

Efim Bezrodniy

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Kiev

Ukraine

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My family background

My name is Efim Itsko-Yankelevich Bezrodniy. I was born in Kiev in 1923. I was called Froim. My father Itsko Yankel Abramovich Bezrodniy told where our last name came from. He said his grandfather's or great grandfather's real name was Emmerman. At that time there were "catchers" in towns and villages. They grabbed 12-14 years teenagers to send them to the tsarist army. My grandfather was among those that got caught. He didn't want to tell them his name. He said that he didn't have a father or a mother and that he didn't know his name hoping that those people would feel sorry for him and let him go. But of course they didn't let him go. Instead they sent him to the cantonist school. They wrote his name as Bezrodniy. This word means "somebody that has no family" in Russian. He was a cantonist for about twenty years. Since then our family name is Bezrodniy. This story has been told throughout generations in our family.

I didn't know my grandfather or my grandmother on my mother's side. They had been gone before I was born. My grandfather's name was Abram, but I don't know my grandmother's name. I don't know what my grandfather did for a living, but I think he was a handicraftsman like my father. My father was born in Kremenchug, Poltava province, in 1878, where he lived until the civil war. My father finished primary school - 3 or 4 classes. That was all education he got. He learned to repair and upholster furniture and had his own shop on the first floor of a small two-storied house of his parents'. My father had an apprentice that was also his assistant. Although his family wasn't rich my father earned enough to lead a modest way of life and give education to their children. My father didn't tell me about the religious situation in his family. However, I believe that my father's family was very religious, because my father observed all Jewish traditions and went to the synagogue until the end of his life.

My father had a brother - Evsey Bezrodniy, born 1874. I saw Evsey once in my life when he and his wife Tsylia visited us approximately in 1935. They lived in Dnepropetrovsk and Evsey, I believe, was a shoemaker. They had a son Grigoriy and a daughter Mirrah. During The Great patriotic War



Evsey and his family were in the evacuation. Evsey died in Dnepropetrovsk in 1954. Grisha and Mirrah also died.

My mother Tuba Moiseyevna Bezrodnaya, nee Drannikova, was born in Kremenchug in 1882. Her father Mosey Drannikov had a haberdashery store. I didn't know him, as he died far before the revolution. My grandmother on my mother's side lived until 1935, but I don't remember her at all, not even her name.

My mother had two older brothers: Emmanuil and Iolik Drannikovs. Emmanuil and his family - his wife and son Aron born in 1915 also moved to Kiev. Emmanuil worked at a shop. During the war he and his wife were in evacuation in Middle Asia. Aron finished a military college and became a professional military before the end of the war. I don't know where he served. During vacations he often visited us. He had warm relationship with my sister Mindel. During the war Aron was in the army and came as far as Berlin. In the late 1970s he emigrated to Israel with his family. Now he lives with his son in Ashdod. His wife Fiera died long ago. Emmanuil returned to Kiev after the war. He was single and died approximately in 1960.

My mother's second brother Iolik - we called him Yulik in the family - was a worker, too. He got married late and his girl was born when he was about forty years old. Iolik Drannikov, his wife Tsylia and their daughter Mirrah lived in Kiev. During the war they all were in the evacuation with Emmanuil's family. Iolik died in the middle of 1950s in Kiev. His wife and daughter passed away, too.

My mother's brothers studied in cheder and primary school. My mother had actually no education, although she was born wise and intelligent. The family of my mother's parents was also very religious. They strictly observed all Jewish traditions. They followed the kashruth and celebrated Sabbath. My grandfather came home early on Friday. My grandmother lit the candles and my grandfather said a prayer. The family got together at the table for dinner. Their Ukrainian neighbor cooked their Saturday dinner and served the table. The Jewish rules do not allow even striking a match on Saturday. My grandfather had all religious accessories: thales, tfillin, Talmud and he treated them with solicitude. They raised their children to be religious people.

My parents knew each other since their childhood. Both of them were born and grew up in Kremenchug.

The families of our parents often went to the synagogue together. They were acquaintances and were good friends. As far as they knew each other well they sort of "engaged" their children good-humoredly. When the children grew up their marriage was a natural thing to happen. My mother often told me that they had a real Jewish wedding: under the huppah in the synagogue. Almost all Jewish population of Kremenchug was there, including the rabbi. There was delicious food and they received many presents. After the wedding my parents lived separately from their parents. At first they rented a small room and then they managed to save some money and purchased a small house. That was the house where my father had his shop. It was a small wooden house. The shop was on the first floor and on the second floor there were two rooms. My mother said they had eight children but four of them died when they were babies. I don't even know their names or dates of birth.

I had two older sisters and a brother. My oldest sister Dina was born in 1905 and the next was my brother Mindel, born in 1913. My other brother Alyosha was born in 1920.

Growing up

Life was quiet in Kremenchug before WWI and revolution. My father was the only furniture specialist in town and he had many customers. My mother was a housewife and was taking care of the children. Dina, the oldest, went to the Jewish school. She had teachers coming home to teach her to play the piano and French. Our quiet life ended in 1914 with the beginning of the civil war, and especially in 1917, the Great October Socialist revolution. I don't know exactly why the family moved to Kiev from Kremenchug. My mother didn't like to talk about the difficult years. I only know that hunger and pogroms were chasing them away, there were many gangs¹ in Ukraine and they were killing Jews in the first place. Poverty was all around; my father had no customers and he lost his job.

Approximately in 1921 my parents moved to Kiev. They moved in the house that belonged to Count Petrovskiy before the revolution, located in Andreyevskiy Spusk. At first my parents rented an apartment from landlord Stambovskiy, Polish. I was born in this apartment and I remember it very well. It was a very good apartment. The ceilings were high and decorated with stucco molding. We had two rooms. One was a big 40m² room and the second room was smaller. There was a kitchen with a Russian stove and a balcony between the rooms. We had mezuzahs on all doors in our apartment following the Jewish traditions. Approximately in 1932 the authorities installed a partial in the big room to let another family move in. But we still had sufficient space left especially that Dina was already married and was not with us any longer.

I remember well Dina's wedding, although I was only 3 in 1926. They installed huppah in our yard and there were so many guests - Russian, Ukrainian and Jewish people, rabbi and kosher food. It was a very merry wedding. A Jewish orchestra played wedding tunes and the guests danced. I have lifetime memories of this wedding. Dina married Israel Khazimov, a Jew. He owned a barber's in Mikhailovskaya Street in the center of the city. After the wedding Dina moved to her husband's house.

My parents were very religious people. My father prayed every day, putting on his Thales and tfillin. At Sabbath we had a minjan² - religious Jews came to pray in our house. Men were in a bigger room and women - in a smaller one. This pray house in our apartment lasted until the middle of 1930s until the authorities summoned my father to the NKVD (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs) and forbade him to have religious people come to his house to pray. My father, however, kept praying until the end of his days. We observed all Jewish traditions at home, followed kashruth and celebrated Saturday. On Friday my father came home a little earlier than usual to pick up Abrasha, my older brother and me to go to the sauna. We were back home before the first star appeared in the sky, before Sabbath. My mother said a prayer and lit candles in the antique silver candlesticks. They didn't do anything on Saturday. Janitor Afanasiy came in on Saturday to start a fire in the oven, turn on the lights and greet us with Saturday. My father treated him with some vodka and delicious snacks. Later the whole family got together at the table to have a nice dinner. My mother served delicious traditional Jewish dishes: stuffed fish, chicken broth and stuffed chicken necks. My mother had halla - Saturday bread - baked a day before in the stove. She also made matsa for Pesah in this same stove. Delicious smell spread all around and the neighbors - Russian and

Ukrainian were saying "Tania is baking matsa - there will be a holiday soon". They called her a Russian name Tania, because Tuba was a difficult name to pronounce. I have great memories of Pesah celebration in the house. We didn't have special kosher dishes and my father koshered all dishes in a big pot with boiling water on the eve of a holiday. The house was thoroughly cleaned, all garbage and bread was to be thrown away to have not even a crumb of bread left at home. During the cheder my father was sitting at the head of the table leaning against a pillow. Before he sat down he used to put away matsa and we, kids, had to find it according to the tradition. My father said all necessary prayers and conducted cheder in strict compliance with the requirements of Haggadah (Haggadh - rules and procedures to be followed at Pesah). The family got together at dinner during the whole Easter week. We had guests: Sister Dina and her husband, my mother's brothers Emmanuil and Iolik with their families. My mother often invited our Russian and Ukrainian neighbors to treat them to delicious food and matsa. In those years there was no national discrimination, at least, in our neighborhood. I didn't know the words "zhyd", "katsap" - slang for a Russian - or "hohol" - slang for a Ukrainian. During Christian Easter our neighbors treated us to their Easter bread and painted eggs and we liked those a lot.

We celebrated all Jewish holidays at home. My parents and older children fasted before Yom-Kippur. At Purim my mother made triangle pies with poppy seeds - gomentashy. During Hanukkah we had a special Hanukkah candle stand with eight candles burning and ate sweet doughnuts with jam and potato pancakes, and the children got some money for a gift. I liked these holidays a lot, because my father told us about the history and origin of every holiday and where all traditions came from. Sometimes we spent holidays at Dina's home. I remember celebration of "Simhat Torah" in 1940. On this day Jewish people finish their annual reading of Torah and begin it again from the first page. I remember rabbi in kippah carrying the Torah scroll along the street. People around were singing and dancing and enjoying themselves. This holiday was a lot of fun.

We lived a frugal life. My father worked as an interior decorator in the Comborbez shop. The word Comborbez was an acronym that meant Communist struggle against unemployment. This shop was located in Gostinniy Dvor at Podol (Gostinniy Dvor is an ancient administrative building in Podol, a historical district of Kiev). My father often worked at weekends to earn a little more. My mother was a seamstress at the factory. I didn't go to the kindergarten. I stayed at home with older children - Dina and Mindel. Mindel was called Bella at home.

In 1930 I went to school. There were Russian, Ukrainian, Jewish and Polish schools then. I spoke fluent Yiddish, as it was the main language we spoke at home. But I liked Russian and wanted to go to a Russian school. My mother took me to comrade Urman, Head of the Public Education Department - he enrolled children on the lists of different schools. He showed me his watch asking me to say what it was in Yiddish. I answered and he put me on the list of the Jewish school without even asking me what I wanted. At that time children could choose a school to their preference. Their parents were supposed to obtain a letter from the department of public education. The official representative of the department issued such letter addressed to the school that parents preferred to send their child to. However, in my case comrade Urman happened to be a Jew and he sincerely thought that it would be easier for me to study at the Jewish school in my own language. Besides, there were not enough children studying in Jewish schools (many wanted to go to Russian schools) and he sent me to the Jewish school.

I went to the 8-year Jewish school. We studied mathematics, language, history and geography. We didn't study any special subjects related to the Jewish history or culture. The only difference from other schools was that we studied all subjects in Yiddish and that all children were Jewish. My educational process was long. There were long intervals. I had a congenital hip dislocation, but nobody noticed it when I was a baby. In 1935 I had a surgery and had to stay in plaster for a year. I went to school a year later than all other children. I had to walk with crutches. Schoolchildren didn't tease or laugh at me; they were good to me. They even asked me "Froika, can you give me your crutches to hop a little?" I didn't suffer much that I missed a year of classes. But the surgery was not performed and in 1938 I had five surgeries within several months. This time I stayed in bed for almost two years and finished school in 1941 before the war. Other children were my friends; they visited me and brought me my home task from school. We didn't our home task together and they were helping me with my classes. Although I was ill for several years, had several surgeries, and over lived pains and inconveniences I enjoy recalling my school years. I had many friends of different nationalities. I was a young Octobrist³ and then a pioneer. We enjoyed many things: the 1st of May parades and the first Soviet movies. I remember how we went to watch the movie "Circus" with the Soviet movie star Lubov Orlova. We condemned racism that was derided in this movie. People of all nationalities - Jews, Ukrainian or Polish - were equal, we believed. During the war in Spain we wore proudly the "Spaniard" caps. I made one for myself. We were Soviet children brought up as young communists and Lenin followers.

Our family combined love to our own people, respect of its religion, history and culture with our interest to everything that the new way of life brought: construction sites, collective farms and five-year plans. It must have been similar to many other Soviet Jewish families. Even famine of 1933⁴ did not seem to overshadow our joyful existence. I remember little rolls that we received at school as additional ration. My sister Mindel (Bella), an accountant, went on a two-month business trip to a village from her work and brought back potatoes and some other products. My father had some earnings on the side. After work he went to work for different people that paid him with bread or other food products.

In the middle of 1930s arrests and repression began⁵. Some of our neighbors disappeared, too. They were arrested at nighttime. My parents never mentioned any arrests. I remember my older brother Abram agitation about the arrest of director of his school. My father told him that it was none of our business and everything had its reasons. Once my father didn't come back from work. He didn't return the following day either. My mother kept crying saying that we would never see him again. But he was taken home the following day. He didn't tell us where he had been. Only later we got to know that he was kept at NKVD (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs). He had to sign his consent to spy and report to the authorities on suspicious individuals. My father worked as a carpenter at the "Continental" hotel for foreigners and he had to watch them. After that religious Jews stopped coming to our house, and I think they were one of the reasons why my father was temporarily under arrest. After that my father grew old quickly. He was often sad and couldn't sleep at night.

Mindel married Efim Galker, a Jew and a jeweler in 1938. There were many gusts at their wedding. There was music and people enjoyed the party very much. However, this wasn't a Jewish traditional wedding. This was a different time⁶. Bella moved to her husband's apartment. He was a very well to do man.

There were my parents, Abrasha and I left in our apartment. He was my brother, my friend, my advisor and protector. After finishing school Abram worked at the shipbuilding yard and studied at the technical school. In 1940 he was recruited to the army and sent to serve on the border with Poland. When the war began in June 1941 Abram was at his frontier post and he perished there on the first day of the war.

The war was a complete surprise for all of us. Although we read newspapers, listened to the radio and knew that Hitler came to power, but after the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact⁷ people calmed down and believed that the war was not a threat to our country any longer.

During the War

On Sunday of 22 June 1941⁸ my father collected his tools and went to do one of his side jobs. He returned in two hours' time and told us that the war began. At twelve o'clock Molotov⁹ spoke on the radio with the announcement of the war and appeal to the Soviet people. My mother burst into tears saying that Abrasha perished. My father tried to console her, but he probably didn't believe what he was saying.

The husbands of Dina and Bella were recruited on the first days of the war. They both perished on the first months of the war during defense of Kiev. The story of Bella is described below.

Our family had no evacuation plans. We all thought that the war would be over within several weeks in our victory and that Germans would not reach Kiev. But then rumors began spreading that Germans were killing all Jews on the occupied areas. The authorities began to evacuate enterprises and governmental bodies from the city. My mother didn't want to evacuate. She said that if Abrasha were alive he would be looking for them in Kiev and that she had to stay and wait for him.

My sister Bella was working as an accountant at the NKVD office and NKVD employees and their families were the first to be evacuated. We left Kiev on 3 July 1941. My mother left a letter to Abram on the door to our apartment. She still hoped that he would come back. We convinced my mother that we were leaving for a short time. The seven of us - my mother, my father and I, Bella and Dina and her son Yuliy and daughter Raya) got on the special train for evacuation of the Town and Regional Party Committee, NKVD and Public Prosecutor's office employees' families. Everything was very well organized for this trip. People got meals - one hot meal per day and one packed meal. Although we had little luggage, my father took his Thales, tfillin and Talmud with him. He was praying during our whole trip. He made only one concession to his daughter Bella. He did not put on his religious accessories, because Bella felt embarrassed about what her colleagues would think about it.

We arrived at Stalingrad and settled down at the stadium. This was in summer, it was warm and sunny. We lived on the football ground. There were tens of thousands of people like us around. I was just a boy and everything that was happening to us seemed an exciting adventure to me. We stayed two or three weeks in Stalingrad and realized that although the front was still quite at a distance the war was going to last for long time and we had to move on. We boarded a boat and sailed up the Volga to the north. Now we were traveling among other common people. And this

tour was different from when we were traveling as a family of an NKVD employee. We got no meals and we were left on our own. We couldn't stay in Kazan or Kuibyshev - they were overcrowded with evacuated people. We stopped at the town of Tetyushi Tatar SSR. We rented a room from a local family in the house on the hilly bank of the Volga. My father got a job of a docker. He received some food products for his work and we all shared what he brought home. We stayed in Tetyushi until autumn 1941 and realized that we had to go where it was warmer, as we had no winter clothes with us. We got on the train to Uzbekistan. It was a long trip. My father got off at the stops to get some food in exchange for clothes. On one of such stops my father missed the train. We met again in Tashkent. He managed to get there even before we did. We headed to Fergana from Tashkent. We had been starving for quite some time and when we saw the market in Fergana - apples, water melons, melons, bread, smelling deliciously, we decided to stay there. We met an elderly woman there at the market. She was a Tadjik Jew and we rented a room in her house. It was a small room but it was dry and clean.

My father went to work as a loader at the station. He worked until late and he came back exhausted and went to sleep right away. We were all sleeping on the floor. Dina got a job of an accountant at the commerce department and Bella became a cashier in the cinema theater. I got a job of a shoemaker. Our life was gradually improving. We received some food for our food cards and got some food in exchange for our clothes at the bazaar. But there was not enough food anyway. Dina's children fell ill. Yuriy had dystrophy and abscesses; Rayechka was feeling ill and coughing. In April 1942 my father fell ill. He had a suppurative inflammation on his leg. He was staying in hospital. They didn't have enough bandages or gauze even for the wounded and they didn't have sufficient medical supplies. On 15 April my mother came from the hospital crying and said that Papa died. This was the first death that I faced in my life. My very dearest father died. I was crying all the time before and after the funeral. My father was buried on the Jewish cemetery in Fergana. He was wrapped in the cerements. One of the Jews that was in the evacuation there read a prayer. In few days after the funeral this same man talked to me. He said I was the only support for my mother and sisters and that I had to pull myself together to be able to provide for them and become the head of the family. By that time we understood that my sisters' husbands either perished or were missing, as we received their last letters in September 1941 from the vicinity of Kiev. In September 1942 Dina's daughter Rayechka died and was buried near my father. The girl actually starved to death. She was 7 years old.

I worked at the garment factory for some time. I remember Max Neimark, a German. He was a foreman at the factory. Once he didn't show up at work. It turned out he was arrested only because he was German. He was charged of cooperation with fascists, although there were no fascists in that region whatsoever. Nobody saw him again. Later I finished a course of accountants for agriculture crediting. I got a job assignment in a little town at the border with Afghanistan, but there was no work there. And I returned to Fergana. I was offered to work as cash messenger although I was lame and had to walk with a stick. But they offered a good salary and I agreed. I worked as cash messenger until the end of our stay in Fergana. I made the rounds of various town and regional institutions - sometimes I got a car and sometimes I walked escorted by two men, received the money and took it to the bank. This was a hard and dangerous work, but it was well paid and helped our family to have a better life. At this same time I became a Komsomol member

At the end of 1944 I was called to the Town Komsomol Committee and ordered to accept a job assignment of a cash messenger in the Western Ukraine liberated from fascists. I was to go to the town of Stanislav - Ivano-Frankovsk at present. I received two thousand rubles, permission to move all members of my family there and free tickets. I realized how dangerous the situation might be there. There were many nationalistic gangs that hated and killed representatives of the Soviet power¹¹. And the job of cash messenger was twice as dangerous. However, I couldn't help accepting this job offer. But it happened so that circumstances resolved this problem. Sister Dina fell ill with spotted fever on the train. She was sent to hospital in Kiev. As we were in contact with her we were ordered to stay at home. Our apartment in Andreyevskiy Spusk was occupied by others and we were allowed to live in a smaller room. Later we had to turn to court to resume our rights for the apartment.

After the War

I sent a letter to the Public Prosecutor office explaining that I couldn't go to Stanislav to take my position there due to my sister's illness. I was worried about having received the money and not arriving at the place. The Prosecutor assistants told me to stay in Kiev as long as needed. They said that the authorities that assigned this money to me should claim it. So I stayed in Kiev and sent the money to Fergana at their request in 1949.

I went to work as a welder at the Kiev plant "Red excavator", manufacturing agricultural equipment. He worked there for 35 years until I retired. I met my future wife Sophia Mitrofanovna Savchuk at this plant. She was born in a Ukrainian family in Vassilkov, Kiev region, in 1922. By the time we met all her family had passed away. I only know that they were farmers and lived in a village. Although we were of different nationality and cultures, we fell in love with each other and got married in 1948. My family was not against this marriage. They understood that we loved each other and they liked Sophia. We were both living at the hostel at that time. So after we had a civil ceremony at the registry office we received a room as a family in that same hostel. We are a typical Soviet family. We celebrate Soviet holidays and have family gatherings. We do not celebrate Jewish or Christian traditions in our family.

In 1951 I became a candidate for the CPSU - Communist Party of the Soviet Union - membership and a member of CPSU in 1953. I became a member of the Party strongly believing in the ideals of communism. I felt hurt when they delayed my admittance to the Party for two years instead of one. They didn't explain any reasons to me. I think this was reflection of the state anti-Semitic policy - struggle against cosmopolitanism, the "doctors' case"¹², etc., although I didn't know anything about it at that time. Finally I was admitted to the Party as workers had privileges in this respect. The policy of the Party was to admit one intellectual against 10 workers. When Stalin died in 1953 I cried sincerely and stood in the sentinel of honor near his portrait. That is why denunciation of the cult of Stalin on the XXth Congress¹³ in 1956 was an unexpected blow to me like it was for many other members of the Communist Party. Only with the flow of time when more and more information was revealed I understood that Stalin was the cause of many disasters in our country and with our people.

We have two sons. Yuriy was born in 1950 and Michail - in 1954. In 1966 when Yuriy came of age to receive his passport I decided that he should choose his mother's nationality. It was impossible for a Jew to enter an Institute or get promoted at work. To eliminate any suspicions about the

nationality of our son I decided to change my name so that my sons didn't have a typical Jewish patronymic - Froimovich. I might have betrayed my father by changing my name but I was more concerned about our son at that time. I got acquainted with director of the registry office and she agreed to have me change my name, patronymic, last name and nationality. Of course, I had to pay her. I felt ashamed of myself for changing my name given to me by my parents. They suggested that I took the name Fyodor Yakovlevich, Ukrainian. But I changed only my first name to Efim. I did this for the sake of my children. I wanted them to be able to get a higher education. My wife, to her honor, didn't put any pressure on my choice.

Yuriy got educated at Kiev radio engineering college. He works as an engineer. He married a Ukrainian girl Nadia and they have a 30 year old son Volodia.

Our second son Michail got educated at Kiev engineering and construction institute. He received a red diploma. He speaks fluent English, works on the computer and is an expert in construction materials. He works for a big private company and earns good money. He has three children. His older son is adopted by him. He married a woman with a child. His son Andrei is 12 and his younger son Alyosha was born a month ago, in 2002.

Although my sons are married to Ukrainian women and their nationality is written Ukrainian in their passports they sincerely identify themselves as Jews. They don't go to the synagogue or observe any traditions, but they are aware of their origin and feel proud of being Jews. We've never had any discussions about nationality in our family. We get along well and love each other. We watch closely the development of events in the Middle East and we are very concerned about the war imposed on Israel. A few years ago we even considered moving to Israel. But my wife got in a car accident. She was severely injured and became an invalid. We didn't dare to emigrate and the children didn't want to leave us here.

My mother Tuba Bezrodnaya died in 1959. She remained very religious until the end of her life. She went to the synagogue, lit candles on Sabbath and prayed. But she never forced us, children, in this respect. We lived our own life. Sisters Dina and Mindel (Bella) didn't get married and worked as accountants at various enterprises in Kiev. Dina died in 1994, Mindel - in 1989. Yulik, Dina's son, studied at Moscow physic technical institute and worked at big research institute. In the late 1970s he emigrated to Israel. He lives there with his wife Raya and son Victor.

Aron, the son of my mother's brother Emmanuil, lives in Israel. When he was leaving in 1970s he took my father's Thales and other religious accessories with him. Aron became a religious man. Although he is a former colonel of the Soviet army, he prays and goes to the synagogue and celebrates all Jewish holidays. I have not been a religious Jew - this is the way it happened in my life.

Glossary

1 In 1920s there were many anti-Semitic gangs in Ukraine

They killed Jews and burnt their houses; they robbed their houses, raped women and killed children.

2 According to the Jewish tradition in order to celebrate any holiday or Sabbath a minian - minimum 10 religious men were to be present at the synagogue or a prayer house

Fewer people had no right to address God with their prayer.

3 Oktyabrenok - "pre-pioneer", Soviet child of seven years or upward preparing for entry into pioneers

4 Artificial famine in Ukraine in 1920 that took away millions of people

It was arranged to suppress the protesting peasants that didn't want to join collective farms. 1930-1934 - the years of dreadful forced famine in Ukraine. The authorities took away the last food products from farmers. People were dying in the streets; the whole villages were passing away. The authorities arranged this specifically to suppress the rebellious farmers that didn't want to accept the Soviet power and join the collective farms.

5 In the mid-1930s Stalin launched a major campaign of political terror

The purges, arrests, and deportations to labor camps touched virtually every family. Former rivals Zinovyev, Kamenev, and Bukharin admitted to crimes against the state in show trials and were sentenced to death. Untold numbers of party, industrial, and military leaders disappeared during the "Great Terror". Indeed, between 1934 and 1938 two-thirds of the members of the 1934 Central Committee were sentenced and executed. More than half of the high-ranking army officers were purged between 1936 and 1938.

6 In those years it was not safe to go to the synagogue

Those were horrific 1930s - the period of struggle against religion. There was only 1 synagogue left of 300 existing in Kiev before the revolution of 1917. Cult structures were removed; rabbis, Orthodox and Roman Catholic priests disappeared behind the KGB (State security Committee) walls.

7 Non-aggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, which fall into history under name Molotov-Ribentrop pactum

- Soviet government in 1939 began secret negotiations for a nonaggression pact with Germany, meanwhile continuing negotiations, begun earlier, with France and Britain for an alliance against Germany. In August 1939 it suddenly announced the conclusion of a Soviet-German pact of friendship and nonaggression. This pact contained a secret clause providing for the partition of Poland and for Soviet and German spheres of influence in Eastern Europe.

8 22 June 1941 at 5 o'clock in the morning the fascist Germany attacked the Soviet Union without declaring a war

On this day the Great patriotic War began.

9 MOLOTOV (Skriabin) Viacheslav Mikhailovich (1890-1986), a Soviet political leader
During the October revolution he was a member of the Military Revolutionary Committee

In 1939-49 & 1953-56 he was Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR. Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1921-57. Member of Presidium of the central Committee of the CPSU in 1926-57. He was belonged to the closest political surrounding of I.V. Stalin; one of the most active organizers of repression in the 1930s - early 1950s. He spoke against criticism of the cult of Stalin in mid 1950s.

10 Komsomol - the Communistic youth organization, created by the Communist Party, so that the state would be in control of the ideological upbringing and spiritual development of the youth almost until the age of 30

11 Western Ukraine forcefully joined the USSR in 1939

The local population resisted this unification and hated the Soviet power ferociously.

12 "Doctors' Case" - was a set of accusations deliberately forged by Stalin's government and KGB against Jewish doctors of the Kremlin hospital charging them with murdering outstanding Bolsheviks

The "Case" was started in 1952, but was never finished in March 1953 after Stalin's death.

13 XX Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1953

Khrushchev publicly debunked the cult of Stalin and lifted the veil of secrecy from what was happening in the USSR during Stalin's leadership.