Yakov Voloshyn

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Yakov Voloshyn lives alone in a small one-bedroom apartment in Obolon, a new district in Kiev. His apartment is very clean and cozy. There are a lot of books, many of them are classics. There are pictures painted by Yakov on the walls: portraits of his wife and sister, still life and landscapes. Yakov has had a lifelong hobby: birds. there are cages with pigeons on the balcony and two cages with canaries in the kitchen. Yakov is a short man with thinning hair and dark thick eyebrows. He will turn 88 in December 2003, but he is still vivid and lively. Since his wife's death, his daughter helps him to do the housework, but he manages alone very well. Yakov is an interesting conversationalist and has a good sense of humor.

Unfortunately, I can't tell you much about my parents' families. However little I knew, I've forgotten most of it. My paternal grandfather's name was Rafail Voloshyn. I don't know where or when he was born. I don't know anything about my paternal grandmother, not even her name. I know that my father's family lived in the small town of Bogopol, Nikolaev region, 400 kilometers from Kiev. I've never been there. My grandfather visited us several times when I was still a child. I remember that my grandfather had dark hair, but a red-haired beard, probably because he smoked. I remember that he smelled of tobacco when he kissed me and I liked the smell a lot. I remember that grandfather bought tobacco and cigarette paper and rolled cigarettes with a special machine. I liked watching him do it. My grandfather wore ordinary clothes. I don't remember whether he wore a cap or a hat. I don't know what my grandfather did for a living. My grandmother was a housewife as was the custom in patriarchal families. My grandparents weren't rich.

I don't know how many children there were in the family. My father, David Voloshyn, was born in 1885. His Jewish name was Chuna-Duvid. I only knew one of my father's younger brothers, Moisey Voloshyn. He was an artist. Perhaps, I contracted this love for painting from him. My father's family must have spoken Yiddish since my father spoke fluent Yiddish. I think that my father's family was religious since religiosity was common among Jews. I don't know what kind of education my father and uncle got. I know that my father worked in a store before he got married.

My father told me that Jewish pogroms 1 happened in Bogopol. Gangs 2 robbed Jewish houses and raped Jewish women. For some reason they took away bed comforters: pillows and blankets. Jews took shelter in attics and basements. Bandits killed them if they found them hiding. Fortunately, my father's family didn't suffer from pogroms. They had been robbed, but survived. That's all I remember from what my father told me about his childhood.

As for my mother's family, I don't know much more either. They lived in Bershad, Vinnitsa region, 250 km from Kiev. My maternal grandfather's name was Shmul Alshtein. I don't know whether he was born in Bershad and I don't know his date of birth. My grandfather was an invalid. He had one

leg amputated. I don't know for sure, but perhaps, he got this injury during World War I. My grandfather owned an inn in Bershad. I don't know any details. All I know is what my mother told me: he had a small beard and wore common clothes. I don't know anything about my mother's mother.

Bershad was a small Jewish town. Horse-drawn carts were used for transportation. My mother told me about the Russian cabman Fedul who had a red beard. He spoke Yiddish better than any Jew. I remember this anecdote; I don't know why. During the Great Patriotic War 3 there was one of the most horrific Jewish ghettos in Bershad.

My grandfather Shmul and my grandmother had 13 children. My mother, Malka Voloshyna, nee Alshtein, was born in 1890. I remember three of my mother's sisters: her older sister, Hanusia, her younger sister, Charna, and a third one whose name I don't remember. I don't remember whether my mother told me about her childhood and youth or about the family. I don't know where my mother studied. After the Russian Revolution of 1917 4, when the Jewish Pale of Settlement 5 was abolished, six of my mother's sisters probably moved to Kiev. Hanusia married Israil Menachimovich, a Jewish man. He was a polygraphic worker. Hanusia was a housewife after getting married. They didn't have children and adopted Moisey, a Jewish orphan. My mother's sister Charna married Abram Goldshtein, a Jewish man. Abram was a clerk in an office and Charna was a housewife. They had a son named Emil. He was a bit younger than I. As I mentioned earlier, I don't remember the name of my mother's third sister. Her husband's name was Fishel Bratslavski, he was a Jew. I don't remember what Fishel did for a living, but my mother's sister didn't work. They had two daughters, Lubov and Raisa. They were a little older than I.

I don't know how my parents met. They got married in 1911 or 1912. I think they had a traditional Jewish wedding with a chuppah and a rabbi: this was a common custom at the time. After their wedding my parents moved to Uman, a small town in Poltava province [200 km from Kiev]. In 1913 my older sister Rosalia - Reizl was her Jewish name - was born in Uman. I was born in 1915. I was named Yakov and this name was also put down in my birth certificate.

The population of Uman was about 50,000 people. Jews constituted the majority of the population. Jewish families lived in the center of town. There were one and two-storied wooden houses in Uman. Jews dealt in craftsmanship and trade. There were Jewish doctors, lawyers and teachers. I don't know the number of synagogues in Uman. I remember two synagogues located close to each other. My parents went to a smaller synagogue. It was two-storied and the women sat on the balcony. There was a Hasid 6 community in Uman and they had a synagogue. There was a Jewish school where children studied religion and general subjects in Yiddish.

We lived on Inzhenerny lane. My parents rented a house. The owner's last name was Kotkov and his houses were called 'Kotkov's houses'. He was a Jew. He owned several houses in one yard. We lived in a one-storied brick house. There were four rooms, a bathroom and a kitchen. The walls of the house were always damp and I remember that when it rained we placed tubs along the walls to collect the water. My sister and I stayed in the children's rooms. My parents had a bedroom and the biggest room served as a dining room and a living room at the same time. There was running water in the house. My mother cooked on the Russian stove 7 in the kitchen. There were wood-stoked stoves to heat the rooms. We only had the most necessary furniture at home: beds, wardrobes, a table and chairs. It was inexpensive furniture. Since we lived in the center of town there was little

space and there were only a few trees near the house. The center of town was overpopulated and the houses stood very close to one another.

My father was a shop assistant in a food store. My mother did the housekeeping and looked after the children. Ours was a family of average income. We had enough food and clothes. Once a week a Ukrainian milkmaid from a neighboring village delivered milk, sour cream and cottage cheese. These weren't kosher products, but my mother and father didn't mind, I guess.

My mother didn't wear a wig and I don't think many women in Uman even knew about this tradition. My mother wore a kerchief and my father only wore a hat when he went out. My parents wore common clothes. They spoke Yiddish to one another and Russian to me and my sister. My father had religious books. Each of my parents had a prayer book that they took to the synagogue. My father went to the synagogue on Sabbath and on Jewish holidays while my mother only went there on holidays.

We always observed Sabbath at home. My mother made food for two days on Friday. It wasn't even allowed to heat up food on Saturday. I remember that my mother lit candles on Friday evening. My father blessed the meal after a prayer and we sat down to dinner.

We started preparations for Pesach long before the holiday. We put away our everyday crockery and utensils and took special crockery from the attic. I don't remember whether we observed the kashrut every day, but at Pesach we only had kosher food. We bought matzah for Pesach. My mother cooked traditional Jewish food. There was gefilte fish, chicken broth with dumplings, stuffed chicken neck and puddings with matzah and potatoes. My mother made strudels with jam, raisins and nuts. On the first day of Pesach my parents went to the synagogue. In the evening my father conducted the seder. I don't remember any details. All I remember is that we were to steal a piece of matzah [the afikoman] and hide it.

We also observed Chanukkah. On the first day my mother lit a chanukkiyah and added one more candle each day. Chanukkah was a double holiday for us since it was my mother's birthday on one of the days of Chanukkah. In the morning my parents went to the synagogue and when they returned we had a festive dinner. All guests gave my sister and me some change. I cannot remember for sure how I spent this money, but I remember that I was always looking forward to this holiday. My sister and I liked Yom Kippur most of all. My parents went to the synagogue for the whole day. On this day our parents fasted and for us they left fruit: grapes, apples and pears. When our parents returned from the synagogue we had a family dinner.

In 1921 my sister started an eight-year Russian school. I went to the same school in 1923. There was also a Jewish school in Uman, but my parents probably decided that my sister and I would have to continue our studies in Russian educational establishments and that this would be easier if we went to a Russian school. After finishing school Rosalia entered a factory vocational school. After finishing it she went to work at the mechanic plant in Uman.

There were many Jewish children in our school. There was no anti-Semitism at school - I don't think there was any anti-Semitism in the USSR before World War II. My favorite subject at school was drawing and I spent a lot of time drawing. I also created slogans and newspapers at school. I didn't have much time to study other subjects. I devoted all my time to drawing and my second hobby: pigeons. We had a wood shed in the yard where I made a pigeon house. I had over 20 pigeons, but

this still didn't seem enough to me. I put two pigeons underneath my shirt and went to wander around in town. When I saw a pigeon on a roof I released my pigeon and it flew back to its pigeon house and that other pigeon followed it. I ran back home. To make a pigeon get used to its new home, I had to keep it in the house for several days. I pulled out a few feathers from its wing or tied a wing with a thread. Well, it doesn't mean that I never had any problems stealing pigeons. Sometimes their owners came to us to talk with my father. My father called me and I understood that I had to return the pigeons.

I let my pigeons out in the evening. I had a post with a cloth on its end that I used to wave. My pigeons flew high up into the sky turning into black dots and then they returned home. I was happy watching them fly. Unfortunately, my hobby ended tragically. One sad evening they flew as usual and then, when all pigeons were back I locked the shed as usual. When I came to give them food in the morning there were no pigeons in the shed, although the door was locked. A polecat had got into the shed and stolen all pigeons. Even in winter when we came to pick wood for the stove we found traces of blood and feathers in the shed. I gave up my hobby then, but I didn't lose my love for pigeons, and now I've kept pigeons again for several years. However, since the only place where I can keep them is my balcony I only have decorative breeds of pigeons.

In the 4th grade I became a pioneer [see all-union pioneer organization] 8. All I remember from my pioneer childhood is spending vacations in pioneer camps. There was a camp near Cherkassy. I remember lining up in the morning for the flag-raising ceremony and I also remember singing pioneer songs at the fireplace in the evenings. This was so long ago... Another childhood memory: there was a vendor selling bagels near school. A bagel with poppy seeds cost one kopeck and without half a kopeck; there was a half-kopeck coin. My parents gave me a half-kopeck to buy a bagel.

My father hired a private teacher for me to study Hebrew. I don't remember his first name, but I remember his surname: Uchitel ['teacher' in Russian]. He taught me to read and write in Hebrew. Unfortunately, I have forgotten it and only remember how to write my surname in Hebrew. I cannot remember why, but I didn't have classes for a long time. In the 5th or 6th grade I fell ill with scarlet fever. I was so severely ill that I missed many days at school and had to go to the same grade the following year. I finished school at the age of 16 in 1931.

My teacher of drawing gave me a letter of recommendation to enter an art institution. There was none in Uman. In Kiev there was a vocational art school. It was closed after I graduated in 1934. My parents decided to move to Kiev. My father received a room in a communal apartment 9 on Kuznechnaya Street, present-day Gorky Street, in the very center of Kiev. It wasn't my national origin that was an obstacle for admission. At that time it was one's social status. My father was a clerk but children of workers and peasants had admission privileges 10. The admission commission liked my drawing and if my father had been a worker, my admission would have been guaranteed. My father loved me dearly and to remove any possible obstacles he went to work as a laborer at the nail plant. When he came home from work in the evenings it was next to impossible to recognize him. He handled heavy carts with nails and wires all day long. He came home exhausted and dirty, but this job helped for me to be admitted to the school.

We were very hard up. My father earned little and my mother didn't work. We decided that I had to study and go to work at the same time. My uncle, Israil Menachimovich, worked in the commercial

department of a newspaper in Kiev. He helped me to become an apprentice in the illustration department of the popular daily newspaper 'Proletarskaya Pravda' [Workers' Truth], present-day 'Kievskaya Pravda' [Kiev's Truth]. My tutors were Kazimir Reshko, a photographer, and Kazimir Swidzevski, an artist, who signed his drawings with the pseudonym 'Ognit'. Ognit taught me to retouch photographs. This kind of work was done manually at the time. It took a lot of effort to improve photographs or correct deficiencies for newspaper photographs. I was an industrious apprentice and a short time later I became one of the five best retouching experts in Kiev. I studied in the art school simultaneously and finished it in 1934. I continued working in the editorial office.

I remember the famine in Ukraine 11 in 1932-1933. Of course, it wasn't as horrific in Kiev and other bigger towns as it was in villages. I never saw corpses in Kiev while there were dead bodies in villages, as documents and photographs confirmed. Of course, we will never know the whole truth about those years, in the same way we shall never know the truth about the Great Patriotic War. I remember sausage was made from horse meat at that time: it was red and wet and if kept for a short while it lost so much water that there was hardly any sausage left. However, we managed somehow. There were coupons for meals in a canteen issued at enterprises, and food packages were handed out. There were long lines in food stores. It was hard, but it wasn't mortal.

I worked for the 'Proletarskaya Pravda'. Starting in 1935 work became more and more difficult. There were arrests [during the so-called Great Terror] 12 reaching their height in 1937. They lasted until the beginning of Word War II. The situation was troublesome in the editorial office. Chief editors were often replaced: every two weeks or two months. When a new chief editor was appointed the previous one was declared an enemy of the people 13. And we were just surprised that he had managed to disguise himself so skillfully; we didn't suspect anything wrong. We didn't have any doubts. We were raised to have faith in the justice of the Party and Stalin and believed everything that was said on their behalf. People were obsessed with the mania of searching for and denouncing 'enemies of the people'. The whole thing was escalating and became scary. Some things might have been called funny if they hadn't been so frightful.

Visitors often came to the editorial office to report on facts that they believed were significant and worth publishing. Ten to eleven-year-old children came to show pieces of newspaper sheets saying that one could recognize the beard of Trotsky 14, who was declared an 'enemy' or the glasses of Zinoviev 15, an 'enemy' executed a short time earlier. They thought the owners of these pieces were supporters of 'enemies of the people' and demanded to take them to court.

Or to give you another example: there were portraits of classics of literature such as Pushkin 16, Gorky 17 and others on the covers of school notebooks. There were two letters underneath, probably initials of the artist who made them. It was a common thing. I do the same: put a date and my initials in the corner, 'Ya.V.'. Children brought their notebooks to us saying that 'D.C.', for example, was an abbreviation for 'death to communism'. They said that this was a political diversion and demanded to punish those who were guilty. Of course, those ideas were generated by their fantasy, but you can imagine to what extent the propaganda had developed people's 'watchfulness' if even children got this heresy into their minds.

Another example: before Soviet holidays the town was decorated with portraits of party and state officials. Those portraits were put on facades of buildings and people didn't get daylight in their apartments for weeks. When they turned on the lights in the evening window frames appeared

cross- shaped through the cloth. People came to the editorial office to complain that, say, devoted communist and atheist Voroshylov 18, was hung on a cross. They claimed it was blasphemy.

The year 1937 had its impact on me. I came to work one morning and the chief of my department told me that I had to make an appearance in 19, Rosa Luxemburg Street. I became weak in my knees: this was an NKVD 19 office address. It occurred to me - another example of the patriotic spirit we were raised with - that if they arrested me, I wouldn't be able to do my mandatory service in the army. Young people of my year of birth were to be recruited in 1937. I thought that I wouldn't be able to fulfill my duty to my Motherland.

I went to the NKVD office. The reason they summoned me was the photograph 'A group of red army soldiers' printed on the cover of 'Proletarskaya Pravda'. It was summer and soldiers wore their shirts and field caps and there were star badges on their caps. Photographs were retouched with raster, or to make it easier, grid. This raster gave the impression of crosses and looking through a magnifying glass at some angle one could see a swastika on stars, a full or half image. The newspaper was on the desk in front of an investigation officer. He asked me how I managed to have let this happen. I explained that it was a printing defect. He didn't believe me and I began to explain the technical details. I also mentioned to him that the newspapers began to use diagonal raster to print illustrations to exclude the swastika image or other images. They let me go, but warned me that this wasn't the end of the story.

The printing office was in the yard of the editorial office. I often took my photographs there. I went to the zincographer's shop and saw that there were individuals in civilian suits thoroughly studying the photograph matrix. They made sure that I didn't retouch stars. I didn't have to. I only retouched faces. Those NKVD officers checked the whole process including photography, copying, etching, etc. I have no doubts that a swastika appeared again. Then they repeated the process of printing this photograph to make sure that my explanation was correct. This was the end of it.

However, some people had more problems with their work. My friend Vladimir Rovski was a newspaper retouching artist. This was his pseudonym. His real surname was Zetnarowski. He was Polish. Vladimir worked for the newspaper named Communist. After World War II it was renamed to 'Sovetskaya Ukraina' [Soviet Ukraine]. I don't think this newspaper exists any more. There was an issue with a photograph of the garden of a railcar repair plant on the last page. There were flowerbeds, trees and benches where workers could rest during their lunch break. Turning this page upside down censors discovered 'Trotsky's nose', 'Zinoviev's glasses' and so on in it. Vladimir was arrested immediately after this issue of the newspaper was published.

I didn't know what happened to Vladimir for a long time. Only recently, when I had an article about this story published in a newspaper, his nephew, Igor Zetnarowski, found me and told me about Vladimir. Vladimir was arrested and taken to an NKVD prison where he was kept for almost a year. Since he was born in Poland they declared that he was a 'Polish spy'. He was kept in a stone box for eight months. It was a cell where he couldn't lie down or even sit. He was tortured terribly during interrogations. They tried to make him confess of his espionage for Poland. It's hard to believe, but when Vladimir was called to another interrogation he was made to sit on a stool with a picket in the center of the seat. His wife, Emilia, went to Moscow and managed to have an appointment with Kalinin 20. Thanks to his wife, Vladimir managed to be released. After she talked with Kalinin there was a court hearing. The prosecutor withdrew the accusations and Vladimir was released. He

became an invalid. By the beginning of World War II Vladimir got better and volunteered to the front. He perished near Moscow in 1942.

I was recruited in November 1937. On my last day in the editorial office my colleagues gave me a cigarette case. There was an engraving: 'To the alumnus of the collective of the 'Proletarskaya Pravda' newspaper, Yakov Voloshyn, recruited to the glorious Red army, from the local committee of the editorial office. 30.11.37, Kiev'. I was sent to the Far East, 7,500 kilometers from home. The mandatory service lasted two years. I became a private in a chemical company. It was to perform chemical decontamination of the area in case of chemical offensive. I received my uniform. Only 2nd year military received high boots in the army; at the beginning of the service we got boots with leg wrappings. Leg wrappings were two-meter cuttings of cloth. After putting on boots we wrapped the leg wrappings around our legs and fixed them. Since I was good at drawing my military service was not bothersome for me. There were classrooms for political classes in every unit. Our commissar was very happy that I could draw posters and slogans for these classrooms. By the way, I never joined the Komsomol 21. Somehow I didn't join it when studying at school and when I was in the army my commandment insisted that I became a Komsomol member, but I wasn't really eager to. I can't even say why I was so reluctant. I never faced any anti-Semitism in all the years of my military service.

In 1938 there was an armed conflict with the Japanese in the vicinity of a very small lake called Hasan Lake. I took part in combat actions. There were minor conflicts with the Japanese on the border almost every day. They crossed the corner and there were minor fights with Soviet frontier men. They were not mentioned in newspapers, but it was a state policy at the time to conceal information. Newspapers didn't even mention major actions in the vicinity of the Hasan Lake. They didn't reveal the number of casualties on our side although they were significant. Perhaps, the Japanese were probing on our forces and equipment. The Japanese had advantageous positions on the hills while we were at the bottom of the hills. They fired from their machine guns. Stalin's order was not to cross the border with Japan. If our troops had crossed the border this local conflict might have turned into a war between the USSR and Japan. The combat actions lasted for eight days, I think. Mekhlis 22, chief of the political department of the Dalnevostochnaya army - a Jew, by the way - arrived at the scene.

Even in the Far East I witnessed Stalin's terror. Marshall of the Soviet Union Blyukher 23 was the commander of the Dalnevostochnaya army. By the way, he was also a Jew. He was a young man, a brilliant strategist, a former guard military who started his military career as a private during World War I. On Stalin's orders he was arrested during a combat action on the Hasan Lake. Shortly afterwards he was executed on charges of espionage for Japan. General-colonel Shtern 24, chief of headquarters of the army, also a Jew, was appointed commander of the Dalnevostochnaya army. Later he was also arrested and executed.

When combat action on the Hasan Lake was over the Dalnevostochnaya army was divided into the 1st and 2nd Dalnevostochnaya army. The headquarters of the 1st army was in Khabarovsk [7,800 km from Kiev]. There was an army newspaper, 'Trevoga' [Alarm in Russian]. The headquarters of the 2nd army was in Vladivostok, 800 kilometers from Khabarovsk. They didn't have a newspaper yet, but they were planning to establish one. Mekhlis was chief of the political department of the army and ordered to establish the newspaper of the 2nd army, 'Na Zaschitu Rodiny' [For the Defense of the Motherland].

'Trevoga' published job announcements and I saw one saying that the 2nd army needed an artist. I wrote to them and before my term of service was over I received a letter from them, saying that I should come to the editorial office. The editorial office was in the town of Voroshilov- Ussuriysk [present-day Ussuriysk]. Our commissar received the direction to transfer me for service in the editorial office in Voroshilov-Ussuriysk. I was a librarian, a postman and an artist in my unit. My commissar was insulted by the idea of my transfer. He called me to his office and told me off for writing to this editorial office. I reminded him that I had been recruited to the army from an editorial office. Anyway, he couldn't help following the order he got and let me go to Voroshilov-Ussuriysk. I worked with the newspaper until the end of my service. Once demobilized, I decided to stay there. My parents wrote to me saying that life was difficult and in the Far East salaries were higher than in central parts off the USSR. I decided to stay with the editorial office on a contract basis. In addition to 'Na Zaschitu Rodiny' newspaper I worked for two civilian newspapers. I sent my parents money to support them.

The Far East was a thinly populated area. There were very few women and in the late 1930s a movement called 'hetagurovskoye' after Valentina Hetagurova, a pioneer of the movement, began in the USSR. She appealed to women with the words: 'Girls, to the Far East!' She was a communist and there was an appeal of the Party to go to the Far East regions of the USSR. Many girls went there. However, I didn't marry one of the 'hetagurovka' girls.

Before I joined the army I dated an employee of the letter department in our editorial office. My fiancée was a Jew named Lilia Tombak. Her Jewish name was Leya. She was born in Kiev in 1917. Her father, Adolph Tombak, was a joiner at a plant. Her mother, Hana Tombak, was a housewife. Lilia was the youngest in the family. She had two older sisters. The oldest sister, Evgenia - her Jewish name was Ghenia - was born in 1909 and the second- oldest sister, Raisa - her Jewish name was Rochl - in 1912. Ghenia was single. She worked as an accountant in a diner. Raisa finished the Food Industry Technological College and worked as a production engineer at the confectionary. Shortly before the war Raisa married a Georgian man whose surname I don't remember. In 1940 their son Georgi was born. My wife's family was a typical assimilated Jewish family that gave up Jewish religion and traditions.

Before I went to the army Lilia and I decided that we would get married when I returned home. I corresponded with her. After my demobilization, before I was to start work under a contract, I requested a leave to visit home. There was a standard two-month vacation for people in the Far East. A train trip to Kiev lasted 14 days. In 1939 I arrived home and Lilia and I registered our marriage in a registry office. It was an ordinary day. I came by to pick Lilia from work and we dropped by the registry office in the building next to our editorial office, located on 19, Lenin Street. We didn't have a party. My wife followed me to the Far East. We rented a room in a house. Some time later I had to take my wife back to Kiev. She was pregnant and the climate in the Far East wasn't good for her. Lilia stayed with her parents and I returned to continue working under my contract which was to expire in December 1940.

Two years before I got married my sister Rosalia married Yevsey Khananov, a Jew. He worked as an architect in a design institute. He had finished the Faculty of Architecture of Kiev Construction College. They had a civil ceremony in a registry office and a small dinner party with only the closest relatives in the evening. After they got married my sister and her husband lived in Kiev, separately from their parents. Their son Fred was born in 1938.

In November 1940 my wife wrote to me from Kiev to announce the birth of our son Rafail. He was named after my paternal grandfather. In December 1940 I finally returned to Kiev. We lived with my wife's parents. I could have gone back to work with 'Proletarskaya Pravda', but my close friend, Yuri Mescherski, worked there already and I understood that if I went back to work there they would fire him. So I went to work in the editorial office of the Kiev military newspaper, 'Krasnaya Armia' [Red Army], where I was chief of the illustration department. We had more information about the situation in the world than our readers. In winter 1941 we started to notice alarming signs. There was an announcement about a major military training in April 1941. This meant that the leadership of the country had a notion that there was to be a war. Although a non-aggression treaty with Hitler was signed [the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact] 25, and we were supplying grain and meat to Germany, there was a feeling of concern.

Then came the day of 22nd June 1941. At 5 o'clock in the morning our neighbor came to talk to us. He had a telephone and we used it in the case of an emergency. My wife's sister Raisa worked a night-shift at the confectionary. She was the first to hear about the war and called our neighbor. There were flak guns firing in Kiev already. German planes were bombing Solomenka [Editor's note: a district in Kiev], an aviation plant, and the Arsenal, a military plant. They seemed to know the whereabouts of industrial enterprises and hit their targets accurately. I went out to call my workplace from a telephone booth. They told me to come to work immediately. The editorial office became a military regime. There were beds, bed sheets, utensils and military uniforms delivered to our office and we stayed there for a month continuously printing news from the front and flyers. Then the headquarters of the military unit was relocated to Ternopol [400 km from Kiev], and the editorial office moved there as well. We stayed there several days and then returned to Kiev. Our troops were retreating.

On 22nd July we received an order for reduction of staff. I was chief of the illustration department, in the rank of a logistics technician. This was an administrative title and converted to military ranks I was a lieutenant. My unit consisted of invalid Abram Reznichenko, an artist, sergeant Petia Denisov and me. I received higher allowances due to having a higher rank. Perhaps, for this reason I was subject to dismissal. I was sent to the political department of the Kiev military regiment. An officer there asked me, 'Are you a Komsomol member?' 'No.' 'A Party member?' 'No'. 'Nothing I can do for you then'.

I got an assignment to join the army newspaper of the 12th army near Monastyrishche [130 km from Kiev], near Uman. There were some more people to go there. We had a truck and a driver to take us to our destination. However, we failed to get to Monastyrishche. There was a continuous line of retreating military moving to the East. They were exhausted and dirty and had no weapons. There were horse riders passing by with no saddles or guns: there were many of them, probably several thousand. We turned to go back. There were villagers and their cattle: cows, pigs and sheep, moving on the roads. Somebody asked us to take two pigs that couldn't walk on our truck. We reached Zaporozhye region [about 400 km east of Kiev] and encamped in a forest. There were military telling us that we were too slow in our retreat although we covered 40-50 kilometers per day. We could have moved faster on our truck, but what about those who were walking, or wounded or went on crutches?

Once a military was asking for volunteers to study military professions: field engineers, cavalrymen, artillerymen... I enlisted for the job of a radio operator. We were taken to the group of

future cadets of the commanding advanced training course: there were about 70 people. This was an advanced course. We had too little time to study because we were retreating and had to get training on the way. When we came into a town we looked for a building, a former hospital or school. Then we had to find bed sheets and arrange a kitchen. It usually took us two to three days and then we received the order to move on. Sometimes we had transportation means and sometimes we didn't. And we were on retreat...

In late December 1941, on New Year's Eve, we finished our training near Stalingrad, 1,000 kilometers from home. We were given military ranks. Of course, this was wrong. If a man was a logistics technician what kind of a major could he possibly make? He was responsible for office work and now he was supposed to be the commander of a battalion. Perhaps, this also had an impact on the war proceedings. One cannot expect positive results when so many people are not fit for their position.

I was assigned to a military unit in the village of Staromlinovka [about 600 km from Kiev], Donetsk region in Ukraine. I became commander of a communications platoon of 20 people. Several days after my arrival we went to the front. We were to maintain communication between the military units. We never had enough cables. We moved to a new location where we placed communication cables and a few days later we were ordered to retreat. We had to leave our cables and then had to install communications in a new location, but we didn't have any cables left. We also dragged our radio station with us without having a power source for it. Later we dropped it. It was too heavy.

We had wire communications. The wires tore and we had to check and fix them continuously. There were casualties among communications operators. When communication gets cut off during a battle, an operator grabs an end of the wire and follows it to find a tear that he has to fix: connect and insulate the cables. Then he has to check if it works and if there is still no communication he goes on to find another tear. There were cables in an open field and we had to creep so we wouldn't be shot. It was easier when we could hang cables on tree branches, but this rarely happened. Cable on the ground was easily damaged by a horse, a tank or a wagon. Often operators perished. I never had a full staff of operators in my platoon. There were to be about 29 people, but I rarely had 12 and sometimes even less. There were untrained newcomers and I had to explain to them that this was a telephone and that was a list of codes etc. in the course of action. Everything had codes. The Germans knew them; their intelligence was efficient. For example, shells had the code name 'toys'. At times, the Germans shouted, 'Hey, Rus, have they delivered toys yet?' The Germans somehow managed to disclose our passwords. They shouted, 'Is today's password 'bayonet'?'

Tragic and funny things happened at the front. I remember one night in summer 1942: we encamped for a rest in a forest in Zaporozhye region. There was a village nearby. At dawn we saw that we were in an apricot orchard. We were very hungry and pounced on ripe apricots. We got so stuffed that we felt like doing nothing. We were lying down, hit a trunk with the foot and if an apricot fell at an arm's length we grabbed it, but if not we were too lazy to get up and pick it. Then we heard someone ask, 'Anybody wants sour cream?' It turned out there was a milk farm nearby and soldiers brought cans with sour cream. Nobody cared if sour cream and apricots were a good combination or not. We had sour cream poured in our tins, drank it and lay down again. When the order 'Line up!' came, only moaning could be heard around. Everybody had a stomach ache.

There were horrific occasions. It was in the winter of 1943, I guess. There was a lot of snow. We were ordered to relocate to another village near Oriol [500 km from Moscow] in Russia. So we were on the move again. There was a snowstorm and it was hard to walk. It was easier to hold on to something, a half belt of a fellow comrade or a horse's tail, which was even better. So we were walking at night feeling sleepy. There was no road, only snow around. We reached the village. We knocked on one door: there was no space left there. We came to another house and it was the same scenario there. We found a house where two soldiers were preparing for the night. They put something down to sleep on the floor. Our commissar asked them to which unit they belonged. They replied and he ordered them to get out of the house. The guys began to beg him, 'Oy, mister, it's cold, where can we go?' They were probably village boys since they called him 'mister'. They had probably just been recruited, but the commissar kept yelling telling at them to get out. 'You don't want to get out of here?' And then there were two gunshots and the commissar ordered us to remove two corpses. We took them out and dropped them in a snowdrift. That was it. Terrible!

Of course, the commissar was drunk as usual. He always had two flasks of vodka and his adjutant had two as well. Who would have dared to reprimand him? He would have replied with a bullet. These boys were probably put in the lists of the 'missing'. I saw this with my own eyes and know that this wasn't a single incident. A human life had no value at the front. They fired without warning for the most insignificant disobediences. And they were able to do it with complete impunity: the war would justify it, if one survived, of course. So many wasted lives. But one gets used to everything, including death. When we walked in a village and one of us was killed by a sniper the rest of us went on as if nothing had happened. If it weren't for such an adaptability of the human psyche, people would go mad in great numbers. Or, another example: it happened that there was an order to capture a site. A battalion goes into action and nobody returns. They send another and then another... Terrible battles. And then it turns out, it wasn't necessary to capture this site, but so many lives have been wasted...

When the Germans occupied a village or a town, they settled down in houses, particularly in winter, to keep warm and sheltered, while we dug trenches and made blindages. A blindage was wider than a trench. We made a roof from a few layers of logs. There were no stoves, not even in winter. There were one or two kerosene lamps made from shells. This was how we lived. However, a human body works miracles in such extreme conditions. All inner reserves are put into use. I cannot remember anybody getting cold at the front or falling sick with typhoid. We suffered from lice. It was impossible to get rid of them considering the conditions at the front. We had soap, but we didn't have hot water. We could heat a pot of water on the fireplace, but this was the utmost we could do.

We changed underwear once every few months and when they brought clean underwear it was only conventionally clean. You felt like giving it to the laundry right away. However, soldiers are smart and somebody thought of an effective way to fight lice. We had sanitary kits with bandage and cotton wool. However strange it may sound, lice like cleanness. Soldiers put cotton wool or bandage in their armpits and groin and in the morning those were covered with lice. We burnt them. It didn't resolve the problem on the whole, but it mitigated the suffering for a while. I don't remember anyone having typhoid at the front whereas in the rear many people died of typhoid.

There was a mobile kitchen in every unit: two huge tubs on wheels. Those kitchen facilities were moved with horses, tractors or tanks. There were regular food supplies, but in winter there were

delays. Those kitchen facilities failed to catch up with us at times and occasionally the only food we had was moldy dry bread. Although they say salt is not good; it was impossible to eat food without salt. Our cooks boiled pork or horsemeat. Colt meat was good if properly cooked. However, much depended on the cooks. We didn't always get bread, salt or tobacco. Lack of tobacco was more painful than lack of bread.

There were a few girls in our regiment: radio operators and nurses. They received chocolate and the girls who smoked used to exchange their chocolate for tobacco. When we had no tobacco supplies we smoked horse manure. We dried and smoked it. We had horses and there was no lack of manure. We exchanged it for things in a neighboring unit. This was our currency: a bobbin of cable for two buckets of manure. At times there was poor insulation on cables. It is important for the quality of communication: with poor insulation the current flows into the ground. Once we got lucky: we discovered huge three-meter high bobbins of German barbed wire. We used this wire throughout the winter. The current didn't flow into frozen ground though there was no insulation on the wire. This wire was also tough and didn't tear easily.

I kept the cigarette case my colleagues from the editorial office had given to me before I went to the army in the left pocket of my uniform shirt. I didn't use it: I had a pouch for makhorka tobacco. I kept my cigarette case there as a keepsake and with the secret hope that a bullet targeting at my heart would ricochet. I also kept photographs of my wife and son.

I grew a moustache: we shaved with knives or sharpened axes. We had soap and toothpaste supplies, but no razors. Many men had beards and a moustache. But I only wore a moustache. I had a khaki backpack tying on the top. I kept a towel, soap, toothbrush, dried bread, tinned meat, a spoon and a fork in it. Later I got a trophy backpack made from a calf or colt skin with fur on the outside. I remember that it was signed Hans Kofman in ink or ink pencil. When I was wounded this backpack disappeared.

There were medical facilities in every unit. There were medical units in all subdivisions. There were medical attendants to provide first aid and take the wounded from the battlefields. They walked the fields looking for the wounded and provided first aid to the severely wounded before they were moved to hospitals in the rear. The wounded were transported on sanitary trains. Although international conventions banned the bombing of sanitary trains many of them became targets for German planes.

There were political units in every regiment. We didn't have political classes. Political officers read newspapers delivered to units. They also looked into minor disciplinary violations: somebody didn't clean a gun as required or quit his post or didn't come to stand sentinel. In case of serious violations there was a tribunal. There were SMERSH officers of the frontline security service. [Editor's note: Smersh was a special secret military unit for the elimination of spies, SMERSH is an abbreviation that stands for 'smert shpionam' in Russian, 'death to spies'.] In our regiment no death sentences were issued. They usually sentenced a person to five years and this individual remained in the same regiment. When a person distinguished himself in action or rescued another person his sentence was called off and later it happened that it was completely forgotten.

The fascists were evil enemies. Those who weren't at the front could have thought otherwise, but we saw it all with our own eyes. We saw villages burnt to the ground: only chimneys remained. We saw families coming out of cellars with their children and bags, dirty, wearing rags; they were rare

survivors. We saw those people burying their dear ones, small children burnt alive for nobody knows what sins. We saw and heard it all. We marched into battles with the words 'For our Motherland, for Stalin!', and they were not mere slogans or meaningless words. This was our faith, religion, a call of the heart and conscience, if you want. Nobody will take this away from me! For our Motherland, for Stalin we marched into the battles. This was what we knew and what we believed in. It's another story how many casualties it cost us to retake this village...

In 1942 I joined the Communist Party. This was my deliberate decision and nobody talked me into it. I submitted my request for admission and obtained recommendations from my commandment. The term of candidateship to the Party at the front was formal: three to four months [in comparison to the standard one year]. If a person was killed during his candidateship term he was admitted to the Party posthumously and his family received his Party membership card.

My communications platoon was in an artillery division. During our retreat to the east this division incurred many casualties and some time later another artillery regiment arrived at our positions with weapons, staff and ammunition. By that time my term for the lieutenant rank was over. After six months there was to be a promotion. I was promoted to senior lieutenant. A senior lieutenant cannot be the commander of a platoon. When this artillery regiment arrived I was appointed chief of communications of an artillery division. There were communications operators, several cannon guns and their maintenance personnel under my command. Starting in 1942 we were marching on Russian territory. I cannot remember the names of any of the settlements that we passed.

There were Jews at the front. There was an assistant commander of a platoon, a Jew, whose last name was Grach, but I don't remember his first name. Later he was wounded and never returned to us. There were frequent losses in our platoon: wounded, killed, wounded, killed.

The remanning was very poor. We weren't sent to the rear for remanning. There were special units in the rear to recruit people to the front from villages, but still, we never had a complete staff. There were old people with no education who came to the regiment. If there was a telephone message these old men would ask someone to put it down. Those people couldn't write. Many things were happening. During my random checks I sometimes saw a telephone operator sleeping on duty. It was an emergency actually since he could have missed telephone calls. I would wake him up and reprimand him for sleeping, but he would tell me that he wasn't sleeping, just dozing off. There was nothing I could do. We were in need of staff and besides: what kind of punishment did those people deserve? This man might have been exhausted, hungry or received sad news from home, there might have been whatever reasons... I understood the circumstances. Perhaps, the fact that I wasn't a professional military also played its role. I wasn't taught implicit obedience and following orders.

Being an officer I had the right for a personal weapon. I had a gun. I also had an adjutant, a courier. Whenever I had to send a message he was always at hand. His name was Fedia. He came from Kursk in Russia. He was a nice guy! How many times he saved my life risking his own! If we had to go on an errand and there was a sniper ahead of us, Fedia went first. Or, if there were mines in the area Fedia went first and I followed him.

The field post service operated well, even in those circumstances. Letters were delivered regularly. I didn't know anything about my family before 1943 and they didn't know anything about me. Our financial chief brought me my certificate for monthly allowances for my family, but I signed for not

taking it since I didn't know the whereabouts of my family. I heard about my family by chance. I corresponded with correspondent Mikhail Nidze, my colleague from Krasnaya Armia newspaper where I had worked before the war. He was the only person from my peaceful prewar life with whom I kept in touch. In winter 1943 Mikhail wrote me my wife's address: town of Miass, Cheliabinsk region. It turned out that my wife also wrote to him hoping that he would know where I was. He wrote to her, 'Lilia, dance, we know where Yakov is!' and gave her my field mail number.

My wife told me about my parents. They evacuated separately and at different times. My wife and son and my wife's parents and sisters were in evacuation together, and my parents and sister and her son were in evacuation in Bashkiria. Lilia was happy to learn that I was alive. Of course, when I heard from my wife I sent her my certificate for allowances. It was a support for them, however small. Money was so devalued that there was little they could buy for what they got.

My wife wrote often. From her letters I knew about their life beginning from their departure from Kiev. Their train was often bombed. They didn't have any food or even water. My son was just a baby. My wife drank water from puddles and then breastfed our son. I won't even mention such things as diapers or clothes. They had a hard life especially in winter. They lived in a house and needed wood for heating it. A military registry committee provided sledges, a horse, a saw and an ax to people in evacuation, but they had to go cut trees and saw them in the woods by themselves. Of course, it was too much for women to handle, but they survived somehow ...

The situation was hard at the front, particularly during action, but there was time to rest. There were one or two-month intervals between battles. We were silent and so were the German troops. In winter we received 100 grams of vodka every day. In summer we only got vodka after battles. Vodka was delivered in barrels that had the word 'kerosene' written on them. These barrels were originally used for transportation of kerosene and it was actually impossible to clean the barrel completely. The vodka had the distinct smell and taste of kerosene, but we drank it nonetheless and nothing happened.

The soldiers did some plotting to receive more vodka in summer. Summer, no combat action, boring days... They got together to consider what they could do to have a barrel of vodka delivered to them. The commanding officer of my company and I went to the commanding post. We watched the German positions through binoculars or spyglasses: everything was quiet. Then the commander of the company ordered his artillery units: Fire! And they fired three volleys of shrapnel - Fire! Then we looked: The Germans were running around. Now it was most important for us to write a report to the regiment command. Since they were the ones who provided food it was up to them. The chief of headquarters would walk to and fro the blindage dictating to a clerk: 'Write down. A German company has been scattered, two kitchen facilities have been lost', and then he would think of something else to write. And the commandment of the regiment would approve it since they had no grounds for not approving it. Frankly, they had no grounds to approve it either, but the note was signed by the commanding officer of the company. Then the note was sent to the division commandment. The following day a barrel of vodka would be delivered to us.

My last day at the front was at a battle for a hill in late fall 1943. This was Ponyri station, near Oriol, in Russia. Actually there was no hill left, the area had been leveled down: there were pits from shells, corpses and heaps of steel around. This was an important hill since the area around could be checked well and the Germans and we were equally interested in getting this hill under our

control. It was nighttime. There was no communication with our neighbor on the right. According to procedures our neighbor on the left had to provide communications with us and I was to establish communications with my neighbor on the right. I sent two telephone operators to find the breakage and restore communications. This was during a combat action.

The commander of my battalion called me to ask, 'Why is there no communication? If you don't have it fixed in ten minutes from now I will shoot you in front of the line as a traitor of the Motherland!' And he put his gun to my temple. I began to explain that we didn't have enough people: there were so and so many wounded, two killed, three taking a rest. He ordered, 'Then you go!' And I went. I wasn't angry with the battalion commander. I understood that he was right. He needed communication and I was there to provide it. As for the price of it: he didn't have to worry about it. At that time the Germans got a new powerful cannon called 'Big Bertha'. It went off not far from me and from then on I didn't remember anything.

I regained consciousness in the medical unit. I couldn't hear or talk. I was severely shell-shocked and was sent to a hospital in the rear. I was in a hospital in Tambov, then in Michurinsk and from there I was taken to Ufa in Bashkiria. The hospital in Bashkiria was set up in a former Party recreation center. It was better equipped than any other hospital, of course. A doctor examined me and told me that only time could cure me. There was no other treatment. I didn't have any appetite and didn't eat. I suffered from headaches. My wife was notified that I was in hospital. The chief of this hospital issued a permit for my wife and son to come and see me. When they arrived they were accommodated in a room in the hospital. They stayed with me for two weeks. Of course, my mood improved after they came. I began to eat and my condition was slowly improving. I couldn't talk, though and we communicated in gestures. My son didn't recognize me. I kissed him and he said, 'This is not my Papa. It's some prickly man' - I hadn't shaved.

I stayed six months in this hospital. In March 1944 they released me and told me to go home. Kiev was already liberated. I got a food package and tickets to go home. I hadn't recovered my speech at the time and often used gestures to help people understand me. There were some other military going to Kiev in my compartment. I remember a man selling makhorka on the platform. He had a bag of makhorka and a bag of money of the same size. Money wasn't worth much.

Kiev was very destroyed and its main street, Kreschatik, was in ruins. Our house wasn't destroyed, but the Military Prosecutor of the Kiev regiment lived in our apartment. How could I fight against him trying to prove that it had been our apartment originally? The military registry offices had detailed information about former or new tenants, but they couldn't do much to help. I received an apartment near my former apartment. When I came there it turned out that there was already a tenant in this apartment. It was a chief accountant of the regional executive office [Ispolkom] 26 who owned a house in Boyarka on the outskirts of Kiev. I went back to the registry office and told them that I still didn't have a place to live. The military registry office sued this official. Besides him having a house there was another circumstance not in his favor. He lived in Kiev under the German occupation and authorities were suspicious about such citizens. Nobody looked into details of what a person was doing during the German order. They presumed that those living under occupation cooperated with Germans. I didn't even have to go to court. The military registry office did it all for me. He moved out and I moved in. I received two rooms in a big communal apartment. The two other rooms belonged to the family that had been living there since before the war.

Shortly afterwards the registry office notified me that my military unit had included me on the lists for an Order of the Red Star 27 for the battle for Ponyri station. So I managed to fix communications somehow. Marshall Grechko 28, commander of the Kiev regiment and later Minister of Defense of the USSR, conducted the award ceremony and handed this order to me.

Shortly after I returned home I heard about the mass shooting in Babi Yar 29 in Kiev. There were talks and witnesses talked about this horrific crime. Later these talks faded and for many years the authorities kept silent about it as if nothing had happened.

In early 1945 German fascist officers were on trial in the Kiev House of Officers for the crimes they had committed against Soviet people. They were sentenced to death and were to be hanged. The sentence was executed and it was a public execution. There were gallows in the central square in Kiev, present-day Square of Independence, and those fascists were hanged. There were newspaper articles about the trial. The name of artist Moisey Voloshyn, my father's brother, who perished tragically during the occupation of Bogopol, was mentioned in this trial.

The Bug River divides Bogopol into two parts. There was a bridge across the river. When Germans came to Bogopol they separated men and women. Men were in one part of the town and women and children were across the river in the other part. When the Germans figured out that Moisey was an artist they began to give him work. He made portraits of Hitler and whatever they told him. His wife and two daughters were in the other part of the town. He couldn't live without them and lost his mind. The Germans killed him. His family perished along with other Jews in Bogopol. This story was also presented in the trial in accusation of German officers.

On 9th May 1945 [see Victory Day] 30 I heard on the radio about the end of the war and the complete capitulation of the fascist Germany. This was a great holiday for survivors of this horrific war. People in the streets laughed, cried and kissed each other. In the evening many people came into the streets. There were fireworks and music, people danced and sang songs of the wartime.

My wife and son and her parents returned from evacuation in 1945, after Victory Day. We all lived in those two rooms that I had received. I remember when they arrived my mother-in-law wanted some white bread. I went to the market where I bought a loaf of freshly made white bread for 800 rubles. I remember this well. Money wasn't worth anything and people mainly exchanged food for things and vice versa. There were lines to buy food in the postwar years. If flour or butter was sold in a store, people had to stand in lines for many hours and made lists of customers and many wrote their numbers on their palms to remember.

My parents, my sister and her son returned to Kiev in early 1946. My parents' apartment was vacant and they had no problem to move in there. My mother's sisters and their families also returned to Kiev. My mother's older sister, Hana, died in Kiev in the 1970s. I lost track of her son Moisey. My mother's sister Charna and the youngest sister whose name I don't remember died in the 1980s. They were buried in the Jewish section of the town cemetery. No Jewish traditions were observed at their funerals.

My wife didn't work after she returned to Kiev. In 1946 our daughter Nelly was born and my wife looked after the children. I went to work in 1945. I worked with the Soviet Villager newspaper. This was a newspaper of the Central Committee of the Party published in Ukrainian for the Western regions of Ukraine, annexed to the USSR after the war: Moldova, Bukovina, Subcarpathia 31. In the

late 1940s this newspaper ceased publication and gave way for a new newspaper: 'Kolkhoznoye Selo' [Kolkhoz village]. This was also a Central Committee newspaper and published in a bigger format. It was published in Russian and Ukrainian. I worked a lot to support the family. Besides working for the newspaper I also worked freelance in other editorial offices. I took retouch orders and gave photographs back at the scheduled time, receiving my payment. I also painted covers for books and magazines. Some time after the war we received monthly allowances for military awards. Then this privilege was cancelled 'at the request of the working people' as it was usually explained at the pretence that veterans didn't want any privileges.

After they returned to Kiev my parents didn't observe Jewish traditions. At least, that's what I thought. I didn't visit them often. My family and my wife's parents didn't observe any Jewish traditions. We knew about Jewish holidays. Occasionally we recalled that there was a Jewish holiday and what we were supposed to eat on it, but that was all. We never had matzah at home.

We always celebrated Soviet holidays. My colleagues from editorial offices - photographers and artists - visited us. There were at least 40 guests on New Year's, 1st May and Victory Day. Of course, Victory Day was the most important holiday for us: it was our family tradition that my wife and I, our children and, later, our grandchildren went to the monument of Combat Glory and to the museum of the Great Patriotic War in the morning. There were other veterans of the war. We talked about the past days and drank a little vodka to nothing of the kind ever happen in the future.

I had many friends and I didn't care whether they were Jewish or not. There were many Jews among them, though. There were employees of many nationalities in editorial offices, but the majority of them were Ukrainians and Jews. For example Lev Treskunov, the editor of Pravda Ukrainy, the newspaper of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, was a Jew. Kagan, the secretary was a Jew. He wrote his publications under the pseudonym of Gan. Two Jews were executive editors: Frungertz and Larin. This was a central Party newspaper and at other newspapers the situation was the same. Therefore, most of my colleagues were Jewish.

There was anti-Semitism after the war. It was concealed at the beginning, but gradually it became more open. The Jewish theater, which had been very popular among Kiev citizens before the war, didn't return to Kiev from evacuation. It was 'temporarily' moved to Chernovtsy until the ruined building of the theater was restored. However, it never returned to Kiev. In the late 1940s the theater in Chernovtsy was closed.

Another example: eleven Jewish employees of Proletarskaya Pravda perished during the war. I offered our chief editor to make a memorial plaque with the names of those who had given their lives for victory. He agreed, but there was nothing done to implement this verbal agreement of ours. And I understand why it was this way: there were eleven Jewish and two Russian employees of our editorial office who perished during the war. There are memorial plaques in many editorial offices, but not in Kievskaya Pravda.

The campaign against 'cosmopolitans' 32 in 1948 gave a start to open anti- Semitism on a state level. The struggle against cosmopolitans mainly involved people of intellectual professions. First they started the struggle against the [Jewish] Antifascist Committee 33. The actor Mikhoels 34, the leader of this committee, was murdered. They imitated an 'incidental' truck accident, but this was an evidently plotted accident and even those who didn't want to understand the essence of things

could see it. Other members of the committee were arrested. Trials took place in a closed court and there was very little information about them published. There was only one sentence practiced: the death sentence ... Scientists, actors and writers were fired and newspapers published dirty articles about them.

In January 1953 the Doctors' Plot 35 began. Anti-Semitic articles were published every day. I faced anti-Semitism as well. I met twice with a military at the front. He was a stranger, but we talked and had a smoke and said our 'goodbyes'. When I came to work with the Kolkhoznoye Selo newspaper, he was chief editor. We recognized each other and began to recall the front and how we met. During the period of the struggle against cosmopolitans I heard that our deputy editor, a fanatical anti-Semite was spreading mendacious rumors about me. He said that I had not been to the front but that I had stayed in the rear in Tashkent, and other such lies. Friends whom I believed told me about it. I got tired of it and I went to talk with the chief editor. I asked him whether I had been at the front or not. He burst out laughing and said, 'But we met there!' Then I explained to him what it was about. He was upset about it. He called his deputy and told him that he was reducing him to chief of department - and this was a significant reduction - and if he ever heard again that he was spreading lies he would dismiss him. This was the end of it.

I returned from the front a convinced communist, but when those events happened I couldn't believe Stalin and trust that it was happening without his knowing. I began to have doubts, but it was dangerous to share them with anyone else. However, when Stalin died in March 1953 I cried. It seemed to be the end of the world for me and there would be no life afterward. Many people felt like this. It was everybody's mourning and there was a huge line for mourning armbands in the central department store. When Khruschev 36 spoke about Stalin's crimes at the Twentieth Party Congress 37 I believed him. I had seen many of the things Khruschev talked about. Execution of the best commanders before the war: this was a crime! Almost all commanding staff was executed in the late 1930s. It resulted in so many victims, so many captives - millions of them. Many other things that I had never even thought about came to my mind.

In 1963 I had a minor conflict with one of the editors. I heard about a vacancy of an artist in Kievskaya Pravda, the former Proletarskaya Pravda. I called the editor whom I had known before the war and he said he was waiting for me. On Saturday I quit with the Kolkhoznoye Selo newspaper and on Monday I started work with Kievskaya Pravda. My career started and ended with this newspaper. I worked for this newspaper until I retired and was the oldest journalist not only at this newspaper, but also in Kiev.

My mother died in 1968 and my father passed away two months after her. We buried them in the Jewish section of the town cemetery. There were no Jewish rituals observed at their funeral.

Regretfully, working so much, I didn't have any time to spend with my family. I didn't give enough attention to my children. I came home late in the evening, had dinner and sat down to work again. I did extra work for other newspapers from home. I had to do a good and timely job for them. There were deadlines for this additional work since every newspaper had fixed terms of issuance, particularly, the daily newspapers. If you fail to complete your task on time you won't get any again.

We worked on holidays. I don't know whether people read the newspaper on holidays, but it was issued, anyway. There was a lot of work on holidays. The newspaper published photos of parades

from Moscow. We received those photographs by telegraph and they were indistinct and had many defects. I had to work on them very thoroughly since they were photographs of members of the government. On such days I stayed at work until one in the morning. Then I had to take the photographs to the printing shop. Since I couldn't get there through Kreschatik Street, which was cramped with crowds of people, I had to take roundabout ways and came home at dawn. However, sometimes I also got a chance to take a rest. When there was a meeting of the Politbureau or something like that in Moscow or Kiev there were official reports. The radio and telegraph agencies of Ukraine were to send us those materials and I could take my chance to rest.

In summer I liked going to the beach on the bank of the Dnieper with other photographers. We took beer or something stronger with us. Driving laws were different at the time. Drivers weren't allowed to smoke when driving, but a little drinking was all right. We spent our summer vacation with the children in the Crimea [900 km from Kiev]. Our children often had angina and their doctor advised us to take them to the seashore every summer. Those were happy days: we were together and I didn't have to hurry. This was my time when I enjoyed spending time with the children.

In 1970 I decided to go to Sverdlovsk and find my wartime adjutant Fyodor. He lived on the outskirts of Sverdlovsk. I didn't recognize him at once: I remembered him when he was young and now I saw a grown up man with a beard. He had been wounded after I left and had his leg amputated. He didn't even have an artificial leg, just a piece of wood tied to his stump. We were happy to see each other and talked for a while. He invited me to dinner on the next day. I went to his place the next day. He had died of a heart attack at night. I went back to my hotel, packed and left for home. There was another fellow comrade I met. He attended a celebration of Victory Day that took place in the house of officers. We met in the smoking room and recognized each other. Of course, it was nice to see him. I never saw him again. But there are veterans who still keep in touch. They have many memories to share. This was a war...

In the 1970s large numbers of Jews began to move to Israel. Here, meetings were held at their former workplaces and those people were offended and humiliated, and called traitors at such meetings. My nephew, Fred Khananov, my sister's son, his wife and son left for Israel. Fred and his wife were architects. His wife's father was one of the key personnel in Mostostroy, a construction company. He was supposed to sign a permit for his daughter to be able to leave. When they heard at his workplace that his daughter was leaving they arranged a meeting with all employees who besmirched his name. In the end he was fired. I don't remember any details, but it was horrible to listen to his story. People turned into brutal bloodthirsty crowds.

Frankly speaking, I had a negative attitude toward the idea of departure. I didn't consider it myself for many reasons. I didn't know the language, and it's not so easy to learn a new language at my age. Besides, I don't think there will ever be peace in Israel and I know what a war is like. However, I sympathized with those who decided to move there. I think that every person has the right to choose his own destiny and a place to live.

I accompanied my nephew to Uzhhorod [700 km from Kiev] near the frontier. I couldn't go farther without a visa. Of course, it took Fred and his family some time before they got settled in Israel. They had a miserable life for some time, but then he and his wife found good jobs and things improved. Unfortunately, I don't know anything about them now. Fred doesn't write to me. Well, if he doesn't want to write, it's up to him. My sister and her husband stayed in Kiev. She died in 1990

and was buried in the town cemetery in Kiev.

My children studied well at school. After finishing a secondary school my son Rafail entered the Faculty of Machine Building of Voronezh Polytechnic College. I can't remember why he didn't continue his studies in Kiev. I don't think it had anything to do with anti-Semitism. In Russia anti-Semitism was no different from Ukraine. After finishing college my son got a mandatory job assignment 38 in Moscow. He was a foreman in a printing house.

Rafail married twice. His first wife was a ballerina with the Bolshoi Theater 39 in Moscow. Unfortunately, their marriage failed. When my some came home from work his wife was leaving for work. She returned when he was asleep and he left in the morning when she was sleeping after a performance. They hardly ever saw each other and a few years later they divorced. Their daughter, Victoria, was born in 1964. She is married. Her surname in marriage is Logvinskaya. Her older son, Boris, was born in 1985 and her younger son, Alexandr, in 1987. In 1995 Victoria, her husband Leonid and their sons moved to America. They live in New York. They are doing very well.

Rafail's second marriage is successful. His wife, Irina, is Russian. I don't remember her maiden name. Irina was born in Moscow. She is a little younger than Rafail. She is an editor. They don't have children, but that's all right with them.

My daughter Nelly finished the Industrial College in Kiev. She is an engineer in china production. She married her former Ukrainian classmate. Her name in marriage is Gluschenko. Nelly is a production engineer in a scientific research institute for china. She has two daughters: Marina, born in 1972, and Yekaterina, born in 1983. Marina graduated from the Philological Faculty of Kiev State University. She is a pedagog. Yekaterina studies at the Industrial Academy. Nelly and her family live in Kiev. She and my granddaughters often visit me and help me about the house. My children have non-Jewish spouses, but it doesn't matter to me as long as they are happy.

I worked with Kievskaya Pravda until I retired. In 1975 I turned 60, but my editor didn't let me go until he found a decent replacement. I had to work for another year until they found a replacement. I still keep in touch with my newspaper. I've always helped them when they needed my expertise. They invite me to celebrations, congratulate me and give me presents on Victory Day. I feel that my former colleagues care for me and I appreciate it. I'm the oldest employee of this newspaper and, I guess, the oldest journalist in Kiev. After I retired I continued doing work for other editorial offices. I began to draw when I retired. I often went out to draw picturesque landscapes in Kiev. I also painted still life pictures and portraits of my relatives. I always enjoyed drawing.

I was a personal pensioner of the republic, as I was chief of department of a newspaper of the Central Committee of the Party before my retirement. This didn't mean that I received a higher pension. There were standard pensions for all, but I did have some privileges. My wife and I could enjoy the services of the best polyclinic at the time. Once a year I got a free stay in one of the best recreation centers of the USSR. I bought an extra stay for my wife and we went there together. Every year we visited my son and his wife in Moscow.

In 1992 my wife died. I still feel this loss acutely. She was my dear one and made up a significant part of my life. Lilia was buried in the town cemetery. There was no Jewish funeral. Since then I've lived alone. Drawing and the pigeons living on my balcony fill up my life. Pigeons have been my hobby since my childhood. Well, they are not ordinary pigeons that need to fly. These are

decorative pigeons that adjust well to the life they have.

When the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, Mikhail Gorbachev 40, announced a new course of the USSR, perestroika 41, in the late 1980s, I felt skeptical about it at first. We had always been promised a happy future before and I didn't believe such promises, but then I realized that this time there was at least some truth in it. We really got freedom. The Iron Curtain 42 separating the USSR from the rest of the world for years collapsed. We were allowed to communicate with people living abroad, visit them and invite them to come. I didn't travel abroad, but it was important to me from the spiritual point of view.

There were books published that formerly might have been reason enough to be sent to the Gulag 43, for example, books by Alexandr Solzhenitsyn 44. It became possible to listen to foreign radio stations, such as The Voice of America, Radio Free Europe 45 and others. Before we could only listen to them at night, when they were not jammed to the extent one couldn't hear anything. Now there is no such need to listen to them since any newspaper publishes more than any of theses radios can tell us. In the past those 'voices' were the only source of true information for citizens of the USSR. However, I had a negative feeling about the last stage of perestroika, the breakup of the USSR. I think that the union of all republics was much stronger than all these independent states. I think that Ukraine and Russia will unite.

After Ukraine gained independence the rebirth of Jewish life began. Hesed 46 was established in Kiev. Old people always feel its care. We receive food packages every month. It is very helpful. Hesed provides medications and it is very important for us considering our age and needs. I receive Jewish newspapers that I always read. They organize birthday parties and amateur concerts in Hesed.

I am a member of the Kiev Jewish veterans association of the European council in Ukraine. The average age of our veterans is 80. We have meetings twice a month and I always attend them when my health condition allows me to go there. We recently celebrated the 95th birthday of one of our veterans of the former tank forces, Colonel Zaretskiy. I gave him a painting which shows him on a tank decorated with flowers. There was a party in Hesed.

There are many events in Hesed. Recently we attended the meeting organized to commemorate the anniversary of the extermination of the Jewish Antifascist Committee. This meeting was conducted in the library of the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine. On 7th September veterans were invited to a meeting with representatives of the army of Israel. They came to Kiev at the invitation of the all-Ukrainian Jewish Congress. The representatives visited the Babi Yar Memorial and Hesed. We met with them at the banquet in a restaurant. They are such patriots of their country! At the end of the dinner the anthem of Israel was played. They stood up without any order and were standing until it ended. Unfortunately, most of us could only talk with them with the help of an interpreter. I shall remember this meeting. Unfortunately, I've never traveled abroad, but I hope to visit Israel one day.

Every year at the anniversary of the mass shooting, the Day of Grief, on 29th September, we go to Babi Yar to commemorate the victims. We lay flowers on the memorial for those who perished.

As for state organizations, we get an impression that nobody cares about veterans. They only invite us on Victory Day: they greet us and give us flowers and presents. Then they forget us until

another celebration. In the past veterans were invited to schools to tell children about this horrible war and our victory, but nobody needs it now. Who will tell them about this war when all veterans are gone? How much longer will we live? I am 88 and I hope to live until 90. We'll see what happens...

Glossary:

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

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

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

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

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

permanently.

6 Hasid

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

7 Russian stove

Big stone stove stoked with wood. They were usually built in a corner of the kitchen and served to heat the house and cook food. It had a bench that made a comfortable bed for children and adults in wintertime.

8 All-Union pioneer organization

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

9 Communal apartment

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

10 Admission privilege

After the Revolution of 1917 people that had at least minor private property (owned small stores or shops) or small businesses were deprived of their property and were commonly called 'deprivees' [derived from Russian 'deprive']. From 1917 to the middle of the 1930s this part of the population was deprived of civil rights and their children were not allowed to study in higher educational institutions. Communists declared themselves to protect the interests of the oppressed working class and peasants and only representatives of these classes enjoyed all civil rights.

11 Famine in Ukraine

In 1920 a deliberate famine was introduced in the Ukraine causing the death of millions of people. It was arranged in order to suppress those protesting peasants who did not want to join the

collective farms. There was another dreadful deliberate famine in 1930-1934 in the Ukraine. The authorities took away the last food products from the peasants. People were dying in the streets, whole villages became deserted. The authorities arranged this specifically to suppress the rebellious peasants who did not want to accept Soviet power and join collective farms.

12 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.

13 Enemy of the people

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

14 Trotsky, Lev Davidovich (born Bronshtein) (1879-1940)

Russian revolutionary, one of the leaders of the October Revolution of 1917, an outstanding figure of the communist movement and a theorist of Marxism. Trotsky participated in the social-democratic movement from 1894 and supported the idea of the unification of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks from 1906. In 1905 he developed the idea of the 'permanent revolution'. He was one of the leaders of the October Revolution and a founder of the Red Army. He widely applied repressive measures to support the discipline and 'bring everything into revolutionary order' at the front and the home front. The intense struggle with Stalin for the leadership ended with Trotsky's defeat. In 1924 his views were declared petty-bourgeois deviation. In 1927 he was expelled from the Communist Party, and exiled to Kazakhstan, and in 1929 abroad. He lived in Turkey, Norway and then Mexico. He excoriated Stalin's regime as a bureaucratic degeneration of the proletarian power. He was murdered in Mexico by an agent of Soviet special services on Stalin's order.

15 Zinoviev, Grigory Evseyevich (1883-1936)

Soviet communist leader, head of the Comintern (1919-26) and member of the Communist Party Politburo (1921-26). After Lenin's death in 1924, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Stalin formed a ruling triumvirate and excluded Trotsky from the Party. In 1925 Stalin, in an effort to consolidate his own power, turned against Zinoviev and Kamenev, who then joined Trotsky's opposition. Zinoviev was removed from his party posts in 1926 and expelled from the Party in 1927. He recanted and was readmitted in 1928 but wielded little influence. In 1936, he, Kamenev, and 13 old Bolsheviks were tried for treason in the first big public purge trial. They confessed and were executed.

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 Gorky, Maxim (born Alexei Peshkov) (1868-1936)
Russian writer, publicist and revolutionary.

18 Voroshylov, Kliment Yefremovich (1881-1969)
Soviet military leader and public official. He was an active revolutionary before the Revolution of 1917 and an outstanding Red Army commander in the Russian Civil War. As commissar for military and naval affairs, later defense, Voroshilov helped reorganize the Red Army. He was a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party from 1926 and a member of the Supreme Soviet from 1937. He was dropped from the Central Committee in 1961 but reelected to it in 1966..

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

20 Kalinin, Mikhail (1875-1946)
Soviet politician, one of the editors of the party newspaper Pravda, chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets of the RSFSR (1919-1922), chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR (1922-1938), chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (1938-1946). He was one of Stalin's closest political allies.

21 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.

22 Mekhlis, Lev Zakharovich (1889-1953)
Soviet party statesman, colonel- general. Started as a social democrat, was a member of Poalei Zion. After the 1917 October Revolution he attained the ranks of Political Officer in the Red Army. An energetic assistant of Stalin, he was at different times minister of state control of the USSR,

editor-in-chief of the most influential governmental newspaper, Pravda, chief of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Sometimes referred to as Stalin's 'alter ego', Mekhlis constantly informed on the army commanders to the Central Committee. Mekhlis died in Moscow and is buried in the Kremlin wall.

23 Blyukher, Vasiliy Konstantinovich (1890-1938)
Soviet commander, marshal of the Soviet Union, hero of the Civil War, the first to be awarded the Order of the Red Banner; in 1921-22 Minister of Defense, chief commander of the People's Revolutionary Army of Dalnevostochnaya Republic. In 1929-38 commander of the Special Dalnevostochnaya Army. Arrested and executed by Stalin.

24 Shtern, Grigoriy (1900-1941)
Soviet commander, colonel-general, Hero of the Soviet Union. In March 1919 he volunteered to the Red army. From May 1938 Shtern was chief of headquarters of the Far East front. In May 1941 a German airplane, unnoticed by the anti-aircraft defense, flew from Belystok to Moscow and landed there. This caused a wave of arrests among anti- aircraft high rank officers. In June Shtern was arrested and confessed that he had been a German spy since 1931. He was shot without trial on Beriya's orders. Rehabilitated posthumously.

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

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

27 Order of the Red Star
Established in 1930, it was awarded for achievements in the defense of the motherland, the promotion of military science and the development of military equipments, and for courage in battle. The Order of the Red Star has been awarded over 4,000,000 times.

28 Grechko, Andrei Antonovich (1903-1976)
Soviet army officer and minister of defense. As a World War II commander he took part in the liberation of the Caucasus, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. In 1953 he assumed command of Soviet troops in East Germany, suppressing the East German workers' rebellion of that same year. He became first deputy minister of defense in 1957, under the ailing Marshal Malinovsky. Assuming the top defense post in 1967, he deftly organized the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia by Soviet and other Warsaw Pact troops suppressing liberalization in that country. In 1973 he became a member of the Politburo. He is credited with modernizing the Soviet army.

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

30 Victory Day in Russia (9th May)
National holiday to commemorate the defeat of Nazi Germany and the end of World War II and honor the Soviets who died in the war.

31 Subcarpathia (also known as Ruthenia, Russian and Ukrainian name Zakarpatie)
Region situated on the border of the Carpathian Mountains with the Middle Danube lowland. The regional capitals are Uzhhorod, Berehovo, Mukachevo, Khust. It belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy until World War I; and the Saint-Germain convention declared its annexation to Czechoslovakia in 1919. It is impossible to give exact historical statistics of the language and ethnic groups living in this geographical unit: the largest groups in the interwar period were Hungarians, Rusyns, Russians, Ukrainians, Czech and Slovaks. In addition there was also a considerable Jewish and Gypsy population. In accordance with the first Vienna Decision of 1938, the area of Subcarpathia mainly inhabited by Hungarians was ceded to Hungary. The rest of the region was proclaimed a new state called Carpathian Ukraine in 1939, with Khust as its capital, but it only existed for four and a half months, and was occupied by Hungary in March 1939. Subcarpathia was taken over by Soviet troops and local guerrillas in 1944. In 1945, Czechoslovakia ceded the area to the USSR and it gained the name Carpatho-Ukraine. The region became part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1945. When Ukraine became independent in 1991, the region became an administrative region under the name of Transcarpathia.

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 Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee (JAC)

formed in Kuibyshev in April 1942, the organization was meant to serve the interests of Soviet foreign policy and the Soviet military through media propaganda, as well as through personal contacts with Jews abroad, especially in Britain and the United States. The chairman of the JAC was Solomon Mikhoels, a famous actor and director of the Moscow Yiddish State Theater. A year after its establishment, the JAC was moved to Moscow and became one of the most important centers of Jewish culture and Yiddish literature until the German occupation. The JAC broadcast pro-Soviet propaganda to foreign audiences several times a week, telling them of the absence of anti-Semitism and of the great anti-Nazi efforts being made by the Soviet military. In 1948, Mikhoels was assassinated by Stalin's secret agents, and, as part of a newly-launched official anti-Semitic campaign, the JAC was disbanded in November and most of its members arrested.

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

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

35 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.

36 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.

37 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.

38 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.

39 Bolshoi Theater
World famous national theater in Moscow, built in 1776. The first Russian and foreign opera and ballet performances were staged in this building.

40 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.

41 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.

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

the late 1980s and early 1990s.

43 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.

44 Solzhenitsyn, Alexander (1918-)

Russian novelist and publicist. He spent eight years in prisons and labor camps, and three more years in enforced exile. After the publication of a collection of his short stories in 1963, he was denied further official publication of his work, and so he circulated them clandestinely, in samizdat publications, and published them abroad. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1970 and was exiled from the Soviet Union in 1974 after publishing his famous book, The Gulag Archipelago, in which he describes Soviet labor camps.

45 Radio Free Europe

Radio station launched in 1949 at the instigation of the US government with headquarters in West Germany. The radio broadcast uncensored news and features, produced by Central and Eastern European émigrés, from Munich to countries of the Soviet block. The radio station was jammed behind the Iron Curtain, team members were constantly harassed and several people were killed in terrorist attacks by the KGB. Radio Free Europe played a role in supporting dissident groups, inner resistance and will of freedom in the Eastern and Central European communist countries and thus it contributed to the downfall of the totalitarian regimes of the Soviet block. The headquarters of the radio have been in Prague since 1994.

46 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.