Ivan Barbul

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Ivan Barbul is a taller than average, broad-shouldered man who looks young for his age. He has thick gray hair, gentle features and expressive eyes. He has a low voice like that of a professional lecturer. The most dramatic part of our discussion is his story about how his parents, sisters and little brother perished during the Holocaust: he couldn't hold back the tears in his eyes, and his voice was trembling. However hard it was for him, he insisted that he told the story to the end. His wife, Liana Degtiar, stayed beside him during our discussion. She was ready to offer him help at any given moment as Ivan has heart problems. Ivan, his wife and their grown-up son, Boris Barbul, live in a spacious three-bedroom apartment in Ryshkanovka, a green and well-organized district built in the 1960s in Kishinev. The apartment is furnished with plain, but comfortable furniture. They have a big collection of Russian books: fiction, scientific works and volumes on physics and mathematics. All members of the family are involved in science. One can tell that they love each other: they treat each other very gently and have a good sense of humor.

My family background

My maternal great-grandfather's name was Abram Shafershuper. My uncle Yoil, my mother's brother, told me that our great-grandfather served in the tsarist army for 25 years, some time in the late 18th or early 19th century. I don't know whether my grandfather served as a cantonist 1, or if he was recruited for active service, when he became of age. When he was demobilized, the tsar granted him a plot of land in Bessarabia 2, in the village of Tsarevka near Rezina. Our family on my mother's side originated from Tsarevka. Uncle Yoil told me that my great-grandfather was an extremely strong man. There were regular contests between the strongest men in the village, and my great-grandfather was unbeatable. These contests must have been very violent, as my great-grandfather was killed during one of them. My grandfather, Moisey Shafershuper, moved to Rezina [Bessarabian province, Orgeyev district. According to the census of 1897 there were 3,652

residents in Rezina, 3,182 of them were Jews]. He owned a plot of land where he grew grapes. My grandfather died before I was born. I think it happened in the 1910s. My brother, born in 1918, was named Moisey after my grandfather.

I knew my grandmother, Etl Shafershuper, well. She was born in Balta [Odessa region, Ukraine], to the family of Alper Neerman. My grandmother was short and sweet like all grandmothers. She always wore a kerchief. I remember that she grew grapes. We, kids, used to go to the vineyard to pick the ripest grapes. Grapes were used to make wine, which my grandmother sold. She also had a cow. She milked it and we would drink fresh milk right from the bucket. My grandmother had a nice big two-storied house on the bank of the Dnestr River. There was always the delicious smell of food and fresh milk in the house. There was a wine cellar in the basement. My grandmother's daughters and their families lived on the first floor, and my grandmother lived on the second floor. My grandmother strictly observed Jewish traditions and so did her daughters. Nobody worked on Sabbath. They lit candles. My grandmother died during the Great Patriotic War 3, in evacuation where she went with one of her children. Grandmother Etl had seven children. I know little about them.

My grandmother's next daughter after my mother was Zlota. She was married and lived with her family in my granny's house. I think she had a son. I remember that he was ill and had some kind of hysteria. He had attacks. I remember visiting them one day, when I wasn't allowed to go into his room: there was an old woman working against an evil eye put on him. I had to wait till she finished her recitals. Aunt Zlota died in evacuation during the Great Patriotic War. I have no details of how it happened.

My mother's brother Yankel died in 1937 and this is all I know about him. I have no information about my mother's sister Anna, either.

My mother's brother Shmil was born in 1903. He was a wealthy man. He owned a bakery. His wife's name was Haya. Their son Semyon was about five years older than me.

All I know about my mother's sister Mariasa is that she was born in 1906 and lived in my grandmother's house before the war.

My mother's younger brother Yoil was born in 1907. He was a flour wholesale trader before Bessarabia was annexed to the Soviet Union [see Annexation of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union] 4. His wife Riva was also born in Rezina, her parents lived in a big stone house in our neighborhood. After the war I found my uncle Yoil in Chernovtsy and he was the one to tell me a lot about the history of my family. During the war, Uncle Yoil shortened his family name from Shafershuper to Shuper. Later Yoil's family moved to New York, USA. My uncle died in 2001. Riva and her son Mikhail live in New York. Riva is 92. She writes us letters in Russian.

My mother, Feiga Rybakova, was the oldest in the family. She was born in Rezina in 1899. She was tall, slender and quiet. I don't know how far my mother went with her education. She could read and speak Yiddish and Russian and she knew Hebrew. I don't know how my parents met. My father came from Rybnitsa, a town on the opposite bank of the Dnestr [left side of the river, the Transnistrian side]. I think they had known each other for a while before they got married.

I know little about my father's parents. His father, Samuel Rybakov, lived in Rybnitsa. In the early 20th century he moved to the USA. My grandfather married twice. He remarried after his first wife died. My grandfather had more children in the USA, but I failed to locate them. I know nothing about his first wife: my father's mother. My father's older brother, Peisach Rybakov, lived in Odessa [today Ukraine] and so did my father's sister Sheiva. Her husband's name was Grisha [affectionate for Grigoriy] Kolker. Their daughter's name was Polina. We didn't have any contact with them before 1940, when Bessarabia belonged to Romania.

My father, Gersh Rybakov, was born in 1894. He finished school in tsarist Russia. He could read and write in Russian, he was an educated person and we had a big collection of books in Russian at home. My father must have finished a yeshivah since he was a teacher at the cheder in Rezina and he knew Hebrew. My uncle Yoil told me that in 1914, when World War I began, my father had moved to Grandfather Samuel's in the USA to avoid service in the Russian army. My mother was his fiancee already. One year later he returned and they got married. They had a traditional wedding under the chuppah. It couldn't have been otherwise at that time. After the wedding my parents settled down in Rezina. I don't know how they lived through the revolution [see Russian Revolution of 1917] 5, but in 1918, when Bessarabia was annexed to Romania [see Annexation of Bessarabia to Romania] 6, they already had three children: Abram, the oldest, was born in 1915, my sister Anyuta was born a year later, and my brother Moisey was born in 1918. My sister Nehoma was born in 1922, Riva in 1924, then came Betia in 1926, and Shmil in 1936. On 12th December 1929 I was born in Rezina; my parents named me Isaac.

Growing up

Rezina was a Jewish town. The majority of its population was Jewish. There were Moldovan villages surrounding the town: Stoknaya, which was less than one kilometer away, Chernoye on the other side of the town, and the Chernaya River. Jews in Rezina were mainly traders and craftsmen: tinsmiths and tailors. There were Jewish doctors. Doctor Grossman lived near where Uncle Yoil lived, in the center, and there was Doctor Rapoport, who moved to Soroki after the Great Patriotic War. There were stores owned by Jews in the center of the town. Jews didn't work on Saturday and Sunday. There was a strong Jewish community in Rezina. Jews strictly observed all traditions. There was a market which was particular crowded on market days. My sisters helped my mother to do the shopping. There was a boulevard in the center, and a small monument either to Carol, the Romanian king [see King Carol I] 7, or to Stephan the Great [Stefan cel Mare, ruler of the Moldova principality (1457-1504)]. There was a big garden owned by landlord Pavlovskiy in the suburb of Rezina on the bank of the Dnestr. He must have been Russian. He only stayed in his mansion here in the summer. Mostovaya Street, where we lived, ran along the Dnestr, and there was Podgornaya Street up the town. In spring, the Dnestr flooded many streets. If you travel to Rezina now you'll see that the town has spread onto the hill.

We lived on the first floor in a two-storied house. We bought this first floor from the owner of the house who lived on the second floor. However, she didn't recognize our ownership. I remember this was some disputable issue for her and there was some tension between us. Aunt Riva's parents lived in a beautiful big two-storied stone house next to ours. We had no garden or even a yard. There was a shed adjoining the house where my parents kept a goat. When the times became hard, the family sold the goat. There were three or four rooms, but only one room had a wooden floor, the rest had cemented floors. The rooms were damp. There was a bigger dining room with a

table in the middle of the room, big enough for the family of ten to sit there. Kerosene lamps were used to light the rooms. I also remember a kitchen with a huge Russian stove 8.

We weren't wealthy considering that ours was a big family. My father worked in a cheder and our relatives from the USA supported us. My father gave private lessons at home. The pupils were of different ages, but they studied together. My father made me attend their classes and I remember that all of them were older than me. The community and the boys' parents must have paid my father for his work. I still meet people, who tell me that my father was their teacher in the cheder. He was strict, but I don't remember him beating his pupils. My father was short, and I don't think he had a beard or moustache, though this doesn't match with the image of a religious Jewish man. Neither my sisters nor I have pictures of my father. My father had religious and fiction books in Russian at home.

My mother was a housewife. She was quiet and hardworking, which she had to be, considering that she had so many kids. I remember that she read a lot and even filled in for my father at the cheder, when necessary. I think she knew Hebrew.

Every Friday my mother baked bread a week in advance. She also made cookies and I remember the smell of baking in the house. There were many of us and she had to cook a lot. When we sat at the table, we had to be quick to take our share as it didn't stay long on the table. My mother cooked delicious food: chicken and beef broth with beans, and stuffed fish which she made like cutlets. She also often made chicken broth with homemade noodles. Clear soup with noodles is my favorite dish. My older sisters gave my mother a hand with the cooking. The family got together at the table for breakfast, lunch and dinner. My mother covered the table with a tablecloth and each of us had a place at the table.

When my father came in we sat at the table as if after getting a command, though there were no commands, surely. My father recited the broche: I don't remember whether he did it every day, but surely he did it on Saturday and on holidays. There was always meat on the table on Sabbath. On Friday morning it was my chore to go to the shochet to have him slaughter a chicken. I remember how the shochet took the chicken, slaughtered it and hung it by its tied legs to have the blood drip down. He also had beef for sale: there must have been a kosher slaughterhouse in Rezina. We spoke Yiddish at home. My father prayed in the morning and in the evening. My mother had a seat at the synagogue. On holidays I went to the synagogue with my father. I know only one synagogue in Rezina where we went. My mother sat on the second floor with the other women.

On Rosh Hashanah we went out to listen to the horn [shofar]. I also went to the synagogue with my father on Yom Kippur, when Jews had to fast for a whole day, but I was just a boy and my mother used to give me some food.

On Sukkot we had meals in the attic where the roof could open and we decorated it with tree branches to make a sukkah.

I remember Chanukkah particularly well. It was a merry holiday. We didn't have a chanukkiyah. We cut a potato in half, took out the inside, poured some oil and inserted a wick in it. My mother placed these candles on the window sill so that everybody could see that we celebrated Chanukkah. I remember receiving Chanukkah gelt from my father and my uncles. My uncles didn't have so many children as my parents and they could afford to give us some money. I saved what I

got to buy sweets.

On Purim my mother made hamantashen. People dressed up and performed on the streets. Children ran around with rattles. My father took me to the synagogue to listen to Megillat Ester. The boys used to rattle and yell when Haman's name was mentioned.

Pesach was the main holiday, of course. My mother did a general clean up. What a clean up it was! We had many utensils which my mother scorched. Before Pesach my father swept the chametz from the window sills. We had special crockery for Pesach. On seder my father reclined on cushions telling us the history of the exodus of Jews from Egypt. He also hid a piece of matzah under a cushion and one of the children was to find it as a gift. I also remember how we ate potatoes dipping them in salted water. One of my older brothers, Abram or Moisey, asked my father the four traditional questions. We all had a little wine. I had a little wineglass of my own. I used to dip matzah in this wine and eat it. It tasted a little bitter. The older children used to laugh at me.

I was a naughty boy, they told me. I used to hide away to eat non-kosher sausage. Our Moldovan neighbor Fedia had a pig farm and a store where he use to sell pork, cracklings and sausages. I bought a sausage from his store secretly saving the money that I got from the adults. I wasn't the only one to buy a sausage. We kept it a secret from my father, but my mother shut her eyes to it knowing that the sausages and cracklings were good for children. However, we never had pork at the table: God forbid.

I remember well my first visit to Doctor Rapoport. I climbed the hill over our town and decided to check how fast I could run down the hill. At the very bottom my legs were running on their own on the narrow path, I fell and injured my head. I was taken to Doctor Rapoport's house. He had a kerosene lamp with beautifully shaped glass on his desk. It had a special device to fix the width of the wick to regulate the brightness of light. I took so much interest in this lamp that I even forgot the pain. The doctor made me lie down on the couch to stitch the injury, but I twitched from pain, hit the table, the lamp turned over and the glass broke. The doctor had another lamp brought in to finish his job. I still have the scar on my forehead.

My older sister Anyuta moved to Palestine in 1935, or in 1936. She attended training sessions arranged by an organization [see Hakhsharah camps] 9 near Beltsy, where she studied farming. Before moving there she had a marriage of convenience since young girls or boys weren't allowed to move there on their own. Her husband's name was Grisha. In Israel they got divorced. Anyuta went to work and got remarried. Her husband's family name was Rabinovich.

My older brother Abram finished a gymnasium in Rezina. In Bucharest [today Romania] he passed his exams for a Bachelor's degree and became a teacher in a village. Abram was in love with Lusia, a girl from our town. Her father was a wealthy Jewish tobacco dealer. Abram and Lusia wanted to get married, but my father was against their marriage. He said that they belonged to different layers of society. Abram and Lusia couldn't get married without their parents' consent: this was a rule with Jewish families. But when Abram came to Rezina he spent all his time at Lusia's home. My brother Moisey finished a vocational school in Rezina and worked as a mechanic in Bucharest. My sisters Riva, Nehoma and Betia studied at school. In 1936 my younger brother Shmil was born. He was loved very much and was affectionately called Shmilik.

At the age of seven I went to an elementary school. My father wanted me to get a good education, of course. There were Jewish and Moldovan children at school. I had a Moldovan friend. His last name was Borsch. We started the day with 'Our Father...', 'Tatal Nostru...' in Romanian [Lord's Prayer]. All children, including Jews, had to pray. I remember once I misbehaved during the prayer: somebody tugged at me or I pushed someone. I must have been a rather vivid boy. Our teacher of nature, Domnul [Sir in Romanian] Markov, whipped me in front of the class. This was quite a whip, let me tell you. This was a traditional school punishment in those years: they also made us kneel in a corner, on grains, hit us on the hands with a ruler, slapped us on the face or pulled our ears.

During the War

When the Cuzists 10 came to power in Romania, anti-Semitism developed at our school just like everywhere else. A Jew could even be beaten for being a Jew. We heard about pogroms in Iasi, but there were none in Rezina. There were only posters reading 'Only Romanian is spoken here' all around: in official and public places, in stores and in the streets. This was more likely the discrimination against both Jews and Russians since Russian was the main language of communication in the current Bessarabia. [Russian was dominant mainly in the cities: most of the Moldovan countryside was Romanian (Moldovan) speaking.] When the Cuzists came to power, we lived in fear.

In 1940, when Bessarabia was annexed to the Soviet Union, we welcomed the Soviet army as our liberators. I had finished the third grade and I remember the time well. I ran with the other boys to the Dnestr where we watched the Soviet troops crossing the river over the pontoon crossing from the side of Rybnitsa. Later, they restored the bridge on the river which had connected Rybnitsa and Rezina before 1918. Our school switched to the Russian language teaching curriculum. At my age I had no problem switching to Russian, particularly because my parents spoke and read Russian: we had Russian books at home. My brother returned to Rezina and went to work at Gorky vehicle plant in Russia. My sister Nehoma also went to work in Russia. She worked at the weaving mill in Ivanovo [today Russia]. Riva went for the tractor operator courses after finishing her school. After finishing the training course she worked as a tractor operator in the village of Tsarevka, I think.

My mother's brother Shmil and his family and other wealthy families were deported to Siberia. Uncle Shmil died while in exile. His son Semyon got married while in exile and returned to Moldova with his wife and mother. The exile saved them from the fascists. Aunt Haya lived in Kishinev and Semyon and his wife lived in Strasheni. He died of a disease in the 1980s, and Aunt Haya moved to Israel. She has also passed away.

When the Great Patriotic War began in 1941, Abram evacuated to Uzbekistan with Lusia's family. My parents, Riva, Betia, Shmil and I also rushed to evacuate. The bridge across the Dnestr had been destroyed by bombs, and we crossed the river on a boat to get to the railway station in Rybnitsa where we took a train to Razdelnaya station which was 60 kilometers from Odessa. From Razdelnaya [today Ukraine] we moved to Odessa where Uncle Peisach Rybakov, and Aunt Sheiva Kolker lived. When we went to Odessa, there was only Peisach and his family there. Aunt Sheiva, her husband Grisha and daughter Polina had evacuated by then. Sheiva and her family returned home after the war. Sheiva died in Odessa in the 1960s. Her daughter Polina and her family live in Jerusalem.

Uncle Peisach worked as a loader in the dock. When the siege of Odessa began, he went to the fighting battalion 11 with other dockers. His son was engaged in digging trenches. His wife Lidia and his daughter, whose name I don't remember, stayed in the town. Uncle Peisach was wounded and evacuated from Odessa by sea. When he recovered, he went to the front. After the war he returned to Odessa where he remarried. I didn't know his second wife. Uncle Peisach died in the 1950s.

In Odessa we stayed at Uncle Peisach's home and later we moved to Aunt Sheiva's apartment which was vacant. Odessa was surrounded at the time and the only way to evacuate from there was by sea. We were waiting for our turn to obtain a permit to board a boat, but our turn never came: the armed forces had first priority. We stayed in Odessa. After the Soviet troops left, the Romanian troops who had incurred great losses didn't come into the town until after a day's hesitation. I remember this day well. I was eleven. I ran around with other boys. I saw people near a basement of an apartment building and looked inside. There was a church nearby. People were carrying bags with dried bread from the storage facility in the basement and I got one bag. It wasn't heavy and I carried it home. It came in very handy since we didn't have any food stocks after leaving Uncle Peisach's house where his wife shared their food with us. On 16th October the Romanian troops entered Odessa [see Romanian occupation of Odessa] 12. They hung the first orders of the occupational authorities on the walls. The Romanians took my father and other Jewish men to the gendarmerie and he never returned. On 19th October the Romanians issued the order for all Jews to pack their clothes and food, leave their keys with their janitors and walk in the direction of Dalnik [a village 15 km from Odessa] where there were work camps to be formed.

We packed and went outside. There were five of us: my mother, Riva, Betia, Shmilik and I. There were many people on the streets already. We met Lidia and her daughter on the way. The Romanians and policemen were directing people from the streets and when we left the town, it looked like a river of human beings carrying their luggage and children and pushing the elders on carts ahead of them. There was a hollow rumble in the air that muted the yells of guards. When we reached Dalnik, they gathered us at some abandoned spot surrounded with wooden fences and towers with machine guns on them. The area had been lit with floodlights. Our father, who had been taken there from the gendarmerie, met us there. Everybody thought this was the end. People began to say farewell to their dear ones crying and screaming. At dawn the guards lined up all stronger men telling them they were to work at the construction site, but this must not have been very far away as we heard shooting soon after: they were all killed.

We were told to move on. Where were we going? There were masses of people walking, some were dying on the way from diseases or from the shock of those latest days. There were wagons riding aside the column of people: all those who felt like climbing on them were allowed to do so. I also wanted to ride on a wagon and so did Shmilik, but my father told us not to. Those who climbed those wagons never returned. The Romanians probably didn't dare to kill people immediately before everybody's eyes. I remember that once we stayed overnight in an empty cow-farm. It was fall and it was raining and cold. People were stuffed in the building and the smell of manure mixed with the smell of sweat and people's bodies was evident. In the morning we moved on. The colder it got the faster we were forced to march. They probably did it to have more people die a natural death. Many were falling and never got on their feet again. Everybody dropped the luggage they had.

We finally reached Bogdanovka [In Bogdanovka all Jews in the ghetto were shot, by the Romanian gendarmerie, the Ukrainian police, and Sonderkommando R, made up of Volksdeutsche (local ethnic Germans)]. A huge area was fenced with barbed wire and there were pigsties all around. Our family got into one which had sows. There were cells for sows. Aunt Lidia, her daughter and I got into one such cell. We were told we could get some straw from the outside. We brought some straw to put on the floor. We didn't know how long they were going to keep us there. It turned out that we were going to be there for a long time. We didn't get any food. There was a well outside where we were allowed to get water. I made a passage underneath the barbed wire and used to run to a nearby cabbage field where I could dig cabbage stumps out of the frozen ground. I ate them. The others had nothing to eat.

All films about the Holocaust, however horrible the pictures are, reflect the reality only approximately. The reality was much more horrific. This was no ghetto in Bogdanovka. It was beyond comparison. This was an area with no rights or rules, where people were exterminated for no particular reason. Every day wagons hauled out hundreds of dead bodies. The inmates placed their dying relatives in passages between cells so as not to have them die in the cells where they lived. Often these dying people had no clothes on, since their relatives would pull off their clothes to trade them for food products. Villagers from Bogdanovka used to bring food to the barbed fence for the exchange. My mother and some other women found a hole in the fence and used to go to the village to get some food. My mother was ashamed to beg for food and she asked for work to do for food. Occasionally, people asked her to do washing for them and she washed their clothes in the ice-cold Bug River for bread or potatoes. She brought us whatever she could get. My father grew very weak and couldn't get onto his feet again.

There was a senior Jewish man in our pigsty. He had a 'burzhuika' stove [makeshift steel stove] with a stack for the smoke to exhaust through the window. He allowed the inmates to warm up by the stove. One day our pigsty caught fire. I don't think it started from the stove, but whatever the reason might have been, it was burning. The guards told us: 'You may move to another pigsty.' My father didn't want to move, though my older sister Riva and I could help him. I saw him move a hand to my mother gesturing her to take care of the children. When leaving, I saw another old man moving closer to my father. He opened a religious book with a black cover. It must have been a prayer book. My mother took us to another pigsty. When the fire was over and there were only charring stones left, Riva took me to the site: 'You remember this brick? This is where our cell was.'

There were five of us left: my mother, Riva, Betia, Shmilik and I. Aunt Lida and her daughter had passed away. One day a woman told Riva to go to Bogdanovka to bury her mother. My mother went to the village the day before, and while she was doing the washing on the bank of the Bug, a policeman killed her with his rifle butt. Riva was eighteen by now. Somebody told her that the situation was better in Odessa and she decided we had to escape to Odessa. It was winter and there was a lot of snow. Betia could hardly stand on her feet, and Shmilik couldn't move at all. I was more or less all right. We decided that Riva and I should go. When my brother heard that we were leaving, he didn't want to let us go. I lifted him: he was as light as a dove. He couldn't walk and Riva decided that we should go.

I don't know how far away from Bogdanovka we walked, but Riva realized that I couldn't walk any further. We stayed overnight at a farm. I remember the owner: Saveliy Ischenko. Riva asked him to keep me for a few days till she came back for me. If the situation with the Jews was better in

Odessa, she would come for me and we would also take Shmilik and Betia with us. She left. A week later Saveliy told me that his neighbors had learned about me and he couldn't keep me in his house any longer. I had to leave. It was January 1942: it was cold and there was snow. Saveliy rode me to Odessa in his sleigh covering me with straw. I knew that Riva was to be in Peisach's apartment and went there. Our neighbor, who was an ethnic German, gave me shelter. It took her quite a while to convince me to go inside: I had lice. My fur collar on my coat was swarming with bugs. She put some straw into a carton box for me to sleep in. I'm grateful she didn't report me to the authorities. She told me that Riva had come to Odessa. It was true that there were about ten days, when Jews weren't persecuted, but it was only a trick that the Romanians played to set a trap for the Jews who had been in hiding. When the Jews came out of their hiding places, the trap closed. I knew these Jews had been taken to Beryozovka and killed.

I had nothing to do in Odessa and started on my way back. I was still hoping to find Riva, who was to go back to Saveliy's house for me. I was hoping we would be able to help Betia and Shmilik. When I reached Saveliy's place, he showed me a grave near his hut: 'Riva ran in to ask about you, when their column was passing by. They killed her in the morning and I buried her here.' I said, 'I have nowhere to go. I will go to where Betia and Shmilik are.' He asked, 'Back to Bogdanovka? There is nobody left there. They were all killed.' I had just turned twelve, and I was alone in the world. So, I returned to Odessa, where I was captured and taken to the ghetto in Slobodka [neighborhood on the outskirts of Odessa].

The ghetto was in the building of a former Navy school. The yard was fenced with barbed wire and there were Romanian guards at the gate. There was a Romanian commandment and a Jewish head man in the ghetto. The tramps like me were taken to the room called the hoarder. I was kept there for seven to ten days, when the Romanians announced they were going to take us to a Jewish colony. The march headed to Beryozovka. I was very well aware what this meant. I escaped from the column. Where was I to go? If they captured me alone they would kill me. It was easier to go back to the ghetto, which I did by climbing over the fence. I was taken back to the hoarder.

Some time later they gathered the inmates to take them to the Jewish colony. Again I was in this group: I escaped again. This happened several times. On the way I talked to the Romanians. Some of them even gave me bread, but I wouldn't say that they were better than the Germans. They were committed to their duty: they never failed to exterminate Jews. Who, but scumbags, would kill people for no reason? When the winter was over and it got a little warmer, I thought that I might live in a field. Can you imagine: alone, in a field, but I wasn't afraid of predators or darkness. People scared me.

The last time I was taken to the hoarder, a boy found me there. He was Yefim Nilva. He said, 'Let's stay together. Let's be friends.' Somebody had told him about me. Yefim wasn't as exhausted as I was. He had been taken to the ghetto from jail. [In October 1941, the Jews of Odessa were imprisoned in Odessa central jail and stayed there till December.] His mother was killed in jail. Yefim boasted he had a German document stating that he was Russian or Ukrainian, I don't remember for sure. He also demonstrated that he wasn't circumcised while I evidently was. I thought he would be the wall that I could hide behind. And I could help him to escape since I was well experienced at this. The next time, we escaped together, but where were we to go? We knew there was a Jewish ghetto in Balta [180 km from Odessa] and we headed there.

We walked at night to avoid any confrontation. During the day we stayed in haylofts. Occasionally, we went to villages to ask for food. Yefim talked with the villagers since I burred and had to keep silent for safety. To identify a Jew, policemen use to order a person to say 'kukuruza' [corn]. Burring was a sign of Jewish origin. We tried to get some work in villages. We made up a story that we were from a children's home: I was Ivan Ischenko and he was Fyodor Nilvin, and since there were no children's home any longer, we needed work to get some food. People probably guessed the truth telling us there was no work. We finally reached Balta, found the ghetto, but when we came to the fence, the inmates told us to get away as fast as we could since the guards were killing the newcomers.

We started on our way back asking for work in villages until finally we found work in the village office of Gandrabury [today Ukraine]. Yefim did the talking. He told them our names: Ivan Ischenko and Fyodor Nilvin. It was a big village with twelve kolkhozes [see Kolkhoz] 13 before the war. I was to go to work in the Voroshilov 14 kolkhoz and Yefim was assigned to the 'Krasny partisan' kolkhoz. They were called communities during the Romanian rule and had numbers: community one, two, three, etc., while people called them 'a former kolkhoz.' I was to be a shepherd and stay in an air brick and clay hut twined with osier at five to six kilometers from the village.

It was an old, but rather stable hut. The clay had fallen off, but the osier still kept the hut from falling apart. There was a sheep shed with 60 to 65 sheep near the hut. I was the shepherd and there were two janitors who took turns to stay in this hut. Once a week villagers brought me food: bread and potatoes which I cooked. Villagers also brought their sheep for me to shepherd and also brought me some food. This was the payment I got for my work. Yefim worked for a farmer and stayed in his house. Yefim's master took less risk considering that Yefim had a certificate stating that he was Russian. During this period, between spring 1942 and fall 1943, Yefim and I only met twice.

In fall 1943 the retreating Germans and Romanians took the sheep with them. I was alone in this hut. Some villagers came by. They must have suspected who I was, but they didn't report me. They also mentioned that there were childless families in the village, who might adopt me. I didn't dare to go to the village, but one day I decided to go to Ivan Illich Barbul, who was a nice person. He lived with his wife Agafia and his or her old mother. They had no children. He registered me by his family name and named me Ivan. His wife Agafia told me to call her mother and her husband, father. It was hard for me, and then Ivan Illich said, 'Just address her as Mistress, and me, Mister.' I didn't get along with the old woman, as she kept grumbling about me. She died at the time when the Germans and Romanians were retreating and the Soviet forces were approaching. In spring 1944 the Soviet troops liberated Gandrabury. I stayed with my adoptive parents. My friend, Yefim Nilva, returned to Odessa where he had relatives. He found his sister, completed school and served in the army. He got married. His wife Bella is Jewish. Their son's name is Alexandr. Yefim and I became lifelong friends. He is closer than a brother to me. We meet on Victory Day 15 every year.

Post-war

After the liberation I went to the sixth grade at school. Ivan Illich was mobilized to the Soviet army. He perished in Iasi [today Romania] in fall 1944. Agafia was an epileptic and I had to stay with her taking care of her. She had attacks of epilepsy every two to three weeks and stayed besides her waiting for her to recover. I worked hard about the house and in the field with Agafia. Living in a

village means working hard. I joined the Komsomol 16 at school. I was eager to study and liked reading. I borrowed books from the village library. I read all I could get. When I was in the tenth grade, I read about the establishment of Israel from newspapers and heard about it on the radio. The USSR supported this event and was one of the first states to recognize Israel. As I came to understand later, this support was based on the expectation that Israel would develop into a socialist state. When Israel took a different direction, the two states drifted apart. I think that the establishment of Israel is the only compensation to the Jewish people for millions of its deceased.

After finishing school I went to Rezina for the first time hoping that one of my older brothers had survived. I had hopes, but I also feared that there were no survivors. In Rezina I was told that my brother Moisey lived in Kishinev. I found him right away. Moisey told me about all of our relatives. Moisey had been mobilized to the Soviet army at the very beginning of the war. He was at the front until 1945. He had been severely wounded in Poland and taken to hospital. After recovery he went to Uzbekistan to look for Abram. He found Lusia. Lusia and Abram lived together without getting married. Lusia told Moisey that Abram had volunteered to the front and had perished in Konigsberg [today Russia] in 1945. Moisey returned to Rezina in 1945. He had no information about me and thought that we had all perished. Moisey married Nina, a girl from Rezina. He graduated from a law school, but he never worked by his specialty. I don't know the reason; perhaps, it was the Item 5 17 . He worked at a shoe store in Kishinev. He had a daughter called Faina, and a son called Grigoriy. Faina married Grigoriy Rosh after finishing school. Grigoriy finished secondary school and got married. His wife's name is Yelena. Moisey had a surgery in the 1980s to have splinters, which had been inside since the war, removed as they were troubling him.

My sister Nehoma was in Ivanovo during the war where she got married. Her husband, Semyon Abramovich, is a Jew. They had no children. They moved to Chernovtsy after the war.

After finishing school I entered the Faculty of Mathematics of Kishinev University, but then I fell ill and had to quit my studies for the time being. Later, I switched to the Pedagogical College since I could stay in the hostel there. Then I got a transfer to the extramural department getting a job as a teacher of mathematics in Raspopeny in the late 1940s and early 1950s. This was the period of the struggle against cosmopolitans [see Campaign against 'cosmopolitans'] 18, I remember the murder of Mikhoels 19, and the Doctors' Plot 20. However, I have my own point of view on it. I don't refer to this as anti-Semitism. I don't think Stalin was an anti-Semite. Stalin was a politician and he was removing his opponents. He killed more Russians and Georgians than Jews.

I think that the Doctors' Plot had its political base. Perhaps, it had to do with the establishment of Israel and with the fact how popular Golda Meir 21, the Prime Minister of Israel, was with Soviet Jews. I don't think anybody would be able to tell you the actual reason: one has to dig into the archives for it. I think these talks about the state-level anti- Semitism are a bit exaggerated. The ratio of Jews was low in the total population, but if you look at statistics, you'll see that there are many more Jewish doctors, teachers and engineers than those of any other nationality. [Editors' note: The interviewee probably means that the proportion of higher ranking professionals and intellectuals was higher among the Jews than any other nationalities in the Soviet Union.] For example, I am a Jew, and I've never concealed that fact, and I studied and faced no prejudiced attitudes towards me.

I remember the day of Stalin's death, how people cried. I was calm about it: I wasn't going to exhaust myself for this reason. The Twentieth Party Congress 22 in 1956, and the publication of the Khrushchev's 23 report, made me learn many new things. Like many others, I had no idea about the extermination of the leaders of the party, I didn't know about the number of camps [see Gulag] 24, and the number of prisoners or how many people perished there. It was a shock for me. It was a shock to learn that the people moving from Moldova [Romania] across the Dnestr to the USSR, who were communists, were taken to Stalin's camps. The situation in the country changed after the Congress, and I joined the Party in 1956.

After finishing my college I began to work as director of the school in Raspopeny. I often went to see my brother in Kishinev and met my future wife, when visiting my distant relatives. She rented a room from them. Her name was Liana Degtiar. I liked Liana at once and I met with her each time I went to Kishinev. In summer 1961 we went to the Crimea by boat. We sailed to Yalta [today Ukraine] and then traveled across the Crimea. We stayed in Gurzuf, climbed mountains for two days, walked to Alushta and went to Yevpatoria. We got married in spring. Liana is three years younger than me. She was born in Bucharest in 1933. Her father, Elih Degtiar, was born in Soroki in 1903. He graduated from the Cannes University in France and worked as chief engineer in a company in Bucharest. Her mother, Sophia Degtiar, was born in Beltsy in 1908 and finished a gymnasium there. After getting married she worked as a typist at the railroad in Bucharest.

When Bessarabia was annexed to the USSR in 1940, Liana's family returned to Soroki. During the war they were in evacuation in Kurgan, Tuba region, Tajikistan. In 1944, the family returned to Soroki after it had been liberated by the Soviet forces. Liana's father was a lecturer in an agricultural school, and her mother was a housewife, when we met. Liana graduated from the Faculty of Physics of Kishinev University and worked as a scientific employee at the laboratory of the Scientific Research Institute of Electric Instruments. We had a quiet wedding. Our friends and my wife's colleagues came to the registry office. Then we had a small party in Liana's room. Then we went to Liana's parents' house in Soroki and celebrated with the family and their acquaintances. After the wedding I moved in with Liana.

My sister Anyuta's visit from Israel in 1962 was a great pleasure for me. She took a plane to Odessa and from there she traveled to Kishinev. This was shortly after our wedding. This was our first meeting after she had moved away. I told her the story of our family. Anyuta brought me Shmilik's photograph. Anyuta had a husband and three sons: Noah, Judah and Zvi. They lived in Rishon Le Zion [today Israel]. Anyuta's husband grew and sold oranges and their sons helped him. You can imagine how concerned I was about my relatives during the wars in Israel: the Six-Day-War 25, and the War of Judgment Day [see Yom Kippur War] 26. I listened to BBC and The Voice of America. In the early 1970s my sister Nehoma and her husband Semyon Abramovich moved to Israel. They lived in Rishon Le Zion. Now I'm worried about each event, every terrorist act in Israel more than they are. I admire Israelis: they live and work despite terrorist attacks. They have fear, but they don't panic.

When I was director of the school, I was offered a job at the District Party Committee, but Liana believed that I should stick to science. She insisted that I entered a postgraduate course. I enrolled in the postgraduate course of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences in Moscow [today Russia] and lived in a hostel in Pluschikha [a district in the historical part of Moscow] in the early 1960s. There were postgraduate students from all over the USSR and we had a full international student body:

from Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and I was a Jew from Moldova. Our scientific tutors and employees of the Institute of Mathematics teaching techniques were highly qualified specialists. They got along well both with postgraduate students and lecturers. I went to study in the State Library of the USSR named after Lenin [presently called National Library of Russia]. Highly skilled bibliographers helped me to find the books I needed or ordered them from other places, if necessary. If the book was a rarity, they sent a copy of it. I also studied at the library of the Ushinskiy Academy of Pedagogical Sciences. There were also scientific consultants working in the library to provide assistance to postgraduate students on various subjects. I consulted a specialist in mathematics teaching techniques in Polish schools. I'm still very grateful to many of the specialists for their great support.

Our son Alexandr was born in 1963. Liana was working and I received a stipend of a postgraduate student. Liana's parents supported us a lot. Liana often traveled to Moscow on business trips, and her parents took care of Alexandr during this time. We were always happy to see each other. We went to art exhibitions, theaters or just walked around Moscow. Liana spent the money I saved to last for a month in those few days.

After finishing the postgraduate course I returned to Kishinev where I went to work as a senior scientific employee at the Scientific Research Institute of Pedagogy. I dealt in mathematics teaching methodology. I was involved in the scientific research work. I published a book: 'Elements of geometry in primary school'. In 1968, I defended a candidate's dissertation [see Soviet/Russian doctorate degree] 27 in Moscow. Our scientific research institute belonged to the Ministry of Education of the USSR that initiated the introduction of new mathematics curricula in schools based on the experience of French schools under the guidance of Academician Kholmogorov [Kholmogorov, Andrey Nikolaevich (1903-1987): Soviet mathematician, founder of the scientific school in the probability theory and theory of functions].

The old syllabus and textbooks in mathematics underwent radical changes, starting from the first grade. Elements of higher mathematics were introduced in the senior school: set theory, integral, derivative, etc. The changes of this kind required training of teachers. I got involved in teachers' training: prepared lectures, instructional letters, read lectures, I mean, I got directly involved in the teachers' training and the development of new school textbooks. There was a lot of work to do, but unfortunately, there was opposition to this reform in the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. It was only effective for ten years: 1967 to 1976, when the schools switched back to the previous curriculum. At present, a new curricula and textbooks have been introduced, and again this reform is based on the influence of French schools.

Besides working at the Academy, I read lectures in the In-Service Teachers' Training Institute, and in Tiraspol Pedagogical College. I used to travel to Tiraspol for a day to deliver lectures to students. It took me one hour by train. The ticket cost three rubles. I returned to Kishinev in the evening. I liked teaching and got along well with my colleagues and students. I meet some of them now. After work I always spent time with Alexandr, teaching him things. My pedagogical experience happened to be very handy. Alexandr finished the first and second grades in one year, but my wife thought I was overloading the boy. However, I know that if the child manages, it's all right. It's not good, when things are too easy or too hard. When I noticed that Alexandr coped with his load in the first grade and was starting to lose interest in classes, I transferred him to the second grade. It took him some time to catch up with his classmates but he managed very well. His teachers praised him.

I taught Alexandr to follow a strict timetable: at ten o'clock he had to go to bed. At one time in the fifth grade he was having problems: played in the yard and failed to do his homework. 'I can't go to bed, I have to do my homework' he said. I told him that it didn't matter. He had to go to bed then. I also told him that he should have done his homework earlier. This taught him to do his homework on time. Teachers are very important at school, and the attitude of school children to them is important. In our family we always tried to support the authority of teachers. Alexandr was good at mathematics and we transferred him to a mathematics class in another school. He was a sociable boy and had many friends.

Liana was the supervisor of her laboratory in the institute and was working on her candidate's dissertation. In January 1969 she achieved a degree in technical sciences. In December this same year, our second son Boris was born. Boris was an individualist in contrast to Alexandr. He didn't want to go to the kindergarten and whatever efforts of even my colleagues to convince him to agree to attend a kindergarten failed. However, he went to school without any problem, but he fell ill, when he was in the third grade. He had mumps, quite a common disease with children, but had complications and fell into a coma for a long time. Thank God, the doctors managed to save him. After the disease he studied no worse than his older brother and even went to a mathematics class.

Our family spent the summer holidays together. Our favorite place was Odessa and the suburbs of Odessa: Chernomorka, Sergeyevka, and Karolino- Bugaz. Sometimes Liana's parents went there with us. We also traveled to Sochi, Sukhumi and Yalta renting a room like everybody else at the time. We sometimes went to Odessa on weekends: my colleagues and their families got together, rented a bus and went to the seashore for a weekend. Transportation, food and travel were inexpensive. We read a lot during vacations. Reading was very popular: we read newspapers, magazines and fiction. We gathered a big collection of books in Russian. Liana and I had many scientific manuals and guides in our collection. Now that we are considering moving to Israel, Liana and Boris argue a lot about what we should take there with us. Liana sends Boris to a paper utilization office to take the books she thinks aren't necessary, but he brings them back home and calls his mother an inquisitor of the 21st century, jokingly.

In 1978, Liana's parents exchanged their apartment in Soroki for an apartment in Kishinev and moved here. Her mother, Sophia Degtiar, died in late March 1988, we buried her in the Doina [cemetery in Kishinev], in the Jewish section. Liana's father died in February 1992. He was also buried in the Doina cemetery.

Alexandr finished school in 1979 and we wanted him to continue his studies. He was good at natural sciences and mathematics. He entered the Faculty of Biology of Moscow State University.

When he was a fourth-year student, he married his co-student Tatiana Yailenko in January 1983. She is from Donetsk [today Ukraine]. Her mother is Ukrainian and her father is Greek. They had a small wedding party: their fellow students, Tatiana's parents, Liana, Boris and I got together at the wedding party. We arranged the party at the canteen of the hostel. They received a room at the House of postgraduate students [one of the comfortable hostels of Moscow University]. I laughed as I looked up at the rear of this hostel [twelve-storied building]: one can see diaper's and children's clothing hanging on lines - not so bad for students! In December 1983 my grandson Leonid was born. Tatiana was a fifth-year student and took an academic leave to take care of the

baby. Her mother arrived from Donetsk to help her. Alexandr was very attached to his son and even argued with his mother-in-law about training his son at times. Sasha [affectionate for Alexandr] finished a postgraduate course in Moscow, and in 1988 he and Tatiana moved to Kishinev. By this time we had paid for a three-bedroom apartment and gave our previous two-bedroom apartment and the furniture to the children. Sasha went to work at the Academy of Sciences of Moldova. In the late 1980s Liana and I were of the retirement age [pension age for men in the USSR - 60 years, for women - 55 years], but we continued working.

After finishing school Boris entered the Faculty of Physics of Kishinev University. Upon graduation he went to work at the Scientific Research Institute of Electric Instruments where Liana worked. He still works there and is very fond of his job. Boris isn't married.

In 1992 my sister invited me and my wife to Israel. Anyuta bought us tickets. We took a plane to go there. My sister and her family met us at the airport of Tel Aviv [today Israel]. You can imagine this meeting! It was the reunion of our big family: my nephews Noah, Judah and Zvi, their wives, their wives' parents, many children and grandchildren. I couldn't even count them all. Anyuta is a great grandmother. The parents gave each son pardes i.e. a plot of land with an orange garden. Once we got together at Noah's 56th birthday. We had another reunion at Judah's place. He has a big yard and a sorting machine for oranges and tangerines. He had tables installed for this whole big family to fit in his yard. There I had a feeling, it's hard to describe what it was like, hard to find words. I remembered our big family, when we sat at the table, I knew I was no longer alone: I have so many dear people, who love and remember me. However, I was a little embarrassed that there was a language barrier between me and my numerous relatives. They speak English and Ivrit, but I don't know these languages. Anyuta and I spoke Romanian and Yiddish a little. I promised my nephews that when I visit them next time, I would know English or Hebrew.

Liana and I stayed in Israel for two months. We traveled all over the country. Sometimes Noah drove us in his car. He showed us his office at the dock: he deals in the export of oranges. We traveled to Jerusalem and went to Yad Vashem 28, and to the Wailing Wall. The only place we didn't go to was a kibbutz, though I was eager to visit one since my sister worked at one, when she moved to Palestine. My acquaintances working in a kibbutz told me the kibbutzim are going through hard times now, but they are still the agricultural base of Israel. In 1992 my older brother Moisey, his wife Nina, their children Faina and Grigoriy and their families moved to Israel. They settled down in Nathania. Nina died in 2003. I visited Israel again in 1995, and in 1998. I stayed with Moisey in Nathania. I haven't learned English or Ivrit. It's hard to study languages at my age. However, Moisey's children and grandchildren remember Russian and they were always at hand to help me.

In 1993 our son Alexandr moved to Leningrad and went to work at the biophysical laboratory at the Academic Institute. He divorced Tatiana and left the apartment to her and their son. We keep in touch with Tatiana. She is a nice person. Our grandson Leonid often visits us. He is a student of the Faculty of Mathematics of Kishinev University. Alexandr remarried in Leningrad. His second wife Olga Ivanova is Russian. Their salaries were hardly enough to make ends meet. One day representatives of Israel arrived at a scientific conference in Leningrad. They offered Alexandr a job at the University of Tel Aviv. Olga followed Alexandr to Israel. In 1997 their son Ilia was born. Liana went to Israel to take care of the baby. She stayed there for three months and met with her relatives: her father's sisters and her nieces and nephews live in Israel.

After perestroika 29 the Communist Party was forbidden [Editors' note: In fact the Communist Party of the USSR ceased to exist in 1991, after the breakup of the USSR.] in Moldova and the authorities started altering the history on the wave of anti-communism. There was an issue of annexing Moldova to Romania. Mass media praised Antonescu 30 and were even going to build a monument for him in Kishinev. There were discussions and they even collected money. They called the Romanians, who came here in 1941 with German troops, liberators. Imagine how I felt: these Romanian 'liberators' exterminated my parents, three sisters and my six-year old brother plus thousands of Jews. I think that Gorbachev 31 and Yeltzin placed their own well-being at a higher priority than the well-being of the state. Of course, there were many reasons for the breakup of the USSR, but how could they do it when 76 percent of the population voted for the USSR at the referendum? [The turn out on the referendum whether to preserve the USSR as a single and indivisible state on 17th March 1991 was 174 million (80 percent of the total population). Out of that 112 million or 76.4 percent voted for preserving the USSR].

The Jewish life began to revive in Kishinev after perestroika in the 1990s. During the period of the USSR, an association of former Jewish and non- Jewish prisoners of ghettos and camps was established. Later, it fell apart and now I'm a member of the Jewish association. Later, Jewish organizations were established in Kishinev: the Jewish cultural center and the community center. Jews began to celebrate Jewish holidays together. The Jewish life particularly revived, when communists obtained the parliamentary majority in Moldova. [The interviewee probably means that communists being internationalists ex officio pay better attention to the co-existence of the different nationalities.] I think the Jewish situation has improved. It wasn't that good before, when in many areas activities were separated from the rest of the population of Moldova.

When the communists came to power, the Moldovans also started thinking about the victims of fascism. Our local Jewish newspaper, 'Yevreiskoe mestechko' [The Jewish Town], wrote about the local amateur museum of Holocaust in Yedintsy. It is amazing that this museum was established by a Moldovan director of a local school. I think it's important since Jews have always been active citizens in Moldova: doctors, teachers and craftsmen. Now research work has been undertaken in other Moldovan towns where Jews were exterminated. They find the righteous men [see the Righteous Among the Nations] 32, who rescued Jews and establish museums like this one.

The Hesed 33 Jehudah, a Jewish charity organization, is very efficient. At times I hear or read in newspapers about people grumbling about the food that they don't find to be so good. I think they have no grounds to complain. Hesed does a great job. Its numerous volunteers work hard and help thousands of Jews. My wife and I receive food packages each month. We refused this for a long time believing that there were Jews who were in a worse situation than us. I also receive a pension from the Claims Conference [Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany. It was founded in the 1950s to provide assistance to victims of the Holocaust.], as a former underage prisoner of a ghetto. All our relatives live in Israel. We are also considering moving to Israel.

Glossary

1 Cantonist
The cantonists were Jewish children who were conscripted to military institutions in tsarist Russia with the intention that the conditions in which they were placed would force them to adopt

Christianity. Enlistment for the cantonist institutions was most rigorously enforced in the first half of the 19th century. It was abolished in 1856 under Alexander II. Compulsory military service for Jews was introduced in 1827. Jews between the age of 12 and 25 could be drafted and those under 18 were placed in the cantonist units. The Jewish communal authorities were obliged to furnish a certain quota of army recruits. The high quota that was demanded, the severe service conditions, and the knowledge that the conscript would not observe Jewish religious laws and would be cut off from his family, made those liable for conscription try to evade it.. Thus, the communal leaders filled the quota from children of the poorest homes.

2 Bessarabia

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

3 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 Annexation of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union

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

5 Russian Revolution of 1917

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

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

7 King Carol I
1839-1914, Ruler of Romania (1866-1881) and King of Romania (1881-1914). He signed with Austro-Hungary a political-military treaty (1883), to which adhered Germany and Italy, linking this way Romania to The Central Powers. Under his kingship the Independence War of Romania (1877) took place. He insisted on Romania joining World War I on Germany and Austro-Hungary's side.

8 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.

9 Hakhsharah camps
Training camps organized by the Zionists, in which Jewish youth in the Diaspora received intellectual and physical training, especially in agricultural work, in preparation for settling in Palestine.

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

11 Fighting battalion
People's volunteer corps during World War II; its soldiers patrolled towns, dug trenches and kept an eye on buildings during night bombing raids. Students often volunteered for these fighting battalions.

12 Romanian occupation of Odessa
Romanian troops occupied Odessa in October 1941. They immediately enforced anti-Jewish measures. Following the Antonescu-ordered slaughter of the Jews of Odessa, the Romanian occupation authorities deported the survivors to camps in the Golta district: 54,000 to the Bogdanovka camp, 18,000 to the Akhmetchetka camp, and 8,000 to the Domanevka camp. In

Bogdanovka all the Jews were shot, with the Romanian gendarmerie, the Ukrainian police, and Sonderkommando R, made up of Volksdeutsche, taking part. In January and February 1942, 12,000 Ukrainian Jews were murdered in the two other camps. A total of 185,000 Ukrainian Jews were murdered by Romanian and German army units.

13 Kolkhoz

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

14 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.

15 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.

16 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.

17 Item 5

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

18 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'.

19 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.

20 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.

21 Golda Meir (1898-1978)
Born in Russia, she moved to Palestine and became a well-known and respected politician who fought for the rights of the Israeli people. In 1948, Meir was appointed Israel's Ambassador to the Soviet Union. From 1969 to 1974 she was Prime Minister of Israel. Despite the Labor Party's victory at the elections in 1974, she resigned in favor of Yitzhak Rabin. She was buried on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem in 1978.

22 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.

23 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.

24 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.

25 Six-Day-War

The first strikes of the Six-Day-War happened on 5th June 1967 by the Israeli Air Force. The entire war only lasted 132 hours and 30 minutes. The fighting on the Egyptian side only lasted four days, while fighting on the Jordanian side lasted three. Despite the short length of the war, this was one of the most dramatic and devastating wars ever fought between Israel and all of the Arab nations. This war resulted in a depression that lasted for many years after it ended. The Six-Day-War increased tension between the Arab nations and the Western World because of the change in mentalities and political orientations of the Arab nations.

26 Yom Kippur War

The Arab-Israeli War of 1973, also known as the Yom Kippur War or the Ramadan War, was a war between Israel on one side and Egypt and Syria on the other side. It was the fourth major military confrontation between Israel and the Arab states. The war lasted for three weeks: it started on 6th October 1973 and ended on 22nd October on the Syrian front and on 26th October on the Egyptian front.

27 Soviet/Russian doctorate degrees

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

28 Yad Vashem

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

29 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.

30 Antonescu, Ion (1882-1946)
Political and military leader of the Romanian state, president of the Ministers' Council from 1940 to 1944. In 1940 he formed a coalition with the Legionary leaders. From 1941 he introduced a dictatorial regime that continued to pursue the depreciation of the Romanian political system started by King Carol II. His strong anti- Semitic beliefs led to the persecution, deportation and killing of many Jews in Romania. He was arrested on 23rd August 1944 and sent into prison in the USSR until he was put on trial in the election year of 1946. He was sentenced to death for his crimes as a war criminal and shot in the same year.

31 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

32 The Righteous Among the Nations
Non-Jews who rescued Jews during the Holocaust.

33 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.