

# Beila Gabis

Interviewer: Zhanna Litinskaya

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*Beila is a corpulent woman. She dresses in a nice gown for home. Beila lives alone in a nice big apartment on the first floor of a two-storied house in the center of Ternopol. She has good quality furniture, carpets and fancy crockery. There are inexpensive, but carefully chosen pictures on the walls and intricate vases, napkins and china statues on the shelves. She appears to be a smart and wise lady. She does all housework on her own. She is a great cook, makes delicious cakes for sales. She has her own clients who are her friends or acquaintances and their friends and acquaintances. Whoever had tried Beila's pastries call her before holidays to order. Beila enjoys baking and is always ready to make her friends happy making pastries for them for a symbolic price.*

[My family background](#)

[Growing up](#)

[During the war](#)

[After the war](#)

[Glossary](#)

## My family background

My parents came from smaller Jewish towns in Vinnitsa province: my mother was from Layzhin, my father was from Bershad'. My maternal grandmother Beila, died when my mother was 2 years old. I was named after her. I remember my grandfather David Gutelmacher very well. My grandmother and grandfather were born in Layzhin in 1870s. My grandfather was a high skilled fur dresser. He dressed fur and made fur coats and hats. He provided well for the family. My grandparents had two children: my mother and her brother Naum. My mother told me that they had a big stone house in the center of the town. My grandfather's shop was on the first floor. Some time after my grandmother died my grandfather remarried. I don't remember his second wife's name. After he remarried my mother's maternal grandmother took my mother to live with her. She was afraid that the stepmother would not be kind to my mother. My mother's brother Naum, who was two years older than my mother, stayed with his father and stepmother. My grandfather and his second wife had another daughter: Esther and my mother's brother was closer to her than my mother.

Naum, born in 1898, finished cheder, a Jewish school, but he grew up to be far from professing religion. Naum got some business education during the Soviet regime and became chief accountant of the State Bank in due time. He lived and worked in Kharkov and later he moved to Kiev. He often visited us before the Great Patriotic War [1](#). Naum was a bachelor and he was always eager to see his nieces and nephews. He always brought us toys and sweets. During the Great Patriotic War Naum was in evacuation with the bank. After the war he returned to Kiev. At his venerable age he married a woman with a child whom I never saw. Naum died in Kiev in 1968.

My mother had no relationships with her stepsister Esther. Perhaps, this had to do with some feeling of jealousy. Esther was about 5 years younger than my mother. Esther worked in a pharmacy. She married chief accountant of pharmaceutical agency. He was a widower and had three children. His last name was Lerner. He was a well-mannered man. He treated us nicely. They didn't have common children. During the Great Patriotic War she was in evacuation. After the war she returned to Layzhin. Esther's husband died shortly after the war. Esther died in the 1970s. She hardly ever contacted my mother, but she and I corresponded. She visited me in 1967.

My mother Lisa (her Jewish name was Leya) Gutelmacher, born in 1900, was raised in her grandmother's home. Her grandmother was a widow by then. She adored my mother and feeling sorry for the orphan indulged in all her whims and fancies. My mother's grandmother must have been quite wealthy since she managed to give my mother a good education. She finished Russian and Jewish grammar schools in Layzhin. She had fluent Russian and knew mathematics. She was a well-educated woman for her time. My great grandmother's family was religious and my mother observed Jewish traditions her whole life. She knew Hebrew and could read the Torah and Talmud that was rare with women of her time. I don't know whether my mother had aunts or uncles. I only know one: my grandmother Beila's sister Tuba whom my mother loved dearly. Tuba was a striking beauty. She wore beautiful long gowns, furs and expensive jewelry. Shortly before the revolution of 1917 [2](#) a Jewish millionaire from America came on a visit to his hometown of Bershad'. He fell in love with Tuba, married her and they left for USA. Tuba left her beautiful gowns and jewelry to my mother.

My father Chaim Fainshtein was the same age with my mother. He came from a wealthy Jewish family in Bershad'. His parents, Berko and Riva Fainshtein, were born in Bershad' in the 1870s. My grandfather Berko owned a meat factory that manufactured sausage and tinned meat. After nationalization [3](#) this was the only big enterprise in the town. My grandmother Rivka was a smart and business-oriented woman. She owned a restaurant. Unfortunately, I don't remember its name. I can still remember my grandmother Rivka: a beautiful stately woman wearing a lace hairpin in her fluffed up black hair, wearing a wide gypsy style skirt with big pockets where she kept a key ring with keys and a purse. Grandmother was the head of the family: she was busy from morning till night giving orders to housemaids, clerk and cooks at the restaurant. She kept records and audited bills in the restaurant by herself. Based on the above mentioned I think that my grandmother must have had a good education. I will also tell you later about my grandmother pedagogical talents. Grandfather Berko was not so intelligent as my grandmother, but he was also as smart and business-oriented as she. He was very religious and started every day with a prayer putting on his tallit and tefillin. He always wore a kippah and had a small beard. Grandmother Rivka told me that she had 15 children. Eight of them died. The children were raised religious. The boys finished cheder and got secular education if they wished. My grandmother and grandfather thought it their duty to give their children a good education. However, all of them sooner or later became atheists. It was a demand of their time... The children lived in Bershad' or in the vicinity. When they were getting married their parents bought houses for them in nearby towns.

The oldest brother Menachem was born in 1897. He was affectionately called Menasha. He was a worker and turner. He had a wife and four children and resided with his family in Chechel'nik near Bershad'. They were wealthy and in 1929 our family and their family were sent away to Kherson steppes as kulaks [4](#), - I shall talk about it later. After we returned my father and Menachem were

demobilized to the construction of Dneprovskaya hydropower plant where he fell ill with tuberculosis and it took him many years to get cured. I fail to guess why Menachem, a sickly aging man, was recruited to the army when the Great Patriotic War began. However, he went to the war and perished at the front. His wife Hana and children were in the ghetto in Chechel'nik. Fortunately, they survived, but we never met after the war and I don't have any information about them. The only thing I remember is that their daughters' names were Perl and Golda, but I don't remember their sons' names.

The next child in the family was Enta, born in 1905. She fell in love with her cousin brother Aizek who lived in grandmother's house. His parents, my grandmother's sister and her husband, were killed during a Petlura [5](#) pogrom [6](#) in Kryzhopol town where they lived. My grandmother took the boy to her home. Aizek severely injured his genitals at the buttry where he was working and couldn't have children. Enta insisted on marrying him, nevertheless. She said she wanted him and as for children, well, they could adopt them. They loved each other dearly. However, they asked my mother to let them raise me, but would a mother give away her child even to someone of her own family. Enta finished a vocational school and became a designer. At the beginning of the Great Patriotic War Aizek was recruited to the army and Enta, my grandmother and Enta's sisters evacuated to Tashkent. Aizek perished at the front. After the war Enta married a widower with eight children. Enta loved them very much and became a mother to them. Her husband died in the late 1950s and Enta raised his children. The children supported her when she became old. Enta died in the middle of the 1970s.

Uncle Isaac, Itzyk, born in 1910 worked at the buttry in Bershad'. We didn't get along with his wife who was a taleteller. My mother hated it and so did I when I grew up. Itzyk's daughter Surah was exactly like her mother. Itzyk was at the front. He was the only man in our family who returned home after the war. When we met after the war we hugged each other and kept crying for a while. Itzyk came home a sickly, nervous and exhausted man and died about three years later. I have no contacts with his family. I know that Surah lived in Odessa and his older son Aron worked as a driver in Bershad'.

My father's brother Avrum, born in 1912, finished the Polytechnic College in Vinnitsa. He got a job assignment at the distillery in Bershad'. I remember one event where Arum was involved that can serve as an example of educating a grown up son whom my grandmother Rivka handled perfectly. When Avrum received his first salary he bought vodka for his foreman and crew which was a tradition at that time. Avrum was not used to drinking. He returned home tipsy. Grandmother didn't say a word. In two or three days was Avrum's birthday. Grandmother gave him a nice big money box. Everybody was surprised: why would a big guy need a moneybox? Avrum was hurt, but he didn't show it. Before going to bed he came to give grandmother his usual kiss and couldn't help asking her why she made such strange present to him. I stayed at my grandmother's that night. I was reading a book in bed and I stayed quiet as a mouse waiting for my grandmother's reply. She said 'Now, Avrum, when you buy vodka you shall drop exactly the same amount of money into this moneybox. One day you will open it and see how much you've stolen from yourself'. He rose, kissed my grandmother and thanked her for teaching him. He didn't drink from then on. He became a very good engineer. He worked in Layzhin and Nemirov. Before the Great Patriotic War he became chief engineer of the distillery in Bershad'. When the war began he was demobilized to the army regardless of his poor sight. He didn't return from this war. His wife Lisa, a Jew, a

beautiful and intelligent woman with higher education, married a tinsmith after the war since she needed support. She gave good education to her only daughter Manechka. Manechka married a director of a bank. They moved to USA in the 1970s.

My grandmother's younger son Israel, born in 1913, died when he was young. When the family was deported to Kherson steppes in 1929 he got sunstroke in the field and died. I have dim memories, but he seemed a nice handsome boy to me.

Freida, a nice pretty girl, was the youngest in the family. She was 8 years older than I and we often played with dolls together. I loved Freida. She was like a sister to me. Freida finished a technological school and was director of a diner at a distillery. She fell in love with Noeh Bershad'ski, a Jewish man much older than she. They had a daughter: Genia. Noeh was recruited to the army at the beginning of the war and he perished at the front. Freida, Enta and grandmother were in evacuation together. After the war she remarried and moved to the Ural. We corresponded before the 1990s, but then our correspondence terminated. This is all information I have about Freida.

My father Chaim Fainshtein was born in 1900. After finishing cheder he studied at the Jewish primary school and then he began to help his father at the meat factory. I don't have any information about my father's family during the revolution 1917 or Civil War [7](#), but they managed through this hard period all right. My parents got to know each other through a matchmaker that was a customary thing with Jewish families. They got married in 1924. It goes without saying that they had a Jewish wedding with a chuppah. There were many guests at their wedding in Bershad'. The family was big. My grandmother said that the family constituted one hundred to one hundred and sixty members when they got together for a celebration at her home. Therefore, there were even more guests at the wedding. On the next day my parents had a civil ceremony in a registry office. They lived in grandmother Riva's house few months until their parents bought them a house.

## Growing up

I was born on 23 December 1925. By the way, my mother and paternal grandmother had their first argument ever about giving me a name. My grandmother wanted to name me after her relative while my mother insisted that I was named after her mother. I was named Beila. I spent my childhood and youth in Bershad'.

Bershad' always seemed beautiful, quiet and calm to me. Its streets buried in verdure ran down to the Dochna River turning around the town on three sides. Jews resided in the central part of the town. They were craftsmen for the most part: tailors, shoemakers, coopers and glasscutters. Ukrainians had farmlands in the outskirts of the town supplying vegetables, potatoes and dairies. There was also a Russian neighborhood in the town. The street had the name of 'katsapskaya' (slang nickname for Russian - 'katsap'). Russians made pickled vegetables - pickles, apples and watermelons, selling them at the market. Jews attended a beautiful synagogue in the center of the town and Russians and Ukrainians went to a church by the river. Every time crossing the river I glimpsed at this beautiful and attractive church. I wanted to go inside, but Jewish children were not allowed to go to church and I only admired the building and liked the sound of the bells ringing. Grandmother and our family lived in Piski Bershad', a Ukrainian area in the outskirts of the town. Grandmother owned a meat factory located there and the family had a house nearby. We observed

traditions and the holidays, but I don't remember any details.

My first memories are associated with the period of dispossession of kulaks [3](#), or to put it simply – elimination of wealthier population by Soviet authorities. In spring 1929, after Pesach, we were woken up in the middle of a night and I probably remember this night due to the fear I felt. I was under the age of 4. My mother gave birth to my brother Boris some time before. My father, my mother, the baby and I were taken to a black car that people later called 'Black Maria'. My mother only managed to grab some valuables from her box and few diapers for the baby. We left silver tableware, carpets, furniture and clothing at home. We got no explanation. We were taken to the railway station where we were ordered to board a freight train. We were holding hands. It was dark and we didn't see who else was there. When father said something to mother, we heard grandmother Riva calling him: she recognized her son by his voice. Grandmother and grandfather had been taken to the train before us. Other members of our family were there, too: uncle Isaac, Izia, Freida and later uncle Menachem and his family came. I don't remember any details about the trip. I only remember that it was cold in the train and my mother dried diapers on her chest. We were taken to Kherson steppes where we were accommodated in wooden barracks with cracks in the walls. However, authorities promised to build houses for us before winter. There were big bowls outside where my grandmother and other women cooked food. Of course, kashrut was out of the question, but we got more or less sufficient food. There was even some meat in the soup we got. My parents worked in the field and took my brother and me with them: it was unsafe to leave children in barracks. There were jackals in the steppe and there were rumors that they attacked younger children. There were ancient Skythian sculptures of women in the steppe whom I was afraid of. I was also afraid of numerous gophers that were like rats. They ate grain and for this they were hunted for. Men poured water into their holes. When gophers came onto the surface men killed them with sticks and took them to fur supply shop. Their fur was in demand. My father also did this. On the way back he told me to sit on a cart. There was a heap of dead animals and began crying. My father was a kind and nice man, but that time he lost his temper and began to whip me. I was screaming and my grandmother heard me. She came and took the whip from my father and told him off. In the evening my father cried feeling sorry for what he did. Now I understand that my father just lost his temper. This was the only time he lifted his hand against me. We stayed in the steppe until late autumn. It got very cold and nobody followed the promise to build houses. My father decided it was better to go back home than starve to death or die from cold. He thought that even if we had to go to prison we would go back. The rest of our family were of the same opinion. One day our father hired a wagon. Grandmother and grandfather and the children sat on it and we didn't have any luggage with us. We got to the railway station where we got on a train to Bershad. There were all of us on our way back: our family, grandmother and grandfather, uncle Isaac, Izia, Freida, uncle Menachem and his family. We returned to Bershad.

When we arrived my grandmother and grandfather returned to their house. Our house became a meat supply office. Our Ukrainian neighbors offered us accommodation in their house. In about two days Soviet officials came to this house. They asked my parents why we returned without permission. My father told them about living conditions and cold there. On the next day my father and uncle Menachem were mobilized to the construction of Dnepro GES power plant in Zaporozhe. A Jewish family offered my mother two rooms in their house. We lived there for free. In spring 1930 my father and uncle Menachem returned from the construction site. The working conditions there were very hard, they worked standing in knee-deep water and uncle Menachem fell ill with



tuberculosis. My father had swollen veins on his legs from hard work, but he must have worked hard there and earned appreciation of the management since he got employment at the meat factory that belonged to our family in the past. In summer 1930 he joined the Party. From then on my father was afraid of observing Jewish traditions. We didn't observe Sabbath or other Jewish holidays. Soviet authorities began an active struggle against religion [8](#). My father worked on Saturdays. He was sent to work in Torostyanets and then in Golovanevsk where he was director of meat supply agency. My mother and I followed my father. In Golovanevsk my second brother was born. My mother named him Tonia after her favorite aunt Tuba (first letters in their names were the same). My grandmother Rivka stopped speaking with my mother again since she wanted a different name for the boy. In early 1932 we returned to Bershad' where my father became director of meat supply agency and his office was in our former house. We received a room in this same house. There was a carpet on the doorway to my father's office and we could hear what was going on in my father's office and my mother knew the exact time when she had to warm up my father's dinner. My mother also went to work. She became an accountant at the mill.

I spent much time with my grandmother Riva whom I loved dearly. She observed Sabbath. On every Friday evening it was a beautiful ceremony. We, children, watched our grandmother lighting candles and grandfather saying prayers over them and blessing the wine and challah and dipping a piece of challah in salt... My grandmother baked delicious challah bread topped with some spicy seeds! I've never eaten challah so delicious again in my life. My grandmother also cooked the most delicious Gefilte fish. And the most important thing – grandmother baked each grandchild his or her favorite pastry. After dinner grandmother sat into a snug armchair near the stove and we sat on small stools beside her. We told her what happened during a week, how we behaved and what marks we got at school. We showed her our school record sheet and if there was a '3' or, God forbid a '2' there grandmother didn't give one his delicious gift. Grandmother also let her most obedient grandchildren stay with her overnight, and there was nothing better for me than stay in her wide bed, hug and kiss her good night.

My father's office purchased meat that was canned and shipped to Kharkov and Moscow and sometimes the office arranged for shipment of cattle. During shipment cattle lost some weight and then there were discrepancies in documents. Once a claim was sent from Leningrad and my father went there to clarify the situation. While he was away his chief accountant and engineer ran away. They had done some damage. My mother didn't know anything about it. When my father returned from Leningrad he went directly to his office. My mother was cooking his lunch listening to what was going on in my father's office. My father didn't come in the evening or late at night. My mother went out to ask the guard what happened and he told her that my father was arrested by two people wearing civilian outfits. My mother ran to NKVD [9](#) office where they told her that her husband was arrested for suspicion in sabotage. My father was in prison in Vinnitsa. My mother notified his brother Naum about this and he came immediately. My uncle arranged a meeting with my father and also got photographs of the saboteurs who ran away to submit them for an overall search. I can remember well our meeting with my father. My grandmother, Enta, my mother and I went to see him. There were few families waiting in a big room. My father and other prisoners were taken there. My father had lost weight and looked devastated. He lifted me to a wide windowsill and kissed. My mother gave him a bowl of cold meat in jelly that she had bought at the market. It was my father's favorite. My father took a spoon and... fainted. We didn't understand what happened and again gave him the bowl when he regained consciousness. He looked at it and

fainted again. Then, when he came to his senses he waved his hand to put the bowl away. My grandmother took a closer look at the bowl and saw a little child's finger in it. This happened in 1932, when famine [10](#) began in Ukraine. We didn't quite feel it, but there were cases of cannibalism. After that my father fainted every time hearing the word 'cholodets' – cold meat jelly.

In few months the saboteurs were found at the border with Japan where they wanted to escape. They were taken to Vinnitsa and admitted that they had committed theft. My father was released. He resumed his membership in the Party and was given compensation for the period he stayed in prison. However, there was moral damage that was irreparable. My mother took almost all her jewelry to Torgsin [11](#) during the period that my father was in prison. We also suffered from hunger. Uncle Naum supported us. He brought us food packages. He didn't trust postal services: he knew they would never reach the addressee. In 1933, at the age of seven and a half years I went to school. I attended the second shift at school and one evening four adult men pursued me. I screamed and a pedestrian rescued me and took me home. From then on I didn't go to school. There was cannibalism: children were killed to make sausage. I was a plump and appetizing girl and those cannibals couldn't resist the temptation. My parents decided to keep me home for my sake. Therefore, I went again to the first form a year after.

There were Jewish schools, but my parents decided that, considering further perspective it was rather advantageous to go to a Ukrainian school in Piski Bershad' where we lived. I studied well and became a pioneer at school. In 1938 my parents bought a small house with thatched roof in the center of the town. They were planning to remove the old stuff and build a new house on the spot. I went to another Ukrainian school near the center of the town. There were more Jewish children in this school. I had Jewish and non-Jewish friends. We didn't care about nationality. Many Ukrainians spoke Yiddish and Jews spoke Ukrainian in Bershad'.

### During the war

My father was recruited to the army in 1939 and participated in the campaign of annexation of some Polish regions to Ukraine [12](#) and in the Finnish War [13](#). I became my mother's support and help. My mother left for work early to arrive there on time: at that time one could be sent to court even for being 5 minutes late. My mother left me a list of chores. Our family was already bigger; my sister Genia was born in 1935 and in 1938 – my brother named David after my father's father who had passed away. I had to take him to nursery school and her to kindergarten, cook dinner, buy bread and go to school. In 1940 my mother arranged for me to become a lab assistant's apprentice. She wanted me to go to work after finishing the seventh form and continue my studies at an extramural department. I liked working at the mill. I liked grain sampling and testing. Besides, I could take this little grain home that was of help. However, my dream was to study medicine and become a doctor. After finishing school in 1941 my friend and I took our documents to a Medical School in Gaisin, a neighboring town. In the middle of July we received a letter of admission from the School. My mother opened the letter and there was much ado at home: my mother wanted me stay home. She didn't think she could manage without me. My father was in Western Ukraine. On 21 June 1941 we received his telegram where he told us that he was demobilized and was on his way home. He sent this cable from a railroad station. On Sunday 22 June 1941 I was in bed longer. I was at the prom the night before and my mother and I returned home late. My mother woke me up saying 'Daughter, the war began'. My father never reached home. He returned to his military unit.

There were big black plates of radios in the streets in Bershad' where there were crowds of people listening to latest news. On 3 July Stalin spoke on the radio. By that time almost all men in our family were already at the front. On 24 June uncle Avrum, Noeh – my aunt's husband, and other men left. My friends and I studied first medical aid at school: we learned to apply bandages and carry stretchers. We were patriots and went to the registry office to volunteer to the front. They sent us home saying that we were still too young for the front. Soviet troops were retreating and they moved through Bershad' town. Soldiers looked exhausted. Many had their arms or heads bandaged. Slightly wounded were on horse-driven carts. My friends and I were on the bridge across the river. When we saw someone with red armbands we asked them to take us with them. Somebody told our parents that we were there. My mother told me off and locked me in the house. I did regret more than once that I didn't get to the front when we were in evacuation. There was more certainty at the front: one knew that one would either die or survive. There is nothing worse than staying in a ghetto, exposed to humiliation and beating.

On one hot afternoon we were having lunch in the house. The window was open and I saw all of a sudden a man in a uniform lifting my little brother Dima. I got frightened at first and then recognized my father. My mother dropped a heavy frying pan in the kitchen hearing me screaming. We ran outside and hang on our father. We were telling him to come inside, but he was in a hurry. There was a truck with other officers waiting for my father. He only dropped home to tell us that we had to evacuate. He saw refugees from occupied territories that told him about brutality of fascists and mass extermination of Jews in Poland. Our neighbors and grandmother came to our yard. They listened to what my father was telling us. I shall never forget how our father unclasped our hands and even sort of got angry and ran back to the truck. He turned back once shouting to our mother 'Leave, you must not stay!' This was the last time I saw our father. In 1944 we received an official notification that he was missing. I don't even know where he was buried or if he was buried at all.

In few days my grandmother and aunts evacuated. Grandfather Berko refused to go with them. He stayed in Enta's house. My mother also refused to evacuate. She said we didn't have money and that it was too hard for her to leave with five children. My mother remembered Germans from WWI when they were polite and she decided they could not change dramatically. Later she regretted much that she didn't follow our father's direction.

During air raids we went to the basement. Our mother made some kind of shelter in the basement: the old door was nailed up covered with wood and rags. Mother also somehow pulled heavy boulder stones to camouflage the door. There was only a narrow opening in the basement through which we could squeeze into the shelter. This shelter saved us many times during occupation.

Germans came to Bershad' in late July. There was a strong bombing and water in the river was almost boiling from bombs. Residents stayed in their houses and my mother forbade me to go outside. Somebody told me later that few Ukrainians came to meet German troops with bread and salt on embroidered towels. The first to come into the town were Hungarians on motorcycles. They moved on and on the next day German front troops came also on motorcycles. They also ignored the locals, but on the next day an SS Sondereinsatzkommando and policemen from Western Ukraine came with them. There were posters ordering Jews to come for registration everywhere. Germans and policemen came to houses to rob, rape and kill. A German and a policeman came to our house. They tore off a mezuzah and the German rushed it with his boot. The policeman pinched me on my breast hard. Then they searched the house looking for gold and money, something we hadn't had



for a long time. They took away new notebooks, pencils and pens that our mother bought children to go school. When they went to another room I picked the mezuzah: I always wanted to know what was inside, but my mother ordered me to leave it where it was. The searchers turned the house upside down. Before leaving the policeman noticed my little golden earrings. My grandmother had little earrings made from her ring when I was born and pierced them into my ears. He unlocked one earring, but another one didn't unlock and he pulled it down injuring my earlobe. I couldn't say a word. My brother embraced me by my knees. He got frightened seeing my ear bleeding.

On the next day we were taken to the ghetto: few streets were fenced with barbed wire. We stayed in someone's house just few days until the area of the ghetto spread to our street. We returned to our house. Life behind bars was terrible. The ghetto in Bershadt was divided into two parts: an upper part on a hill and a lower part where we were. We were not allowed to leave the ghetto: there were policemen guarding the gate. My mother always applied some smelly herbs to keep Germans and policemen away. They raped young girls. They broke into a neighboring house and raped my friend Chaika. They knocked her mother out hitting her with a rifle butt. My other friend Raya's sister was raped. Their mother was screaming and they shot her. Raya, her sister and their little brother lost their mother. Another beautiful woman was raped in the presence of her husband. When he tried to protect her they shot him.

In few weeks Romanian troops took command in the ghetto: our ghetto became a part of Transnistria <sup>14</sup> Romanians were greedy and could be bought off. A Jewish community and Judenrat were established in the ghetto. Judenrat was responsible for order and cleanliness in the ghetto. They had to arrange for timely removal of dead corpses and forming groups of inmates to go to work. My mother was concerned about me. She told me to stay in the shelter and asked the community to not send me to work. I feel ashamed to say that it often happened that some Jews in the community didn't protect us from occupants. If they didn't include me in the list of a work crew they charged my mother to pay two marks per day. They wanted to benefit from their own kinship. We didn't have any money. We were starving. Every now and then Ukrainians brought some food to the ghetto. One of my mother's acquaintances bribed Romanians to take my brothers Boris and Tonia to her home. They helped her about the house and she gave them some food. There were two Rud' brothers in the ghetto. They worked as guards in my father's office. They were policemen in the ghetto and informed our mother about when she needed to hide us in the shelter to avoid doing some particularly hard work.

The commandant of the ghetto inspired fear and horror in all inmates of the ghetto. I've forgotten his last name, but he was Fuhrer's favorite. He was a young sleek man. He had his boots shining with polish and walked in the ghetto with a whip and his little spitz dog. He could have all male inmates lined up and shoot each one that he didn't like. He called our street the 'Street of pretty girls' and often came here to select another girl for amusement. After he satiated with a girl they killed her. Their corpses couldn't be removed for three days until he gave a direction to do so. I remember a fearful accident. The commandant ordered all to gather in the square. There was a pregnant woman in the front row. She was deported from Moldavia. There were inmates from Moldavia, Romania, the Baltic Republics, Yugoslavia and France in the ghetto. They arrived in autumn 1941. The commandant didn't like the woman for some reason. He ordered her to come nearer, took out a knife and cut her belly open. A living baby fell onto the ground and he crushed it with his boot. I screamed and my mother pushed me to keep silent. I still have this horrifying scene

before my eyes. The woman died of loss of blood.

Fascists made injections to younger children and made them swallow some powder. Seeing a fascist or a policeman they rolled up their sleeves. Soon an epidemic of typhoid began. I think they infected children purposely. My sister Genia and then grandfather Berko fell ill and died. I don't remember their funerals since I was ill with typhoid. I think those who died were taken to the cemetery in Bershad' and buried in a common grave. I was ill for a long time. When I recovered my mother tried to keep me in the shelter. When she couldn't do it, I went to work like other young people. Romanians made stables in the synagogue and the cultural center. Once in December girls were taken to the synagogue and ordered to wash the floors: they were going to make a casino for officers in there. The water was ice cold. We were given buckets and spades. I recognized one policeman. He used to be a Komsomol leader [15](#) in our school. I believed he stayed in the ghetto on purpose to help us. We believed that every Komsomol official was an example of honor, decency and devotion to his country and people. I thought he belonged to an underground group, but he told us that if we didn't finish this task in three hours he would report that we were Komsomol members and they would shoot us. I wasn't a Komsomol then. We took to scrubbing the floors. The mud was mixed with our blood flowing from under the nails. I came home with my ice cold bleeding hands and my mother and I cried desperately!

One night we heard noise, yelling in Romanian and crying. Another group of Jews arrived at the ghetto. In the morning my mother saw light in my grandfather's window as if somebody was trying to light a candle. She went to the house and saw Jews sleeping side by side on the floor. It was cold and they could well freeze to death in the house. My mother woke me up, boiled a big bucket of water and sent me to the house to give those people at least a cup of boiling water to warm up. I came into the house when I heard someone saying 'Look, she is so much like our Bella!' Then I met the Aizner family. Their daughter Bella died on the way to the ghetto. They were not even allowed to bury her. My mother invited them to stay with us and we became friends. Their son Yakov liked me a lot. His mother's name was Lisa, like my mother. She also liked me much. They told us that their family was rich, that they owned factories and plants in Romania and that they had relatives in America. They believed their relatives were going to rescue them through Red Cross. Aunt Lisa began to convince my mother and me to take me with them under a name of their daughter Bella and when we were free – marry Yakov. My mother told me to agree. In a month Red Cross couriers began to visit the ghetto. They had lists of Jews. They came to our house, wrote my name down as Yakov's sister and left. Yakov was handsome, but I wasn't particularly fond of him. Perhaps, I was too young and was afraid of the forthcoming marriage. Yakov began to work in the Jewish police. The policemen made lists of people to go to work every day, and also decided who was to be sterilized and provided this 'material' to fascists. He could manage to not include me on any lists: tried to save me from work and helped me to avoid sterilization. Young girls and women got injections of formalin into uterus. It caused inflammation and high fever. Someone died, some survived, but could never have children. German doctors made these injections. There was one Romanian Jew Landau among them. He was deported from Romania with his wife and two-year-old daughter. His wife died and he was ordered to make those injections. His hands were shaking and he said he could not live with it. He hanged himself shortly afterward. There was also a Ukrainian gynecologist in the camp. He enjoyed mutilating Jewish women. He was taken to court after the war.

On one hand, I was grateful to Yakov, but I didn't want to marry him. In about 3 months Yakov told me to be ready. A courier was coming to pick us up. I felt awfully sorry for my mother and my brothers. I thought I would never forgive myself if I survived and they didn't. When Yakov came I said that I loved my family and couldn't possibly leave them and that if he loved me why didn't he stay in the ghetto himself. He came back with his bag and said he would stay. His mother came. She begged me to either go with them or at least tell her son to come with his parents. I promised her I would do it. I told Yakov that I would never marry him. He left me and I went hysterical. My mother was very upset. She hoped that I might escape from that Hell where we were. In two days the Aizners knocked on our window at 6 in the morning – they were leaving the ghetto. My mother went outside to say 'good bye' to them, but I didn't dare.

In some time Eva who lived in our house came home with an acquaintance of hers, a young man from Yedintsy town [today Moldova] where the girl also came from. His name was Motia Gabis. He told us his story. He was born in Yedintsy in 1921. His father owned a buttry and his mother was a teacher of the Russian language. His father Ouri and Motia also finished a grammar school. In 1940 the Soviet regime [16](#) was established and Motia had to go to a secondary school to obtain a certificate to be able to enter a college. When the Great Patriotic War began the Gabis family failed to evacuate. When fascists came to Yedintsy Dmitri Bogutsak, Moldavian neighbor of the Gabis family, came to shoot Motia's family. Eva hiding in her house saw this happening. Motia's father and mother fell and then fell Motia, wounded, and then Ouri fell. Eva decided they were all dead. She was astounded to meet Motia in the ghetto in Gershad. Motia and my brother were lucky since their wounds were not lethal. Bullets only tore their clothes and made some scratches on them. They stayed quiet until night when they came to their friends' house where they got first aid. After they recovered they had to stay in hiding. Motia and his brother got to Ukraine concealing their identity. Fascists captured them and sent to the 'Dead Loop' death camp [17](#). Motia and Ouri escaped from there, too. They kept hiding in Ukrainian villages. From what Motia told us I understood that our relatives Menachem's wife and their children gave shelter to them. They stayed with my aunt until they got stronger. Later I joked that my uncle's wife heated up a husband for me! Motia and his brother Ouri were taken to the construction of a bridge in Nikolaev. Their work conditions were very hard. They slept in pits they excavated themselves. Almost all of them died at this construction.

I didn't like Motia at first sight. He was wearing torn trousers and a ragged jacket. My mother and I were undoing old carpets for yarn and knitting woolen socks for sale. Motia started helping me. My mother liked Motia at once. She wanted to take Motia to live with us, but was afraid of rumors: he was a young man and I was a young woman... Then Eva said 'Why doesn't Beila marry Motia?' I didn't quite accept this idea. Motia visited us every evening. Once he said that if I married him I would never regret it, that he would care about me and we would have a good life. I agreed: not because I loved him, but because I felt sorry for him. He was very happy and kept telling everybody about the forthcoming wedding. There was a rabbi in the group of Moldavian Jews. He conducted the ceremony of engagement in accordance with Jewish traditions. He even issued a paper that I lost, regretfully, but I've kept ketubah, a wedding contract, written on a page from a school notebook. We also had a chuppah made from old blankets. Our best friends held sticks with a chuppah spread on them. There was not one tallit in the ghetto: fascists took all tallits and tefillins away from older Jews. However, the rabbi wedded us and my mother gave her blessing. Shortly before the wedding Motia's former Ukrainian schoolmate Kolia Kolkey recognized Motia. He was

recruited to the Romanian army and was a guard in the ghetto. He hugged Motia. He helped us a lot. He tried not to send us to work when he was on duty. Our wedding was when he was on duty, too. He brought some food and two live chickens to the wedding. Of course, it was a different wedding. We didn't have any guests since we were not allowed to gather in groups or walk in the streets after curfew. This happened in late 1942.

We received information about the situation at the front. Partisans spread flyers with information about victories of the Soviet army. There was a partisan unit near Bershad'. The majority of partisans were Jews in it. Commanding officer Yasha Thales was a former secretary of the town Komsomol committee. Some of the partisans were sons of inmates of the ghetto. Every now and then another men disappeared from the ghetto joining partisans. Partisans had contact inmates in the ghetto. In the middle of 1943 the inmates collected money for partisans. Every inmate contributed as much as they could afford. We didn't have any money. They made a list of contributors indicating the amount of contributions for some reason and gave this list to one family that buried it in their basement. This family consisted of parents and two children: a teenage boy and a daughter. There was a traitor in the ghetto. Fascists got to know about the money. One night they came to this family demanding the list. They began to torture the girl before the boy's eyes. He couldn't bear it and took them to the basement and got a bottle with the list inside. Fascists killed the boy and then all other members of the family. Then they shot everybody on this list. This lasted several days. We were hiding in our basement and could hear gunshots.

In 1943 fascists were retreating. We were happy about the victorious advance of the Soviet army, but our situation in the ghetto was getting worse with each coming day. Fascists replaced Romanians in the ghetto and started preparation to liquidation of the ghetto. They started from the upper ghetto. They took inmates on trucks to a quarry where they were shooting them. There were also mobile gas chambers where they smothered people with exhaust gas. Only about 320 inmates survived in the upper ghetto. They were in the last truck that Germans left on the road. As for the lower ghetto, fascists decided to flood us. They were going to blast bridges and then the wave would flood our town. Partisans informed us on German plans and we were awaiting death.

On 11 March 1944 fascists broke into our house and took my husband and me away. My mother thought it was their next shooting action, but we joined a group of about 20 younger people and were taken to a quarry with dead corpses. A day before beautiful white snow covered the ground and the sight of dead bodies was horrifying. We were ordered to pull these bodies with boat hooks and place in piles: wood and bodies. I was 5 months pregnant and it was hard for me to pull the corpses, not to mention the horror I felt, but it was impossible to leave the place. They were policemen with dogs guarding us. They prepared canisters with gasoline. When we completed the piles fascists set them on fire that produced horrifying black smoke. The snow became black. I was scared to death. Germans were in a hurry since they could hear the roar of the frontline approaching. When we returned home I kept crying and couldn't tell my mother where we had been. At night of 13 to 14 March we were at home. The ghetto was wide-awake. People were saying 'good bye' to one another awaiting death. At 5 am we heard shooting and then we heard 'Folks, come out. You are safe!' It was a whirlpool. People were jumping out of the windows. Those were partisans and Yasha Thales was the first one who came in. I saw a woman die of infarction from joy when she ran to hug a partisan. Soviet troops came in about an hour. We were happy and couldn't believe we survived.

In few days after we were released mobilization to the front began. My husband decided to go to the front hoping to find that bandit who killed his parents. He told me to wait for his brother Ouri to come back from Nikolaev and then come to Yedintsy, his hometown. When my husband came to Romania he got to know that Mitia Bogutsak who had killed his parents ran away to Romania. Motia decided to volunteer to the front. He knew Romanian and French languages and was recruited as interpreter in headquarters of 24th frontier regiment. Ouri returned in April and we went to Moldavia on foot. In Mohilev-Podolsk we boarded a platform in a military train heading to the front. It took us to Yedintsy. I went to headquarters of the division where Motia was on service and general Kapustin, commanding officer of the division, promised to find Motia and grant him a short leave. He kept his word and Motia came on 3-day leave a day after. We stayed together and then my husband had to go back. I went to the executive committee and they were glad to see me. They needed somebody who knew Russian. They sent me to the registry office where I copied lists of recruits.

### After the war

In a couple of months I went to work at the public education office. I studied a course of pedagogic and also taught young Moldavians elementary grammar: they couldn't even sign their name. In June 1944 I gave birth to a girl in a military hospital. Was nobody to look after the baby and I quit the Pedagogical School. I went to work, but ran home every few hours, and sometimes my landlady looked after the baby. If I hadn't worked we would have had nothing to live on. An inspector at my work began to pick on me: I still don't know whether he was an anti-Semite or he wanted intimacy with me. I had to quit the district public education office. I got employment at the military construction agency that constructed facilities at the border. I indicated in my resume that I was in the ghetto and the lieutenant who was reviewing it told me to skip this part of my biography so that nobody knew that I was in the occupied area. There was a lot of suspicion toward those who stayed in occupied areas. They were treated almost like traitors of their Motherland. I revised my resume indicating that I was in evacuation and got a job of cash messenger. I got a higher salary plus compensation for confidentiality.

My baby conceived in terrible conditions of the ghetto. She died at the age of a year and a half. I was afraid of notifying my husband in the army. He came on leave during October holidays in 1945. Motia was very sad when he heard that his daughter, whom he had never seen, died. He wanted to demobilize, but only students and teachers were the first to demobilize. I obtained a request for demobilization for my husband. He studied two years at the Pedagogical College for two years and could be determined as a student. In two days I returned home late: I took salary to workers on the border. I saw a uniform hanging on the back of a chair. Motia was back. I was so happy. He and I went to see my mother in Bershad'.

There was terrible news waiting for us. Grandmother Riva didn't return from evacuation. In July 1941 she was on the way in evacuation with my father's sisters. Their train was bombed and grandmother Riva lost her leg. She was put on a sanitary train that left without my aunts. Enta and Freida lost track of her. They worked in a kolkhoz in about 50 km from Tashkent [Uzbekistan]. In summer 1942 they were selling vegetables from kolkhoz at a market in Tashkent. They met an acquaintance from Bershad'. They were talking about families and Freida mentioned that they had lost grandmother Riva. The woman they met told them that grandmother Riva was a beggar at the railway station in Tashkent. She was in hospital where someone stole her money and valuables and



she had nothing to do, but beg. Freida and Enta rushed to find their mother. At the railway station they were horrified to find out that she had died on a platform few days before. We cried desperately! I still cannot stand the thought that my beloved grandmother died like a lost beggar. The only consolation that occurred to me was the probably God took her away, so that she never got to know that all of her sons and sons-in-law perished at the front. Itzyk was the only survivor, but he also passed away shortly after the war

My mother and brothers lived in our half-ruined house. They were very poor. It took her a long time to obtain approval for allowing her a pension for the children to be paid for their father who had perished at the front. It was a miserable pension. There was no work, the mill was ruined. My mother wrote letters and requests for other people and they paid her for this work. Motia and I decided to take my younger brother David with us. He turned 7 in 1945. He went to school in Yedintsy. I raised my younger brother.

Motia became director of military trade supply agency and was a teacher in an evening school. He studied at the extramural department in a College in Vinnitsa. After finishing it he got a job assignment [18](#) in Ternopol. We moved to Ternopol. In 1948 my son Semyon was born there and in 1951 – a girl. I named her Rimma after my grandmother. Motia kept his word that he gave me in the ghetto. He took good care of the children and me. He worked hard and created wonderful living conditions for us. Motia also insisted that I didn't go to work. So, I stayed at home with the children.

I supported my mother sending her money and parcels. We visited her once a year and stayed few weeks. In 1973, when we received a big apartment, I took my mother to live with us. She died in 1974. She was buried at the town cemetery. We didn't observe Jewish traditions, but I raised the children as Jews. They knew about the great suffering their nation had to go through.

We've never been interested in politics. No members of our family ever joined the Party. We lived our life and didn't care about any political occurrences in the country. We spent our summer vacations in the Crimea. Most of our friends were Jews, but we didn't segregate people by nationality. It just happened to be so. We didn't observe any Jewish holidays or celebrate Soviet holidays. We only celebrated calendar New Year, birthdays and Victory Day, 9 May [19](#) when our friends visited us. We had a small party and sang songs of the wartime. My husband, my brothers and I drank a shot of vodka on the memorable day of 14 March, the day of liberation from the ghetto.

My older brother Boris finished a lower secondary school and studied at FZU vocational school. He studied in Donetsk and lived in a hostel. After his service in the army he returned to Donetsk. His childhood friend Nina Kooperman became his wife. She also was in the ghetto in Bershad' with her mother. After the war they moved to Donetsk. Boris had two children: Alla, a librarian, lives in Nazareth in Israel with her family, and Grigori who also lives in Israel. Boris died on infarction in 1997. Tonia, my brother, lives in Rudnitsa town, Vinnitsa region. He divorced his first wife Betia. They had two children who live in Israel now. Tonia remarried. He is very ill and very poor.

The youngest David has always been with us. He also lives in Ternopol. David finished Polytechnic College and became an engineer. He is a pensioner, but he still works. He is chairman of the Jewish community in Ternopol. David's Russian wife Tamara Volinyak helps him with his work and makes her own contribution into the life of community. David has twin daughters, born in 1965: Inna and

Lilia. They finished Technological College, but they don't work meanwhile. Inna has a daughter, called Lilia who is married.

My son Semyon finished a Polytechnic College. He worked as a car engineer for many years. Now he works at a private company. Semyon divorced his first wife. His second wife Galena, is a Jewish woman, has two children from her first marriage. Still, Semyon was kind to them. They live not far from us in Ternopol and we often see each other.

My daughter Rimma met her future husband Alexandr Rozenberg in college. They got married in 1973 when they were students. There were many guests at their wedding, but it wasn't a Jewish wedding. Rimma and her husband worked at the Lvov TV factory Electron. They moved to Israel in 1990. Alexandr works in Sokhnut [20](#) and Rimma is a housewife. They like their new life very much. My husband and I had the same opinion about emigration. We were happy about the establishment of an independent Jewish state. Like all other Jews we followed the events and struggle, particularly, during the Six-Day-War [21](#), the war of Judgment Day [22](#). We wished happiness to all those moving to Israel or America, but we ourselves did not want to go to Israel. We remembered but too well how Jewish leaders and Judenrat behaved in the ghetto trying to benefit from us. Neither Motia nor I ever wanted to live our life among only Jews. Besides, our home and family graves are here.

I think I am a very happy woman regardless of all ordeals that we had to go through. My husband and I were always together and we were close. He died in 1994. It was a huge loss for me. I buried him beside my mother's grave at the town cemetery. I am very happy for our children and glad that their life is different from ours. Rimma's daughter lives in Israel. She married a Jewish man from Israel. There was a big traditional Jewish wedding with a chuppah. Unfortunately, I couldn't afford to attend the party, but I've seen a video cassette and it was beautiful. I often look at photographs in the family album. In one of them a rabbi hands beautiful dressed up Lena, my beloved granddaughter a ketubbah and I recall my bitter wedding in the ghetto and my ketubbah. Only because I kept this document I could prove that I was an inmate of a ghetto during the war. Now I receive a solid German pension. I wouldn't manage with the pension our state pays.

There are some economic difficulties, but I am glad that independent Ukraine gives good opportunities for every nation, including Jews, to develop. I've never been religious. I help my brother with his work in the community. He asks my advice and I am ready to help. I observe Sabbath as tribute to tradition and homage to my family. I light candles and make something delicious. I invite my son and his family or my neighbors. They gave me a book of prayers and I pray for the health and wealth of my loved ones. I don't attend Hesed: there is a lot of bureaucracy there, those officials: I don't like the atmosphere like this. I am old, but I am very optimistic about the future. I would dream to travel to Israel and I love my Motherland Ukraine more than anything in the world. I used to have a dacha. Once a neighbor – a drunkard and rascal – called me zhydovka [kike]. He told me to get out to Israel. I replied to him that I am proud to be a Jew and that if I wanted I would go to Israel and if not – I would stay in my Motherland Ukraine. I told him that he is a disgrace to Ukraine and drinks away its riches and people in Israel have built a prosperous country on stones and the rest of the world admires this country. I hope to see my children, my granddaughter and grandson in Israel. I would dream to see Israel with my own eyes and bow to this great land created by human blood and sweat, to the country and its people. I hope that this dream will come true. My children promised me to buy and send me a plane ticket.

## GLOSSARY:

### **1 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.

### **2 Nationalization**

confiscation of private businesses or property after the revolution of 1917 in Russia.

### **3 Kulaks**

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

### **4 Petliura, Simon (1879-1926)**

Ukrainian politician, member of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Working Party, one of the leaders of Centralnaya Rada (Central Council), the national government of Ukraine (1917-1918). Military units under his command killed Jews during the Civil War in Ukraine. In the Soviet-Polish war he was on the side of Poland; in 1920 he emigrated. He was killed in Paris by the Jewish nationalist Schwarzbard in revenge for the pogroms against Jews in Ukraine.

### **5 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.

### **6 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 WWI, 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.

### **7 Civil War (1918-1920)**

The Civil War between the Reds (the Bolsheviks) and the Whites (the anti-Bolsheviks), which broke out in early 1918, ravaged Russia until 1920. The Whites represented all shades of anti-communist

groups – Russian army units from World War I, led by anti-Bolshevik officers, by anti-Bolshevik volunteers and some Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. Several of their leaders favored setting up a military dictatorship, but few were outspoken tsarists. Atrocities were committed throughout the Civil War by both sides. The Civil War ended with Bolshevik military victory, thanks to the lack of cooperation among the various White commanders and to the reorganization of the Red forces after Trotsky became commissar for war. It was won, however, only at the price of immense sacrifice; by 1920 Russia was ruined and devastated. In 1920 industrial production was reduced to 14% and agriculture to 50% as compared to 1913.

## **8 Struggle against religion**

The 1930s was a time of anti-religion struggle in the USSR. In those years it was not safe to go to synagogue or to church. Places of worship, statues of saints, etc. were removed; rabbis, Orthodox and Roman Catholic priests disappeared behind KGB walls.

## **9 NKVD**

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

## **10 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.

## **11 Torgsin stores**

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

## **12 In 1940, the Baltic republics (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) came under the rule of the neighboring Soviet Union (USSR)**

November 1 1939: The USSR Supreme Soviet passed the law on Western Ukraine's membership in the USSR and inclusion in the Ukrainian SSR.

## **13 Soviet-Finnish War (1939-40)**

The Soviet Union attacked Finland on 30 November 1939 to seize the Karelian Isthmus. The Red Army was halted at the so-called Mannenheimer line. The League of Nations expelled the USSR from its ranks. In February-March 1940 the Red Army broke through the Mannenheimer line and reached

Vyborg. In March 1940 a peace treaty was signed in Moscow, by which the Karelian Isthmus, and some other areas, became part of the Soviet Union.

#### **14 Transnistria**

Area between the rivers Dnestr and Bug, and the Black Sea. It was ruled by the Romanians and during World War II it was used as a huge ghetto to which Jews from Bukovina and Moldavia were deported.

#### **15 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.

#### **16 In 1812 Russia managed to annex the eastern half of the Romanian Principality of Moldavia**

From then until the First World War, the territory known as Bessarabia (Basarabia in Romanian) changed hands between Romania and Russia several times. After the First World War, Bessarabia joined Romania, but Moscow never accepted this union. In June 1940, Moscow delivered to Bucharest an ultimatum to evacuate, in four days, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina (Bucovina). Romania had no choice but to yield. The two ceded provinces had an area of 51,000 square kilometers, or some 20,000 square miles and 3.9 million inhabitants mostly Romanians. It was then Romania's turn to reject the settlement and in June 1941 joined Germany and attacked the Soviet Union. In 1944, however, the USSR reannexed the area, occupied the entire country of Romania and, shortly thereafter, imposed a communist government in Bucharest.

#### **17 Dead Loop concentration camp**

There were no mass shootings in the Romanian occupation zone of Transnistria in 1941-1944. Unlike Germans Romanians were trying to resolve the 'Jewish issue' by bloodless methods: isolation of Jews in ghettos and camps where they were to be gradually brought to extinction from hunger and diseases.

On 11 November the civil governor of Transnistria Alexianu issued Order #22 for deportation of Jews in colonies. A concentration camp for Jewish residents of Tulchin (3005 in total) was established in Pechera village Schpikovskiy district Vinnitsa region in December 1941. On 1 January 1942 a group of Jews from Brazlaw and in few days Jews from Ladyzhyn and Vapniaki, from Rogozin in August and in late July, October and November – 3500 Jews from Mogilyov-Podolskiy were herded to Pechera. This concentration camp is known as the 'Dead Loop'. In total about 9000 people from various towns in Vinnitsa region were kept in the camp. They were accommodated in the former 2-storied recreation center building. There were up to 50 tenants in one room. No provisions were made for the most basic necessities of the inmates. Inmates hardly got any food



and the building had no heating. About 2 500 Jews were taken away by Germans for forced labor. None of them returned. In March 1944 Soviet troops liberated the camp. There were 1550 survivors left in the camp.

### **18 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.

### **19 On May, 9 - The Great Patriotic War ended for the Soviet Union on 9th May 1945**

This day of a victory was a grandiose and most liked holiday in the USSR.

### **20 The World Israeli Jewish Agency called Sokhnut was established in 1929**

It is an international voluntary Jewish organization that functions in 58 countries all over the world. Its center is in Jerusalem. Before the state of Israel was created the world Jewish community and the World Zionist organization used Sokhnut as a tool for renaissance of the Jewish national hearth in the former Palestine that was under British mandate at the time. When Israel was declared an independent state in 1947 the Sokhnut directed its activities into the World Jewish communities focusing its efforts at strengthening peace, friendship and harmony between nations, rebirth and development of the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Jewish people, preservation of its national originality and creation of necessary conditions for further development of the ties of Diaspora with its historical Motherland.

### **21 Six-Day-War**

The first strikes of the Six-Day-War happened on June 5th, 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.

### **22 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.