became a pensioner, but I stayed at work part-time. My mother broke her hip and could only get up from her bed when Moisey and I supported her. She spent most of the time in her room reading and watching television. When perestroika 45 began, my mother watched all information programs, particularly, when Gorbachev 46 spoke. She treated him with great sympathy and when he appeared on the screen, she said, 'It's like one's own father comes into the room.' As for me, I lost my respect for him, when he interrupted Sakharov 47 at the congress of deputies [The Congress of People's Deputies, founded in 1989, voted to end the Communist Party's control over the government and elected Gorbachev executive president.] However, we were enthusiastic about perestroika. There were many interesting publications in the press, something that we could only discuss with our closest friends, and there were books published which had been banned before.

My mother died of cancer in 1989. We buried her in the Doina, in the Jewish sector since the Jewish cemetery had been closed by then.

By this time the Jewish society appeared in Kishinev. It was something very different for us. There were lectures on Jewish traditions where material and courses in Hebrew were available. In the 1990s the rest of our friends moved to Israel. In 1990 my husband and I decided to move to Israel. We studied Hebrew for half a year. We obtained a visa, when all of a sudden I was overwhelmed with fear. Our friends weren't very encouraging: 'You have no children. You won't have anything to do here. Moisey wouldn't be able to find a job with his occupation, and you wouldn't get any allowances since you've not come of proper age.' This had such an impact on me that when we went to the cemetery to visit the graves of our dear ones, I said, 'Whatever you decide I'm not going.' He said, 'All right, if you don't want to go.' He went back to work though he was a pensioner, and I saw an announcement that our library needed a person who knew Romanian and Yiddish. I went to work there.

My husband and I visited our friends in Israel twice: in 1996 and 1999. We lived in Bat Yam near Tel Aviv. The telephone kept ringing: my former fellow students from Chernovtsy University and our friends from Kishinev wanted to talk to us. We went on tours to Jerusalem, Haifa, Zefat, on the Kineret Lake and I sobbed by the Wailing Wall. My husband was shocked that they managed to grow a garden on stones. Besides, our friend took us to the cactus garden in Holon. This was an amazing view: there were little cactus plants and huge trees and they were blooming beautifully. We took our second trip on a boat from Odessa since my husband could obtain a free ticket as a former ghetto inmate. We bought a ticket for me. We stayed with our friends in Haifa. During our first trip we were in Yad Vashem 48 late in the evening and didn't see anything. In 1999 we went there for the second time. When the tour guide heard that my husband was in the ghetto, she treated us particularly warmly. Israel is very impressive; I believe one has to visit there.

When the charity center Hesed 49 Jehuda opened in Kishinev, I went to work there as a volunteer. Before they got their own building they worked in our library partially. They generated the lists of needy Jews, distributed matzah, or clothes. Every month I lecture on Jewish literature for them. Now I'm working on a lecture on Kanovich, a Jewish Lithuanian writer, who lives in Israel now. We've had a club of pensioners in Hesed for ten years and I'm an active member there. In 1995 I celebrated the presentation of my book 'Jews of Moldova' at the library; it's an annotated guide in Romanian. In 2000, its extended and added edition was issued with a resume in English. Here in the library we celebrated my 70th anniversary [1998] and my husband and my golden wedding [2001]. Our colleagues asked Moisey to make his outstanding gefilte fish, and it was great. Moisey

died two years after this anniversary. I buried him in the Jewish cemetery near my father and bought myself a place there.

Glossary

1 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.

2 Bessarabia
Historical area between the Prut and Dnestr rivers, in the southern part of Odessa region. Bessarabia was part of Russia until the Revolution of 1917. In 1918 it declared itself an independent republic, and later it united with Romania. The Treaty of Paris (1920) recognized the union but the Soviet Union never accepted this. In 1940 Romania was forced to cede Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the USSR. The two provinces had almost 4 million inhabitants, mostly Romanians. Although Romania reoccupied part of the territory during World War II the Romanian peace treaty of 1947 confirmed their belonging to the Soviet Union. Today it is part of Moldova.

3 Jewish self-defense movement
In Russia Jews organized self-defense groups to protect the Jewish population and Jewish property from the rioting mobs in pogroms, which often occurred in compliance with the authorities and, at times, even at their instigation. During the pogroms of 1881-82 self-defense was organized spontaneously in different places. Following pogroms at the beginning of the 20th century, collective defense units were set up in the cities and towns of Belarus and Ukraine, which raised money and bought arms. The nucleus of the self-defense movement came from the Jewish labor parties and their military units, and it had a widespread following among the rest of the people. Organized defense groups are known to have existed in 42 cities.

4 Annexation of Bessarabia to Romania
During the chaotic days of the Soviet Revolution the national assembly of Moldavians convoked to Kishinev decided on 4th December 1917 the proclamation of an independent Moldavian state. In order to impede autonomous aspirations, Russia occupied the Moldavian capital in January 1918. Upon Moldavia's desperate request, the army of neighboring Romania entered Kishinev in the same month recapturing the city from the Bolsheviks. This was the decisive step toward the union with Romania: the Moldavians accepted the annexation without any preliminary condition.

5 EKO

Short for 'Yevreyeiskoye Kolonizatsionnoye Obshchestvo', the Jewish Colonization Association, founded in London in September 1891. At first its aim was to help in the colonization of Argentina by Jews from the European East. In 1893 EKO opened its branch in St. Petersburg, Russia (Central Committee). At the beginning of the 1890s an EKO committee was established in Kishinev. Starting in 1898, unlike in the first years, when the main aim of the EKO activities was to move Jews out of Russia, the association began to work among the Jewish population inside Russia. The Central Committee of EKO in Russia tried to stimulate agricultural work, to develop professional education, to secure loans and to help Jews to emigrate from Russia.

6 ORT

(abbreviation for Rus. Obshchestvo Rasprostraneniya Truda sredi Yevreyev , originally meaning "Society for Manual [and Agricultural] Work [among Jews]," and later-from 1921-"Society for Spreading [Artisan and Agricultural] Work [among Jews]") It was founded in 1880 in St. Petersburg (Russia) and originally designed to help Russian Jews. One of the problems which ORT tackled was to help the working Jewish youth and craftsmen to integrate into the industrialization. This especially had an impact on the Eastern European countries after World War I. ORT expanded during World War II, when it became a world organization with branches in France, Germany, England, America and elsewhere, in addition to former Russian territories like Poland, Lithuania and Bessarabia. There was also an ORT network in Romania. With the aim to provide "help through work", ORT operated employment bureaus, organizes trade schools, provided tools, machinery and materials, set up special courses for apprentices, and maintained farm schools as well as cooperative agricultural colonies and workshops.

7 Tolstoy, Lev Nikolayevich (1828-1910)

Russian novelist and moral philosopher, who holds an important place in his country's cultural history as an ethical philosopher and religious reformer. Tolstoy, alongside Dostoyevsky, made the realistic novel a literary genre, ranking in importance with classical Greek tragedy and Elizabethan drama. He is best known for his novels, including War and Peace, Anna Karenina and The Death of Ivan Ilyich, but also wrote short stories and essays and plays. Tolstoy took part in the Crimean War and his stories based one the defense of Sevastopol, known as Sevastopol Sketches, made him famous and opened St. Petersburg's literary circles to him. His main interest lay in working out his religious and philosophical ideas. He condemned capitalism and private property and was a fearless critic, which finally resulted in his excommunication from the Russian Orthodox Church in 1901. His views regarding the evil of private property gradually estranged him from his wife, Yasnaya Polyana, and children, except for his daughter Alexandra, and he finally left them in 1910. He died on his way to a monastery at the railway junction of Astapovo.

8 Cuzist

Member of the Romanian fascist organization named after Alexandru C. Cuza, one of the most fervent fascist leaders in Romania, who was known for his ruthless chauvinism and anti-Semitism. In 1919 Cuza founded the LANC, which became the National Christian Party in 1935 with an anti-

Semitic program.

9 Iron Guard

Extreme right wing political organization in Romania between 1930-1941, led by C. Z. Codreanu. The Iron Guard propagated nationalist, Christian-mystical and anti-Semitic views. It was banned for its terrorist activities (e.g. the murder of Romanian prime minister I. Gh. Duca) in 1933. In 1935 it was re-established as a party named 'Everything for the Fatherland', but it was banned again in 1938. It was part of the government in the first period of the Antonescu regime, but it was then banned and dissolved as a result of the unsuccessful coup d'état of January 1941. Its leaders escaped abroad to the Third Reich.

10 Mendele Moykher Sforim (1835-1917)

Hebrew and Yiddish writer. He was born in Belarus and studied at various yeshivot in Lithuania. Mendele wrote literary and social criticism, works of popular science in Hebrew, and Hebrew and Yiddish fiction. In his writings on social and literary problems Mendele showed lively interest in the education and public life of Jews in Russia. He was preoccupied by the question of the role of Hebrew literature in molding the Jewish community. This explains why he tried to teach the sciences to the mass of Jews and to aid the people in obtaining secular education in the spirit of the Haskalah (Hebrew enlightenment). He was instrumental in the founding of modern literary Yiddish and the new realism in Hebrew style, and left his mark on the two literatures thematically as well as stylistically.

11 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.

12 Perez, Itshack Leibush (1851-1915)

Yiddish outstanding writer and essayist. He was brought up in traditional Jewish family in Poland. Perez wrote first in Hebrew, since 1888 - in Yiddish. Poem "Monish" (1888), bock of stories "Familiar pictures" (1890) and "Travel notes" ((1891). Stories "Silent Bontsy", "The messenger", "In basement", "Weaver's love" (1890s), "Hasidic Stories", "Folk legends" (1904-1909). Died in Warsaw in 1915.

13 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.

14 Jewish State Theater in Bucharest

It was founded in 1948 as a result of the nationalization of all performing institutions, including the Jewish theater. It staged classic plays of the Yiddish repertoire, but also traditional Jewish dance performances. Nowadays, because of emigration and the increasing diminishment of the aging Jewish population, there is only a small audience and most of the actors are non-Jews. Great personalities of the theater: Israil Bercovici (poet, playwright and literary secretary), Iso Schapira (stage director and prose writer with a vast Yiddish and universal culture), Mauriciu Sekler (actor from the German school), Haim Schwartzmann (composer and conductor of the theater's orchestra). Famous actors: Sevilla Pastor, Dina Konig, Isac Havis, Sara Ettinger, Lya Konig, Tricy Abramovici, Bebe Bercovici, Rudy Rosenfeld, Maia Morgenstern.

15 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.

16 Pushkin, Alexandr (1799-1837)

Russian poet and prose writer, among the foremost figures in Russian literature. Pushkin established the modern poetic language of Russia, using Russian history for the basis of many of his works. His masterpiece is Eugene Onegin, a novel in verse about mutually rejected love. The work also contains witty and perceptive descriptions of Russian society of the period. Pushkin died in a duel.

17 Strajer (Watchmen), Strajeria (Watchmen Guard)

Proto-fascist mass- organization founded by King Carol II with the aim of bringing up the youth in the spirit of serving and obedience, and of nationalist ideas of grandeur.

18 Annexation of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union

At the end of June 1940 the Soviet Union demanded Romania to withdraw its troops from Bessarabia and to abandon the territory. Romania withdrew its troops and administration in the same month and between 28th June and 3rd July, the Soviets occupied the region. At the same time Romania was obliged to give up Northern Transylvania to Hungary and Southern-Dobrudja to Bulgaria. These territorial losses influenced Romanian politics during World War II to a great extent.

19 Transylvania

Geographical and historic area (103 000 sq. kilometre) in Romania. It is located between the Carpathian Mountain range and the Serbian, Hungarian and Ukrainian border. Today's Transylvania is made up of four main regions: Banat, Crisana, Maramures and the historic Transylvanian territory. In 1526 at the Mohacs battle medieval Hungary fell apart; the central part of the country was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire, while in the Eastern part the autonomous Transylvanian Principality was founded. Nominally Transylvanian belonged to the Ottoman Porte; the Sultan had a veto on electing the Prince, however in reality Transylvania maintained independent foreign as well as internal policy. The Transylvanian princes maintained the policy of religious freedom (first time in Europe) and recognized three nationalities: Hungarian, Szekler and Saxon (Transylvanian German). After the treaty of Karlowitz (1699) Transylvania and Hungary fell under the Habsburgs and the province was re-annexed to Hungary in 1867 as part of the Austrian-Hungarian compromise (Ausgleich). Transylvania was characterized by specific ethno-religious diversity. The Transylvanian princes were in favor of the Reformation in the 16th and 17th century and as a result Transylvania became a stronghold of the different protestant churches (Calvinist, Lutheran, Unitarian, etc.). During the Counter- Reformation and the long Habsburg supremacy the Catholic Church also gained significant power. Transylvania's Romanian population was also divided between the Eastern Orthodox and the Uniate Church (Greek Catholic). After the reception of the Jewish Religion by the Hungarian Parliament (1895) Jewish became a recognized religions in the country, which accelerated the ongoing Jewish assimilation in Transylvania as well as elsewhere in Hungary. After World War I Transylvania was given to Romania by the Trianon Treaty (1920). In 1920 Transylvania's population was 5,2 million, of which 3 million were Romanian, 1,4 million Hungarian, 510,000 Germans and 180,000 Jews. According to the Second Vienna Dictate its northern part was annexed to Hungary in 1940. After World War II the entire region was enclosed to Romania by the Paris Peace Treaty. According to the last Romanian census (2002) Hungarians make 19% of the total population, and there are only several thousand Jews and Germans left. Despite the decrease of the Hungarian, German and Jewish element, Transylvania still preserves some of its multiethnic and multi-confessional tradition.

20 NKVD

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

21 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.

22 Kulaks
In the Soviet Union the majority of wealthy peasants that refused to join collective farms and give their grain and property to Soviet power were called kulaks, declared enemies of the people and exterminated in the 1930s.

23 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.

24 Sovkhoz
state-run agricultural enterprise. The first sovkhoz yards were created in the USSR in 1918. According to the law the sovkhoz property was owned by the state, but it was assigned to the sovkhoz which handled it based on the right of business maintenance.

25 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.

26 Bukhara Jews

Bukhara Jews are an ethnic group of Jews residing in Central Asia. They are descendants of Mesopotamian Jews and speak the Bukharan language which is basically Judeo-Tadzhik. Their religious rite is Sephardic. Most of them repatriated now to Israel.

27 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.

28 Kishinev Ghetto

The annihilation of the Jews of Kishinev was carried out in several stages. With the entry of the Romanian and German units, an unknown number of Jews were slaughtered in the streets and in their homes. About 2,000 Jews, mainly of liberal professions (doctors, lawyers, engineers), and local Jewish intellectuals, were systematically executed. After the wave of killings, the 11,000 remaining Jews were concentrated in the ghetto, created on 24th July 1941, on the order of the Romanian district ruler and the German Einsatzkommando leader, Paul Zapp. The Jews of central Romania attempted to assist their brethren in the ghetto, sending large amounts of money by illegal means. A committee was formed to bribe the Romanian authorities so that they would not hand the Jews over to the Germans. In August about 7,500 Jewish people were sent to work in the Ghidighici quarries. That fall, on the Day of Atonement (4th October), the military authorities began deporting the remaining Jews in the ghetto to Transnistria, by order of the Romanian ruler, Ion Antonescu. One of the heads of the ghetto, the attorney Shapira, managed to alert the leaders of the Jewish communities in Bucharest, but attempts to halt the deportations were unsuccessful. The community was not completely liquidated, however, since some Jews had found hiding places in Kishinev and its vicinity or elsewhere in Romania. In May 1942, the last 200 Jews in the locality were deported. Kishinev was liberated in August 1944. At that time no Jews were left in the locality.

29 Gulag

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

30 Transnistria

Area situated between the Bug and Dniester rivers and the Black Sea. The term is derived from the Romanian name for the Dniester (Nistru) and was coined after the occupation of the area by German and Romanian troops in World War II. After its occupation Transnistria became a place for deported Romanian Jews. Systematic deportations began in September 1941. In the course of the next two months, all surviving Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina and a small part of the Jewish population of Old Romania were dispatched across the Dniester. This first wave of deportations reached almost 120,000 by mid-November 1941 when it was halted by Ion Antonescu, the Romanian dictator, upon intervention of the Council of Romanian Jewish Communities. Deportations resumed at the beginning of the summer of 1942, affecting close to 5,000 Jews. A third series of deportations from Old Romania took place in July 1942, affecting Jews who had evaded forced labor decrees, as well as their families, communist sympathizers and Bessarabian Jews who had been in Old Romania and Transylvania during the Soviet occupation. The most feared Transnistrian camps were Vapniarka, Ribnita, Berezovka, Tulcin and Iampol. Most of the Jews deported to camps in Transnistria died between 1941-1943 because of horrible living conditions, diseases and lack of food.

31 Bandera, Stepan (1919-1959)

Politician and ideologue of the Ukrainian nationalist movement, who fought for the Ukrainian cause against both Poland and the Soviet Union. He attained high positions in the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN): he was chief of propaganda (1931) and, later, head of the national executive in Galicia (1933). He was hoping to establish an independent Ukrainian state with Nazi backing. After Germany attacked the Soviet Union, the OUN announced the establishment of an independent government of Ukraine in Lvov on 30th June 1941. About one week later the Germans disbanded this government and arrested the members. Bandera was taken to Sachsenhausen prison where he remained until the end of the war. He was assassinated by a Soviet agent in Munich in 1959.

32 Campaign against 'cosmopolitans'

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

33 Hatikvah

Anthem of the Zionist movement, and national anthem of the State of Israel. The word 'ha-tikvah'

means 'the hope'. The anthem was written by Naftali Herz Imber (1856-1909), who moved to Palestine from Galicia in 1882. The melody was arranged by Samuel Cohen, an immigrant from Moldavia, from a musical theme of Smetana's Moldau (Vltava), which is based on an Eastern European folk song.

34 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.

35 Polevoy, Boris Nikolaevich (pen name of Boris Kampov) 1908-1981)

Soviet writer, participated in the Soviet-Finnish War (1939-40). During World War II Polevoy was a war correspondent for Pravda. Polevoy's most famous work is 'The Tale of a Real Man' (1946) which was later made into a film, a true story about Hero of the Soviet Union pilot Meresyev who returned to active service on a flying fighter aircraft after his feet were amputated.

36 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.

37 Brezhnev, Leonid, Ilyich (1906-82) Soviet leader

He joined the Communist Party in 1931 and rose steadily in its hierarchy, becoming a secretary of the party's central committee in 1952. In 1957, as protégé of Khrushchev, he became a member of the presidium (later politburo) of the central committee. He was chairman of the presidium of the Supreme Soviet, or titular head of state. Following Khrushchev's fall from power in 1964, which Brezhnev helped to engineer, he was named first secretary of the Communist Party. Although sharing power with Kosygin, Brezhnev emerged as the chief figure in Soviet politics. In 1968, in support of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, he enunciated the 'Brezhnev doctrine,' asserting that the USSR could intervene in the domestic affairs of any Soviet bloc nation if communist rule was threatened. While maintaining a tight rein in Eastern Europe, he favored closer relations with the Western powers, and he helped bring about a détente with the United States. In 1977 he assumed the presidency of the USSR. Under Gorbachev, Brezhnev's regime was criticized for its corruption and failed economic policies.

38 Twentieth Party Congress

At the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956 Khrushchev publicly

debunked the cult of Stalin and lifted the veil of secrecy from what had happened in the USSR during Stalin's leadership.

39 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.

40 Item 5
This was the nationality factor, which was included on all job application forms, Jews, who were considered a separate nationality in the Soviet Union, were not favored in this respect from the end of World War WII until the late 1980s.

41 Betar
Brith Trumpledor (Hebrew) meaning the Trumpledor Society. Right- wing Revisionist Jewish youth movement. It was founded in 1923 in Riga by Vladimir Jabotinsky, in memory of J. Trumpledor, one of the first fighters to be killed in Palestine, and the fortress Betar, which was heroically defended for many months during the Bar Kohba uprising. In Poland the name 'The J. Trumpledor Jewish Youth Association' was also used. Betar was a worldwide organization, but in 1936, of its 52,000 members, 75 % lived in Poland. Its aim was to propagate the program of the revisionists in Poland and prepare young people to fight and live in Palestine. It organized emigration, through both legal and illegal channels. It was a paramilitary organization; its members wore uniforms. From 1936-39 the popularity of Betar diminished. During the war many of its members formed guerrilla groups.

42 Gordonia
Pioneering Zionist youth movement founded in Galicia at the end of 1923. It became a world movement, which meticulously maintained its unique character as a Jewish, Zionist, and Erez Israel-oriented movement.

43 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.

44 Soviet/Russian doctorate degrees
Graduate school in the Soviet Union (aspirantura, or ordinatura for medical students), which usually

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

45 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.

46 Gorbachev, Mikhail (1931-)

Soviet political leader. Gorbachev joined the Communist Party in 1952 and gradually moved up in the party hierarchy. In 1970 he was elected to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, where he remained until 1990. In 1980 he joined the politburo, and in 1985 he was appointed general secretary of the party. In 1986 he embarked on a comprehensive program of political, economic, and social liberalization under the slogans of glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring). The government released political prisoners, allowed increased emigration, attacked corruption, and encouraged the critical reexamination of Soviet history. The Congress of People's Deputies, founded in 1989, voted to end the Communist Party's control over the government and elected Gorbachev executive president. Gorbachev dissolved the Communist Party and granted the Baltic states independence. Following the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States in 1991, he resigned as president. Since 1992, Gorbachev has headed international organizations.

47 Sakharov, Andrey Dimitrievich (1921-1989)

Soviet nuclear physicist, academician and human rights advocate; the first Soviet citizen to receive the Nobel Peace Prize (1975). He was part of the team constructing the Soviet hydrogene bomb and received the prize 'Hero of the Socialist Labor' three times. In the 1960s and 70s he grew to be the leader of human rights fights in the Soviet Union. In 1980 he was expelled and sent to Gorkiy from where he was allowed to return to Moscow in 1986, after Gorbachev's rise to power. He remained a leading spokesman for human rights and political and economic reform until his death in 1989.

48 Yad Vashem

This museum, founded in 1953 in Jerusalem, honors both Holocaust martyrs and 'the Righteous Among the Nations', non-Jewish rescuers who have been recognized for their 'compassion, courage and morality'.

49 Hesed

Meaning care and mercy in Hebrew, Hesed stands for the charity organization founded by Amos Avgar in the early 20th century. Supported by Claims Conference and Joint Hesed helps for Jews in need to have a decent life despite hard economic conditions and encourages development of their self-identity. Hesed provides a number of services aimed at supporting the needs of all, and particularly elderly members of the society. The major social services include: work in the center facilities (information, advertisement of the center activities, foreign ties and free lease of medical equipment); services at homes (care and help at home, food products delivery, delivery of hot meals, minor repairs); work in the community (clubs, meals together, day-time polyclinic, medical and legal consultations); service for volunteers (training programs). The Hesed centers have inspired a real revolution in the Jewish life in the FSU countries. People have seen and sensed the rebirth of the Jewish traditions of humanism. Currently over eighty Hesed centers exist in the FSU countries. Their activities cover the Jewish population of over eight hundred settlements.