Marina Sineokaya

When Marina Sineokaya opened the door, I was about to say that I was invited by her mother as Marina didn't look like a lady over 80 years old. Marina is a tall woman with an excellent posture wearing trousers and a jumper. Her hair is put in a French roll. Her hair is still black and there is hardly any grey hair. Her eyes are young and bright and her smile is very affable. Marina's gait is light and brisk. She doesn't look more than 60. When I asked Marina to tell me the secret of her looking so young, she said it was to love and to live with a loving husband. Unfortunately, her husband died in 1977, and since then she has lived in a one-room apartment of a new building in the center of Moscow. The apartment is very cozy. Beautiful modern furniture is adorned with Marina's handmade decorative covers on the cushions of the sofa and eccentric covers on the armchairs. An abundance of books is the first thing you notice in the apartment. Marina is well-read. She prefers to read the world classics and history books on World War II, and the history of the Jewish people. Marina is sociable and has many friends.

My family background

Growing up

During the war

After the war

Glossary

My family background

My father's family lived in Moscow. In spite of the Jewish Pale of Settlement 1 in tsarist Russia, and the ban for Jews to live in big cities, my grandfather, Moses Yanov, was granted that right. He was a soldier, a cantonist 2. I don't know where he was born, or the family he came from. All I know is that he had served in the tsarist army for 25 years. When the term of the service of cantonists was over, they were permitted to settle in any place they chose. The government gave them monetary assistance so they could start their own business. Of course, my grandfather got married, not at a young age, after he had served a full term in the army. My grandmother, Sarah, was at least ten years younger than my grandfather. I don't know where my grandmother was born.

My grandfather was granted a rather large amount of money by the government and a plot of land. He started his own business of leasing carriages. He built a house for the family and a premise for the carriages. His business was very profitable. My grandmother was a housewife. My grandparents

had six children. My grandfather passed away in 1922, shortly before I was born. He was buried in the Jewish Vostryakovskiy cemetery in Moscow. After my grandfather's death, my grandmother lived with the family of her eldest son Ion. She died in 1935. She was buried next to my grandfather in accordance with the Jewish rites. This was the first time I attended a traditional Jewish funeral. She was buried in a shroud, not in a coffin. There were many people at the cemetery. An elderly Jew, clad in a frock coat and a hat, was reading a long prayer. Everyone was listening to him very attentively and repeating certain words of the prayer after him. The women were crying. After the funeral we didn't observe mourning in our house. The graves of my grandparents are still there.

Apart from my father I knew only three children of my grandparents. Ion was my father's eldest brother. Then his sister Anna, and brother Jacob were born. I don't even know the names of the other two brothers of my father. My father didn't mention anything about them. My father, Abel Yanov, was born in 1888. My father's eldest brother Ion was 16 years older than my father. Before the revolution [see Russian Revolution of 1917] 3 my father took the Russian name Vladimir [common name] 4, which was later written in his documents.

I hardly know anything about my father's life before I was born. I don't know whether my father or his brothers got Jewish education. I assume they did, as my grandparents were very religious people. My father told me that my grandfather always used to wear a kippah. This is the only thing I can tell for sure. I didn't know my grandfather as he died before I was born. When my father's eldest brother grew up, he started assisting my grandfather with his business. My father went to a Realschule 5. When World War I was unleashed, my father was drafted into the army. He was a signalman. He came back in 1918 and found a job as a bookkeeper. Soon after, he married my mother.

I don't know for sure what kind of profession my father's elder brother Ion had. I think he was an officer in a sort of bureau, but I don't know the details. Ion was married to a splendid Jewish woman. I don't know her maiden name, but we called her Fenya or Fenechka, and loved her very much. Fenya was a small plump woman with dimples in her cheeks when she smiled. She smiled a lot. Fenya was very energetic and was able to do many things at one time. She was the heart and soul of her big family. The family was really large. Ion and Fenya had seven children. I can't say that I was friends with the elder children as they were much older than me, but I was friends with their grandchildren and we remained friends all our lives.

Ion's eldest son, Efim, graduated from the Moscow Medical Institute. Before the war, he was the chief of department in a hospital and was a very good doctor. Ion's daughter, Evgenia, was married. She died of tuberculosis at a young age. The second daughter, Elena, was also married and had a son called Victor. He immigrated to the USA after the war. Elena died in the early 1950s. Two of Ion's sons, Vladimir and Iosif, were drafted to the front at the beginning of the Great Patriotic War 6 and both of them perished. When Iosif went to the front, his wife was pregnant and in her fourth month. Iosif never saw his son Boris, who was born in evacuation. Now Boris lives in the USA. Vladimir had a daughter called Irina. We've been friends for ever.

I was also friends with the last but one daughter of Ion, Rozalia. The youngest daughter, Sarah, was a weak and sick child from birth and she died at a young age. Ion passed away in evacuation, in Sverdlovsk, during the war. His wife died in the 1960s in Moscow. All Ion's children were atheists, but all of them celebrated religious holidays with their parents. I remember Ion's apartment. All of

his married and single children lived there except Iosif. There was one large drawing room in the apartment, about 30 square meters. There was a large table there. The whole family including wives, husbands and children used to sit at that table during holidays. It was fun, that was a wonderful, exceptionally friendly and loving family, and it was rare.

Ion was the closest to us out of all father's kin. Father's sister, Anna, also lived in Moscow. She was married to Semion Sorokin, who was a Jew in spite of a truly Russian name. Anna had a son. His name was Boris and he was older than me. I have little information about my father's brother, Jacob. He lived in Leningrad with his family and we didn't keep in touch that much. In my parents' words his life wasn't a very happy one. I don't know what happened to him, but my parents used to say that he came down in the world, lived in indigence, and had a lot of children. I know for sure he had many children, but I don't know exactly how many, and what their names were.

My mother's family lived in the Ukrainian city Nikolayev. My grandfather's name was Mikhail Ogranovich. His Jewish name was Mendel. My grandmother's maiden name was Rahil Kazhdan. My mother told me the romantic story of how my grandparents got married. My grandfather was a common worker at the mill. My grandmother was married before she met my grandfather. She was very beautiful, but she came from a very large and poor family. She had a prearranged marriage to a wealthy man, who was much older than her. The first time she saw her husband was under the chuppah as her parents and matchmakers had arranged everything. My grandmother had a hard nuptial life.

She didn't love her husband, and his family didn't have a good attitude towards her as she was poor and without dowry. She gave birth to two children – a son who was called Naum, and a daughter who was called Genya. I don't know how my grandmother met my grandfather as she was married and the mother of two children. They fell in love with each other, and grandmother didn't care that she was married and had two small children. She trespassed all social laws and rites, took her two children, and moved in with her beloved. From the standpoint of society at that time it was an improbable action. The children from the first marriage lived with them, and my grandfather treated them as his own. Besides, my grandmother gave birth to six more children in her second marriage.

One of the children died an infant; I knew the rest of them. The eldest was the only son. His name was David. Then, my mother Maria was born in 1894. Her sisters Revekka, Matilda and Ekaterina followed. I don't remember when they were born, I only remember the succession. I don't know whether my mother or her sisters had Jewish names. They might have had Jewish names, but they weren't used in the family. My grandparents were religious. Jewish traditions were kept in the family. Sabbath and Jewish holidays were celebrated. While the children were small, they took part in the religious life of the family, and when they grew up they became atheists. Of course, all of them went to their parents' place for Jewish holidays, but they just merely paid a tribute to the tradition.

In spite of the fact that my grandfather was a common worker, he wanted his children to get a good education. All of them went to a Russian lyceum, as there were no Jewish lyceums at that time. The eldest son, David, acquired musical education after finishing the lyceum. He played the violin very well and played in the orchestra of the Bolshoi Theater [7] all his life. The daughters didn't go on with higher education after finishing the lyceum as they acquired such comprehensive and

deep knowledge in the lyceum that it was enough to work in pretty serious positions. Revekka was the only one who left for the Latvian city Revel [the interviewee is talking about the Estonian capital, today's Tallin] and entered a university there, but she left the university at the outbreak of World War I and went to the front field hospital as a nurse. After the war she returned to Nikolayev.

During the Civil War 8 there were pogroms [in Ukraine] 9 in Nikolayev. My mother told me those were horrible times. Once, my mother heard a noise. It came from the street. She looked out the window and saw a man with an axe chasing a Jew, trying to kill him. Of course, it was dreadful to stay in Nikolayev. My grandmother's brother, Genrich Kazhdan, lived with his family in Moscow. My grandmother wrote to him and he suggested that the whole family should move in with him. My mother and Uncle David were the first to go. After that, my grandparents moved to Moscow with the rest of the children. Uncle David was offered a position in the orchestra of the Bolshoi Theater. He was given a room in a communal apartment 10, and he offered my mother to share his apartment.

My mother worked in an office as a typist. Some of Uncle David's new acquaintances introduced my mother to my father. They fell in love with each other. My mother told me that they lived in different ends of the cities. There was no public transport and my father used to walk across the entire city to date my mother. In 1919 they got married. I don't think they had a Jewish wedding. They probably didn't have any wedding party, as it was at such a time where there wasn't even enough bread to be full. I think the wedding party wasn't the most important thing. My father was head over heels in love with my mother and he loved her all his life.

I didn't know my mother's stepbrother and stepsister. Naum was married. He lived in Moscow, but we saw each other very rarely. He died at the end of 1940. Genya got married and went to Kharkov with her husband. In the years of starvation she was afflicted with tuberculosis and died in the 1930s. Uncle David married a very beautiful girl, Augusta. She was German. I don't remember her maiden name. In 1920 their daughter Margarita was born. Augusta had tuberculosis and died in 1925, when Margarita was little. David didn't re-marry. He devoted himself to raising his daughter, and to work.

Revekka was married to an officer, Mikhail Sevastopolskiy. They had a daughter called Sofia. Revekka was a housewife. She was a great cook, and an impeccable homemaker. She was over the hill when she died and she was the one who had the longest life. Matilda was married to a Russian man, Sobolevskiy. She worked in the Ministry of Foreign Trade. She processed the forms for equipment purchase overseas. Matilda had a son who was my age. I don't remember his name. Matilda died in Moscow in 1960s. The younger sister, Ekaterina, was single. She worked with Matilda in the Ministry of Foreign Trade. Ekaterina died in Moscow in 1979. My grandfather Mikhail passed away at the end of 1930. He was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Moscow.

After getting married, my parents lived in the same house as my father's brother Ion. One of the apartments close to Ion was vacant and Ispolkom 11 permitted my father to occupy it. My father worked as an accountant at an automobile plant. There was a small plant, not far from our house. It used to produce some parts for automobiles. The plant doesn't exist any longer. My mother was a housewife.

Growing up

In 1921 my elder sister, Evgenia, was born. I was born in 1922. I was named Marina, a name with starting with the letter ‘M’, in honor of my recently deceased grandfather Moses. When my sister and I were small, my mother didn’t work and raised us. She started working when we went to school. She was employed at the publishing house ‘Goslitizdat’ [state literary publishing house]. She worked there until retirement. She started her career as a typist, and then she became the administrative secretary. She managed work of the editors, translators, typists, and distributed scripts. In general, she was responsible for the technical and organizational part of work.

My mother was acquainted with many writers and poets. Our home library mostly consists of the books given to my mother by the authors and translators. I keep a book given to me by Boris Pasternak 12. It was King Lear by William Shakespeare translated by Pasternak with the inscription: ‘If I were King Lear I would give you half of my kingdom. Now I am giving you my respect and love.’ Signed: ‘Pasternak.’ My mother was the most experienced employee of the publishing house, and when a new manager came, he directed people to my mother when they had certain issues to tackle.

Russian is the native tongue of my sister, my mother, and I. My parents spoke only Russian with us and between themselves. Of course, we heard Yiddish as it was spoken by my maternal grandparents, my father’s brother Ion, and his wife. My sister and I were raised in the spirit of internationalism. We knew that we were Soviet people and we had no idea about our nationality. [The interviewee is referring to the official ideology, propaganda and common belief in the Soviet Union that particular ethnic and national identities are about to be overcome with the further development of the communist state, that is by definition built on the ideals of equality, and the evolution of communist world alliance world-wide. Contrary to the official propaganda of proletarian internationalism ethnicity and national origin kept on playing a very important role in the every day life of Soviet people. Nationality was marked in passports and it provided for the abuse of the less favored nationalities -Jews, Germans, Tatars, Chechens, Ingushes etc. - by the state bureaucracy.]

Our parents were sincere patriots. They thought that Soviet life gave them everything. They knew about pogroms and the Jewish Pale of Settlement and other restrictions before the revolution. Soviet life made them equal citizens of the country. There was no anti-Semitism. My parents thought the Soviet regime to be the one they needed. We were raised as patriots of our country.

We didn’t adhere to Jewish traditions at home. Pesach was the only Jewish holiday I knew from my childhood. On Pesach we and all of my mother’s relatives went to my grandparents’ house. My maternal grandparents were religious and they marked all Jewish holidays. I don’t know if they went to the synagogue. At least they never discussed it with us or their children. According to tradition we visited my grandparents on the first pascal day. Of course, for young people the holiday in itself didn’t mean that much, the most important thing was a family reunion. My father’s brother Ion marked Jewish holidays. We lived in the same building. There was a large table in the room; a lot of people could sit at that table.

Ion’s wife, Aunt Fenya, cooked delicious Jewish dishes: golden chicken broth, gefilte fish, kishke, kneydlakh, casseroles, tasty strudels and honey cakes. Everything she cooked was really scrumptious. My sister and I enjoyed visiting Aunt Fenya and Uncle Ion. Neither our parents nor I took our get-togethers as celebration of religious holidays, for us it was merely seeing our dear relatives, who were always happy to see us and welcomed us with tasty food. We didn’t stick to

any religious traditions and didn't celebrate any Jewish holidays at home as my parents were atheists. We marked Soviet holidays at home such as 1st May and 7th November [see October Revolution Day] 13.

My mother cooked dinner and got together with friends. A separate table was laid for the children. The adults sang songs and danced. We had our own entertainment: played different games, sang Soviet songs in chorus, and recited verses. My mother wanted my sister and me to get a very good education. We weren't very well-off; during our childhood my father was the only bread-winner of the family and his salary wasn't very high. My mother hired a music teacher for my sister and I, but we didn't meet her expectations, we weren't interested in playing interminable gamut and spend hours at the piano. When my mother realized that we wouldn't succeed in music, she found a German teacher for us. She was a German lady, who had lived in Russia for a while. She came to us and we weren't allowed to speak Russian during our class, only German. Such a tough teaching method turned out to be very fruitful. Soon, my sister and I began to speak German fluently. The knowledge acquired from the German teacher was very useful to me in school and later on in the institute.

My sister went to a ten-year compulsory school. After a year I went to the same school. I was a good student. I was very good at liberal arts such as languages, literature and history. It was more complicated for me to study exact sciences though I received good marks for them as well. I became an Oktiabryonok [see Young Octobrist] 14 in the first grade, then I became a pioneer [see All-Union pioneer organization] 15, and then a Komsomol 16 member. I was an active girl and was eager to take part in all school events. I sincerely believed that I was supposed to be the best to set an example for the rest to follow. My parents nurtured a patriotic spirit in me. I believed in communist ideas. I was confident that the USSR was the best country in the world, and Soviet children had the happiest life due to Stalin, who was the idol of my generation. Maybe the adults had a different view of things, but I never discussed it with them.

Beside me there were other Jewish students in the class. Now I understand that at that time it wasn't important for me what nationality my classmates were. My teachers didn't pay attention to my nationality. There were a lot of Jews among the teachers as well. I think there was no anti-Semitism before the war; I can't remember any manifestation of it.

During the war

God had saved us from repression starting in the 1930s [Great Terror] 17. Our family wasn't touched, maybe for the reason that neither my father nor my mother were dignitaries. A common accountant was of no interest to anyone. Eminent people were arrested such as great military and political leaders. We found out about that in school, from newspapers and radio broadcasts. I didn't doubt that those people were guilty and I was always happy that another plot against the Soviet regime had been divulged. I used to wonder how people could be pernicious towards their own country. There were some pupils in our class whose parents were repressed, the so-called enemy of the people. 18. There was a senior graduate who came from another school. He was very offish and reclusive. Some of the teachers asked us to be heedful and compassionate to him. His parents might have been repressed, but nobody could speak of it out loud. We could only make assumptions. We were very sympathetic with him and tried to support him the best way we could.

When in the year 1939, the annexation of Poland 19 to the USSR took place after the invasion of Poland 20 by Hitler's troops, I strongly believed that the Polish people were to be thankful. They were released from usurpers and had the opportunity to become the citizens of the best country in the world. I had the same attitude towards the annexation of the Baltic countries [see occupation of the Baltic Republics] 21 to the USSR as I thought that those countries didn't have very good living standards and were constantly suppressed and that we were the ones who gave them the freedom and the chance for a better living. Now I understand that the citizens of those countries treated us as occupants, though at that time I thought that we were doing good things by liberating those countries and widening our borders to the west.

Of course we were scared that a war might be unleashed, and I was happy when the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact 22 was signed. I thought it was a good thing that Stalin was able to come to an agreement with Hitler and that there would be no war in our land. We didn't know what had happened in Germany while Hitler was wielding the scepter. My aunt Matilda and her husband worked in the trade representative office in Germany. When Hitler came to power in 1933 they managed to leave Germany. They told us how fascists exterminated communists and Jews. I listened to their tales and thought how lucky we were for not having anything of the kind around here. I couldn't picture that such atrocity or even fiercer atrocity was also happening in our country.

In 1940 I finished the tenth grade of school. During the last grade I also took private lessons of German apart from learning other subjects. When I was in the ninth grade, my parents asked me which institution I would like to enter and I said that I hadn't made up my mind whether it would be the German or English department of the Institute of Foreign Languages. Then I heard from my mother that it would be better for me to study German in case we were to be at war with Germany. I didn't take my mother's words seriously at that time, but I remembered them. I didn't manage to enter the Institute of Foreign Languages at the first attempt. My school friend, Veniamin Gubenko, was a connate architect, who was very good at drawing and painting. He plied me with love for architecture and talked me into entering the Moscow Engineering and Construction Institute though I didn't have any propensity for drawing. He made some drawings for me to submit to the admission board and I took the entrance exams myself. Both of us were accepted.

On 1st September, I went to the classes and was surprised not to see Veniamin. I couldn't imagine that he might have missed the first day of school. After classes I decided to call on him at his house. His sobbing mother opened the door. She told me that Veniamin had been arrested at night and nobody explained anything to her. What could a seventeen-year old boy have done for the NKVD

23 to be interested in him? I tried to comfort his worried mother by saying that it was a mistake and he would be back, but he was only fully exonerated ten years after I got married [see Rehabilitation in the Soviet Union] 24

Even in his Komsomol membership card it was stated that he had paid the entire membership fee for the period of his service in the Gulag 25, and in exile later on. Veniamin told us the story of his arrest. His cousin was missing. Somebody told him that they saw a lady being shoved into a car. It

was usually done by the people closest to Beriya. 26. All Moscovites were aware of that. Probably somebody got to know that Veniamin was striving to find his lost cousin and he was arrested that very night. I believed him. There were other cases similar to that as well.

I had studied in the Construction Institute for two months. I couldn't cope with any subject without Veniamins' help. I realized that I wouldn't be able to continue the studies in that Institute and got transferred to the Institute of Foreign Languages. They took into account the marks given at the entrance exam to the Construction Institute and I was supposed to take only one extra exam - German. I passed the exam successfully and was enrolled in the first course. The previous year, my elder sister, Evgenia, entered the Moscow Institute of Philosophy and Literature.

On Sunday, 22nd June 1941, I was at home. It was the summer term and I was getting ready for exams. My pallid and perturbed mother entered my room and said that Germany had attacked the USSR without declaring war and there would be Molotov's 27 speech on the radio devoted to that. All of us listened to Molotov's speech and we couldn't believe that the Germans had violated the non-aggression pact, but it happened. At home I announced at once that I wanted to be in the lines as a volunteer. My mother tried to convince me not to go to the front by saying that only girls who were radio-operators or nurses were required on the front, but such a sissy urban girl as I would be nothing but a burden. I really was a pampered girl. When I was sick, my mother heated the thermometer in her hands before putting it under my armpit. I didn't want to take nurse courses as I was scared to see blood.

I was very happy when I heard the announcement at the institute asking if there were any volunteers to go to the front as military translators and that they should go to the rector. My German was very good, but I didn't know the military terms very well and I understood that I was supposed to learn that. I went to the rector for enrollment. There was a military board in his office. Translators were referred to the intelligence department. That is why the selection process was carried out by the militaries. They interviewed me, put my data down. Then I was informed that I was included in the group for studies at the Military Institute of Foreign Languages. In the pre-war period it was a faculty of the Institute of Foreign Languages and with the outbreak of war, that faculty acquired the status of a separate institute of military translators to be sent to the front.

I was very frustrated that I had to go on with my studies. I thought that the war would be finished while I was studying. I was consoled that the war wouldn't end so soon, and besides only literate translators were required at war. The institute worked in the city of Stavropol located at the Volga, 1,300 kilometers north-east of Moscow. It was a godforsaken town, a big village in fact. This town was flooded, so there is no town of Stavropol anymore. [Editor's note: A lot of small towns and villages were flooded due to the construction of the Volga-Don canal, connecting the two large Russian rivers, and hydroelectric power stations. The inhabitants of such towns and villages were resettled.] When in the 1970s my husband and I took a cruise on the Volga we were shown the place where that town used to be. There was a summer sanatorium for people afflicted with tuberculosis three kilometers away from the town. The whole complex consisted of a large wooden barrack located in the pine forest and the farm where kumis was made [fermented horse milk, popular in the Russian east and Central Asia, considered to heal tuberculosis]. There were huge windows in the barracks so that sick people had more air – as the sanatorium was open during summer time. We settled in the barracks. We went there in October and the barrack wasn't heated.

We could get by without heating in fall. But in winter time there were severe frosts, the temperature was 50°C below zero.

Our teachers didn't live in our barracks but in small huts where there were small ovens. There were no heating means in our barrack. That was an ordeal for us. Water pipes and the sewage system were out of order at once as the pipes burst. In the evening we brought water from the river to wash ourselves in the morning and when we got up there was ice in the bucket. During classes the pens fell from our frozen fingers, but we were supposed to jot down the lectures. Apart from the linguistic subjects we had lectures on the German army and armament. There were no fountain pens at that time, we had to dip a quill in the inkwell and the ink got frozen as well.

We were starving. Almost the entire group consisted of girls as the boys were drafted into the lines. There were several boys in our group, who couldn't be drafted because of their physical state. Hungry and cold girls were made to go to the forest everyday to get firewood for the teachers. One of the groups was to hew the trees, while the other was to chop it. Of course, we weren't experienced in that. We had to saw the trunk of a large pine more than to the half and then push it. When a gigantic pine was about to fall, all of us scattered like mice in different directions. It was the first time I saw death. One of our colleagues didn't manage to run away and he was hit by the branch of the falling pine. He passed away immediately. It was horrible and fearsome. There were times when I regretted not having been evacuated with my sister and mother.

My father worked at the aviation plant before the war, which was evacuated to Kuibyshev [900 km east of Moscow] and he went there too. My mother and sister were evacuated to Ulyanovsk [today Simbirsk, Ulyanovsk region, 700 km east of Moscow]. My institute was evacuated to Central Asia. I was perturbed as I didn't go there to cut firewood for the chiefs! That year of studies was the most terrible for me for the whole period of the war. We were craving to be in the lines. Every day we listened to round-ups about the front and they made us despondent.

Our troops left one city after another and the Germans were breaking through to Moscow. The position at the front was deplorable. That is why our curriculum was contracted to the minimum. Our syllabus was preliminary planned for two years, but in fact our studies lasted for one year. There was no time to linger as translators were needed at the front. There were many requests for translators. Before the war there was no planned preparation of military translators. They started to dispatch groups as soon as they got ready. All of us were conferred the rank of a lieutenant.

At first, I didn't know anything about my kin. I left Moscow at the beginning of October 1941. It took us more than two weeks to take a voyage to Stavropol and when I wrote to my relatives in Moscow, they had already left. The hardest and most worrisome months went by. All my fellow students corresponded with their relatives and received parcels from them. I was the only one who didn't know what was happening with my family.

At the beginning of spring 1941, my sister Evgenia, was wooed by a wonderful Jewish man, Mikhail Libensor. He worked for the Ministry of Foreign Trade with my mothers' sisters. He was infatuated with Evgenia, but she didn't appear to have mutual feelings. Then Mikhail decided to act with my help by having my support. When he came to see us he always brought me some knick-knacks and tasty things. I liked him. Then the war was unleashed and I left.

Once I was asked to answer a phone call while a lecture was being held. I squeezed past somebody and rushed out of the room. It turned out that Libenson was calling. I couldn't even imagine how he had managed to find me as our institute was considered to be a sensitive matter and it was next to impossible to get its address and telephone number as it was a military secret. He was married to Evgenia and he took her, my mother and my grandmother to Ulyanovsk, where the Ministry of Foreign Trade was evacuated. He told me his address and put down the address of my field mail. My mother and my sister were very worried and thought that I had been killed in battle. From that time onwards we always kept in touch. My grandmother died in evacuation in 1942.

In April my group was sent to the suburbs of Leningrad to the second attack army. We had to walk a hundred kilometers to the train station. Most of our way was across the icy Volga, which was when the ice began to melt. We got to the station hungry and worn out. We took a train to Moscow. We were supposed to go to the personnel department of the military ministry and then to the Volkhovskiy front. Leningrad was blocked [see Blockade of Leningrad] 28 by German troops. There were 40 young soldiers in the train car I boarded. The train went with hardly any stops, if there were stops, they were very short. Food was given out at the station. There were tables, and the cooks put porridge in the pots. The horror of that trip is still in my memory. There was no lavatory in the car and we didn't have time to go to the toilet at the stop as the train would leave in a minute or two. I tried not to eat or drink, but the natural needs were stronger and we had to do it at the corner of the car. It was a real torture for me.

During the trip I went through the first German air-raid. Our train approached a bridge and stopped suddenly. German planes were bombing the bridge. They hardly bombed our echelon as it was more important for the Germans to demolish the bridge, but still we were in peril. We were ordered to leave the locomotive and disperse. I hid in a shed with a couple of soldiers. The shed was located not far from the bridge. Through the crevices of the shed I could observe the falling bombs from German planes, which were flying to and fro making a terrible din. That din was the most horrible thing, even more frightening than the bombing itself. The Germans blasted the bridge and left. What were we to do? I was directed to the headquarters of the front and it was mandatory for me to get there. As it turned out some more soldiers were to go there as well. We had to walk for 25 kilometers. So we took off. I had a large trunk with clothes.

My family didn't do any outdoor activities like hiking, so I didn't have a rucksack. The officers carried my trunk in turns. It was thawing. There was a lot of mud and sodden clay. We walked across the edge of the forest and saw a truck stuck in the mud. The officers helped the driver to get the truck on the road and he agreed to give us a lift. We had been given uniforms at the institute, but we weren't given boots but tarpaulin shoes instead. I stepped on the road and I was covered in mud up to my knees. One of the officers suggested carrying me. We got half way through and I fell in the deep puddle. I had nothing to lose, and somehow managed to get to the truck. We drove for a while, and then we found out that the headquarters had been moved. Finally, we got to the personnel department of the headquarters. I showed my allocation certificate and I was told to go to the second army; my companions were sent to the eighth army, so we had to part.

It was getting dark when I was looking for the headquarters of the end army. I was told that it was not far away, eight kilometers or so. I was drenched to my skin and filthy, besides I had to haul my

suitcase. I took the road. I could see neither people nor cars. Finally, a passing car stopped and the major asked me where I was going and what for. I must have looked very wretched as he told me to sit on the shoulder of the road to wait for him to come back so he could take me to the headquarters. He took me to the headquarters, to the intelligence department. It was an empty place of sand and mud. It looked like there were dig-outs where the reconnoiter platoon lived. They gave me warm tea and asked my name. Then they said that they had had a translator by the name of Marina before. It turned out that it was my fellow student Marina Saifulis. I was told the story of how she perished.

She was caught up in the siege in Leningrad. Her squad tried to get her out of the siege one by one through swamps. It was a massacre. Bones of the perished are still found on those bogs. There was no way for the army to maneuver, so they had to walk in a single file through the bogs, jumping from hassock to hassock while the Germans fired at them. They ran from one pit to another to sconce from the fire. Suddenly they noticed Marina. She was very beautiful. I was rapt by her gorgeous thick long plaits. While at school she was constantly being forced to have her hair cut. They even tried to deter her with punishment. Marina was walking along the bog with a straight posture and untressed hair. Everybody cried out to her, ‘Down! Down!’, but Marina kept on walking. Probably she couldn’t cope with the pressure on her psyche. She was hit by a bullet, and she fell. They couldn’t even bury her.

Finally, the army managed to break through the siege with colossal casualties. General Gromov was the head of the intelligence, and so he gave orders to his subordinates on how to get out of that quagmire. In the end they saw a group of people, but it wasn’t clear whether they were Russians or Germans. The General told his personal aide that he would go to and check out the situation. If that group was German, the general’s aide was given an order to shoot him so that he wouldn’t be captured by the Germans. Luckily, they were Russian troops. I joined that army after it had broken through the siege. When Marina died they remained without a translator. It was the start of my front-line experience.

First, I settled in the dig-out with another translator, an officer. We had one batman for the both of us who was supposed to store firewood and stoke the oven. There were no conveniences. My mother had given me a small tub which I used for washing and laundry. I went to the medical battalion to take a bath. During the bath day the officers and soldiers went in the first turn. I went to the bathhouse after them. There was no toilet; the bushes were used for that purpose. There were other girls in the army: in the canteen, medical battalion and headquarters. I moved to the dig-out of the radio-operator, Anna. From that time onwards we shared lodging no matter where we were. We were given only soap out of the personal care items. We were supposed to exchange or mooch for the rest. As an officer I was entitled to an extra ration: a little bit of sugar, pig’s fat and cigarettes. I didn’t smoke and exchanged the cigarettes for caramel, sugar and tooth paste.

I joined the army after the Leningrad siege was broken. Breaking the siege wasn’t enough for me; I had to take part in the battles. We were winning back the piece of land, eight kilometers wide. The German intelligence didn’t even know about that. Nobody reported to the German commandment that the headquarters of the army with commanders and the council, the brain of the army, was based on that piece of land. We didn’t have a place to go. We fortified our positions on the bank of the canal outside Leningrad, which has been built by the tsarina, Catherine the Great [29] for the

amusement of her court. The canal was 20 meters wide so it was possible to take boat trips, which was rather popular in the times of Catherine's reign.

During the construction of the canal clay and earth were shoved on the bank. We made dig-outs, which looked like dens, where we lived and worked. There was the Ladoga Lake behind us, and the frontal and lateral positions were taken by the Germans. Of course we were very rigidly disguised. If the Germans had found out about our settlement, they would have slaughtered us. That was the place where I worked. The soldiers didn't take captives at that time, as there was no room to put them. Some German documents were brought, probably having been taken from the killed Germans and I was supposed to translate those documents. There were two small bunks in my dig-out, and there was a table between them. That was the place where Anna and I dwelled, and it was my working place as well.

Right after breaking through the siege, the construction of a narrow-gauge rail-road commenced in order to deliver provisions to the besieged Leningrad. Before that, provisions were only delivered on 'The Road of Life' 30, in winter time. Trucks drove on the ice of Ladoga Lake during winter time and when the ice melted there was no communication with Leningrad. Before the railroad was constructed it was the only thread that connected dying besieged Leningrad with the rest of the land. When the narrow-gauge rail-road had been constructed, echelons with provisions went to Leningrad. The Germans knew about that rail-road and bombed it frequently. Nonetheless they didn't manage to demolish it.

For our army to succeed in the battle, it was necessary to join the other army located across Ladoga Lake on Oranienbaum bridgehead. [Oranienbaum was the name of the town of Lomonosov before 1948, in Leningrad district with a dock on the Southern coast of the Gulf of Finland. Oranienbaum bridgehead was built in September 1941 during defense actions at the Leningrad front.] I took part in the Oranienbaum operation and still remember the details of it. Our army was supposed to cross Ladoga Lake right under the German's nose. When it was pitch dark at night, the headquarters of the army and military personnel were loaded on several barges. We weren't even allowed to strike a match. We were placed in the holds and were supposed to sit still for the German observers not to notice our transport. The German bank sentry had their searchlight switched on. I have no clue how they failed to notice us.

It was pitch-dark in the hold, we couldn't see a thing. We tried to make assumptions whether the Germans had noticed us or not, or whether they would start bombing or not. God was with us and all the barges remained unnoticed. We successfully got off at Oranienbaum bridgehead and began to get ready for the attack. The first thing was to take the captives and find out from them where the German troops were located. It was my first experience to work with the captives, before that I had to work only with the documents. I was a timid and self-conscious girl, and I was afraid that the captives would lie to me. I was to talk to the fascist face to face without security guards and without any assistance. From the psychological standpoint it was very complicated.

An officer was with me only during two or three cross-examinations. When I got to understand what to ask and where to put an emphasis on I was told that I was ready to work independently. The first captive I was to interrogate happened to be a German pilot, whose plane was brought down in the suburbs of Leningrad. He was a tall broad-shouldered, handsome blue-eyed blond. He was aware that he was in captivity and it cooled his pride. But when he saw that there was a frightened and

embarrassed girl in front of him, he decided to use another tactic, which worked very well. He started to talk about his family, showed the letters from his wife with the imprints from her lipstick.

At the beginning of the interrogation he said that he began to fight in Italy and only recently he was sent to Leningrad. He said that he hadn't participated in the bombing, and that he wasn't able to release even a single bomb and that his plane had been brought down. His story made me feel sympathetic towards him, as I thought he was suffering for no purpose. I jotted down all his answers. Usually the interrogated were sent to the camp, but that one was sent to the headquarters for some reason. During the cross-examination in the headquarters it was found out that he was a double-dyed German officer, who took part in the siege of Leningrad from the first day as well as in constant bombings of the city. When I got to know that I got so frustrated that I told the headquarters commander that I was ready to do any other job - to type, wash the floors, but not to cross-examine the captives.

When I finished my speech, the commander told me that there was no one who could replace me and the translators were 'peace-goods.' He told me that everything would be alright and that I just had to be more strict with the captives and appall them with execution. I found a different pitch of my intonation - the confiding. I convinced them that they had nothing to fear, and that the war was over for them and they had survived. Soon they would have a chance to go back home and after that was the start of a normal life of a civilian. All they had to do was to do away with all those bad things as soon as possible as Hitler would be defeated anyway and it wouldn't only be better for us, but for the Germans as well. First it was hard for me to get over my self-consciousness, but then I got rid of it naturally.

The successful assault of our troops at Oranienbaum bridgehead brought a complete victory. The siege of Leningrad was released. I was conferred with my first military award for that operation: 'For the Liberation of Leningrad' 31. Now it is a rather rare medal; there were very few people alive who were able to break through the siege.

I joined the intelligence. I was to take part in reconnoitering and cross-examining of captives on the spot. When we had defense positions the work of reconnoitering was very hard. We were supposed to make stakeouts. It wasn't an easy job to take a captive to the headquarters. We tried not to capture privates, but the officers. But when there was a need we captured privates as well. We used different methods - sometimes stakeouts, but there were times when we had to go to battle. It was easier when we were attacking. We didn't have to seek captives. In the siege the Germans surrendered themselves. We had a tough directive not to be captured by the Germans alive. It was not the case with our adversary. They were willing to do anything to remain alive. One or two captives were brought to the interrogation department of the division.

I talked to the prisoner face to face; otherwise there wouldn't have been an atmosphere of confiding talk. I had a lot of work to do. I was to cross-examine the captives and process the documents, too. Every day the commander got the summary report from me: 'According to the testimony of the captive it was found out that …'. I knew what questions I was supposed to ask. For our battles to be successful it was important to know about the location of the adversaries: whether it was a non-replenished exhausted regiment having only half of the military personnel left or a fresh well-armed German division. I was also supposed to find out about the quantity of the troops, the weapons and artillery, etc.

Of course, the captives didn’t know most of the things, but they knew a lot about their battalion and division. Trifle things were also of great importance, such as when the captive was mobilized in his division, what kind of uniform, ammunition, and nutrition he got. We couldn’t attack blindly; we were even supposed to know the exility. We didn’t use any physical force during cross-examination. Many people think that interrogations are accompanied by beating - nothing of the kind. If the captives were treated benevolently, not like foe, they shared everything they knew and were willing to assist. I didn’t treat them as enemies. They weren’t fascists to me, just captives, and I didn’t feel hatred towards them. Of course, I had to see the Germans during battle and respites.

Once, my curiosity was about to turn fatal for me. There were miradors on the leading edge, where our observers used to sit and follow the movement of the German troops. I asked for permission to get on the mirador to see what was happening. I saw the Germans relaxing. They were making coffee. As soon as I got off the mirador, it was hit by a shell and the whole contraption was in pieces. It wasn’t the only case when God had rescued my life. There was once when we shifted the Germans from their positions and we got their dig-outs. We knew that before retreat the Germans often mined their dig-outs if they had time. At that time everybody was so haggard and exhausted that we got relaxed and didn’t call the combat engineers. The reconnoiters took a lot of documents from the German headquarters and I had to start working on them immediately.

I was shown where my dig-out was and the soldiers brought the bags with the documents there. I went in there and showed them were to put the bags. I hadn’t even left the dig-out when the combat engineer came with a dog. The dog started sniffing and sat by the threshold. It meant that there was a mine in the dig-out. The dogs were never wrong. A mine was found under the threshold. It was a good thing that I had long legs and stepped over the mine all the time. If I had been smaller, I would have blown up. There were all kinds of situations. Another one was when I was driving in a car with the headquarters driver. We were supposed to cross the bridge. The driver asked me what time it was. It was 3.30pm and he told me that we would be able to cross the bridge as Germans daily began bombing the bridge at 4pm sharp. All of a sudden the Germans started bombing, it was half an hour earlier than it used to be before. Barely had we crossed the bridge and the bridge exploded.

There were rather long interims between the battles. We were young and when we had some leisure time we often used to dance. We had a gramophone and a couple of records with dancing music. The men from my regiment invited some girls from the signal regiment who were off duty, because there were very few girls in our regiment, and went dancing. We had amateur talent groups - there were singers, dancers and musicians.

I had a personal weapon. The reconnoiters gave me a ‘Walter’ as a trophy [this pistol was taken from fallen or captured Germans], a small ladies’ pistol. It was very beautiful, I always had it on me, but I didn’t know how to use it. We had shooting training, but I tried to escape it under any pretext.

In the winter of 1944 we were on the territory of Poland. We could feel the turning point of the war and there were no doubts in our coming victory. Sometimes the Germans surrendered by their entire divisions. Common soldiers were demobilized and they didn’t want to perish at the end of the war, but the German officers fought desperately. Our intelligence cross-examined the captives almost every day. There was another translator who joined us as I couldn’t cope with that volume

of work. We didn’t have to get much data such as where they came from, the assignments and dislocation. Often I had to take the captives to the headquarters via the forest. Then we went to a hamlet. We didn’t waste time on small settlements with the Germans. They weren’t strategically important for us, but there are casualties in any battle. That is why we just circumvented them and went on.

In the forest we besieged the whole replenished and well-armed squadron with the cars. They weren’t going to surrender. They hoped to track us down and to get rid of us one by one. Once we were going to have lunch and saw a car driving from the forest at a rapid speed. One of the Germans was in the driver’s seat and the other one was in the back seat with a gun. The car passed by and vanished. General-major Genrikh Tsvanger, a Jew, was the commander of our engineering troops. He was a remarkable man. He had to take frequent trips to the headquarters and to the construction squads. He was accompanied by security.

There was a time when Tsvanger drove to the squads and went missing. He was missing for two days and we started looking for him. The quest had lasted for a couple of days and his awards and his body parts were found in different parts of the forest. He was torn limb to limb. He had been a General-major and a Jew to the boot. It was hard for us to get over the terrible death of Tsvanger. That is why I was supposed to go to the headquarters of the regiment to take the interrogation minutes from the intelligence department. I had to go by myself, but Tsvanger had had armed security. Of course, I was scared each time. The thought of being murdered was dreadful, but it was even more dreadful to be captured by the Germans alive. I was given a gun, but still I didn’t know how to use it, besides I understood very well that I wouldn’t be able to resist the attack.

One evening I was on my way to the headquarters with the minutes. Suddenly I saw a car’s searchlight behind me. It wasn’t clear who was driving. I leaned against the tree hoping that I would remain unnoticed. The car stopped and the commander of the army, General-Colonel Fediunskiy, got out of the car. He asked me what I was doing alone in the forest. I replied that I was carrying the interrogation minutes to the headquarters and said that the security was behind me. Then Fediunskiy asked whether I had a gun, then he asked if I knew how to use it and I honestly replied that I didn’t know how to shoot from the gun. I should have lied as I heard him swear like a barge-man. I had never heard such obscene language before. Fortunately, I didn’t have to learn how to use the gun. I have never fired a shot. When I went back to the regiment, people got into the habit of sending me with meeting minutes.

There was a SMERSH 32 department in each squad. They had nothing to do with our intelligence department. Officially, they were supposed to divulge German spies and actually they followed our soldiers, especially those who were in the siege. Frankly speaking I strongly loathed the SMERSH. If they heard about my interrogation method, my friendly attitude towards the captives, they would go after me. God had mercy on me and the SMERSH weren’t interested in me.

In spring 1945, we entered German land. First the local population had a feeling of apprehension towards us. We entered unoccupied cities, from where people fled as soon as they heard of our approach. I remember how we went into the town of Marienberg, a small neat town, but absolutely empty. I went into a house and saw a used blanket and a cup of fresh warm coffee on the bed-side cabinet. It looked like the hosts had taken off in haste, without even changing clothes. None of the inhabitants made an attempt to fight us as they were so frightened. When the war was winding up,

those German people who didn’t have a chance to leave the city stayed behind. Not everybody had the opportunity to run away as there was no back-up plan. I wasn’t antagonistic towards those people, I was sympathetic. Once, we went into a hamlet and saw a herd of unmilked goats, who were bleating very wailfully. I found a woman and asked her to milk those nanny-goats. There were also a lot of thoroughbred black and white cows. That kind of cattle was taken to the USSR by echelons as our agriculture was totally devastated and we had to restore livestock. The echelons with cows stopped at different stations so the cattle could be distributed by hamlets.

In April 1945 we had a hunch that the war was about to end. We had battles in Berlin. The battles were held all over the country and the Germans were fighting fiercely. They tried to linger our troops and also tried to stop the American troops from going any further. We were held out so we could capture as little land as possible. That is why by the end of the war the territory of the GDR was so small, as almost the whole of Germany belonged to the FRG. [After the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany, the country was restructured according to the principles of the Yalta in February 1945, and Potsdam agreement: July-August 1945, of the victorious allies. The Oder-Neisse line was made to be the Eastern border of Germany. The remaining county was divided up into four occupational zones namely Soviet, American, British and French. In 1949 the Soviet satellite state of the German Democratic Republic also known as GDR, East Germany, was created by the Soviet occupational zone, while the remaining three zones united and made the Federal Republic of Germany also known as FRG, West Germany].

Our second assaulting army went to the north of Germany. We liberated Eastern Germany and the coast of the Baltic Sea, the island of Rugen. I remember how we liberated the town of Greifswald. An ancient university was located in the center of the town. That university was the second most important university in Germany. There were clinics by the university, and by the end of the war the German army turned those clinics into hospitals for its soldiers. There was a large, well-armed military garrison in Greifswald. That garrison was ready to fight tooth and nail. I understood that the town of Greifswald would suffer when we got there. Nonetheless, we were supposed to take over the city as soon as possible. The leading regiments of our army were replenished for that with artillery batteries and aviation. The order was given to attack Greifswald on 28th April, at 6am. All batteries were to start artillery fire and the planes were to make air-raids. We were supposed to suppress that garrison with as little casualties from our side as possible.

At around 2am, the observers reported to the headquarters that there were three black limousines with white flags coming from the town. We had to decide what to do next. The commander gave an order to let the cars in. There were three people in the car: the first was the deputy commander of the garrison, then a university rector, and the chief of the hospital, located in the university clinics’ premises. They asked our commander to spare the city. They declared the city open. They asked us not to touch the city inhabitants and the wounded as they had no place to go. I was interpreting that conversation. Of course, it might have been a diversion to save time. We had nothing to lose. We were totally prepared for attack, besides we had a chance to capture the city very quickly and move on.

However, our commandment decided to take their offer pondering over the human side of the issue. Nobody wanted to kill many civilians and the wounded. Besides, the university wasn’t only a historic and architectural masterpiece; it also had the largest library in Europe. The commandment

and the Germans processed and signed the act of capitulation: to disarm the garrison, place the ammunition in a designated place, and align all militaries on the main square of the town, put the sentry by the warehouses and stores in order to escape plundering and pillage. After that our officers went to Greifswald, and the truce envoys stayed with us. If our officers died the Germans would be shot. The task was complicated and we had to cancel the operation for all batteries not to start fire at 6am and all planes not to have an air-raid. If there was a single shot or blast our officers in Greifswald would die. Everybody was worried. Our nerves were worn to a frazzle when it turned 6am sharp. Luckily all went very well: there wasn't a single shot fired and none of the planes took off. We sighed with relief.

At 8am, our headquarters went to Greifswald accompanied by a small security group. There was a white sheet in every window. Nobody was seen in the street. All city inhabitants hid away: some of them in the apartments, others in the basement. Then I got to know that Hitler had spread propaganda that the Russians didn't take captives, and just shot everybody at once. We saw the postures where a Russian soldier was depicted as a monster with daggers instead of teeth. Of course, all Germans were appalled. The city surrendered and our commandants' office was established immediately, which was responsible to make order in the city for the civilians to have a serene and quiet atmosphere. I worked in the commandant's office as a translator. I looked peaceful, like a well-bred girl who came from an intelligent family.

When I went outside there was always a group of women following me at a certain distance. They wanted to take a closer look at me. There was once when I went to the city hall and saw the announcements on the board, and one of them caught my eye: 'A young widow is willing to get married.' We had nothing of the kind at that time. I was so amused that I started reading all the other announcements. When I looked back there was a crowd of women behind me. They broached the conversation for the first time and began asking me questions about life in the USSR and our plans for the Germans. The women were interrupting each other and tried to barge in with such phrases as that they were afraid that the Soviet army would kill everybody no matter who they were.

They also said that they had pictured the Soviet people as atrocious barbarians and in actuality we had turned out to be pleasant and kind people. I told them about our life and also assured them that we had no intention to do harm to the German people, who were no adversaries to us. The women asked me to go to the city hall; the population of the town would get together so I could tell them about that. I said that I didn't mind but I had to get the approval from my commandment first. When I told the commandment about that at the headquarters, they reminded me that we still were the enemies of the Germans. So, I wasn't allowed to go to the meeting in the city hall as it might have been a provocation.

I was a link between our army and the town-dwellers, who were able to address their suggestions or complaints to the commandment. Sometimes people complained that our soldiers burst into their apartments and demanded money and precious things. Such cases were very rigidly punished. Our task was to set up the supply of provisions and essential commodities. The local people were involved in that work, and they were happy to assist.

I hadn't met our soldiers who had been captured by the Germans and then been set free by the Soviet army. All of them went to the SMERSH, where it was found out how and when the soldier

was captured and the way he behaved while in captivity. Being influenced by propaganda, I along with most people treated those soldiers as betrayers. But it was all in theory; I didn't come across those people.

Apart from my first medal – 'For the Liberation of Leningrad' –, I also received two orders during the war: an Order of the Red Star 33 and an Order of the Great Patriotic War 34 of the second class. I got the Red Star Order after the Narva operation for undertaking actions ensuring successful fulfillment of military operations as it was written in the report. My summary reports must have helped in military actions. [The Narva assault operation took place in the suburbs of the Estonian town Narva from 24th to 30th July 1944, with the participation of the Leningrad front. As a result of the operation, the German group was defeated and the Soviet troops broke through the Baltic Sea.] I was conferred with the Great Patriotic War order after the capitulation of Greifswald.

I joined the party when I was in the lines. At that time everybody was applying for party membership. It went without saying. I wasn't forced by anybody; it was the way I was brought up. I thought it was necessary for me to be a party member if I were a patriot of my country, who loved her country, defending it from the foes and wishing it prosperity. Besides, I was an officer and all officers in my surroundings were communists. So, I had no doubts of becoming a party member.

In the post-war period I got married in Germany. During my service in the army I had a lot of wooers, who confessed their feelings, and proposed to me, but I didn't like anybody, I was only ready for friendship. My husband-to-be, Colonel Pavel Sineokiy, was assigned the commandant of Greifswald. Later Pavel told me that he fell in love with me at first sight. In fall 1946 we got married in Greifswald. Pavel was much older than me. He was born in 1901 in a Cossack 35 settlement near Kuban. He came from a peasant family. Pavel's father was Miron, but I don't remember his mother's name. His parents passed away before the war and I never met them. He had two brothers. Pavel left his parental home before the revolution. He was a great horse-rider like the rest of the boys in the Cossack settlement. That is why he went to the Cossack regiment of the tsarist army, from there during the revolution he went to the cavalry.

After the war

After the revolution and Civil War, Pavel was sent to the Military Academy named after Frunze in Moscow. Pavel was a very capable and smart man; he was the best student of his graduation year. There is a tradition in the academy named after Frunze of getting golden engravings of the names of the best students on the white marble slab in the hall of the academy. Pavel's surname is on that white marble slab. After graduation Pavel was sent to Turkey as a military intern. When the war was unleashed Pavel went back to his motherland and asked to be mobilized in the lines. He was in the lines from the first days. Both of Pavel's brothers were in the lines as well. One of them perished, and the other went back home and got married. He had four daughters and one son.

In 1946 I was demobilized from the army and went back to Moscow. My husband stayed on in Germany. My parents came back from evacuation in 1946. I moved in with them. As I had the certificate that I had finished one course at the Foreign Languages Institute, I was enrolled for the second course. In September 1946 I resumed my studies at the institute. The post-war life was certainly difficult. Those were the years of starvation, though my family didn't suffer from famine. My husband sent his certificate to us, and military people were maintained well at that time. At the

end of 1946 my husband was transferred to Moscow. He was to be allocated to the general army headquarters in Moscow. Soon he was conferred with the rank of a general. We still lived in the communal apartment with my parents. My family got along with Pavel very well and treated him as their flesh and blood.

In September 1947 our son Sergey was born. It was very hard for me but I didn't want to miss a year of my studies. There was nobody who could help me. My mother worked. In the morning I suckled the baby, swaddled it and left for my classes. My son was at home by himself. I went back home in the interim between classes so I could suckle the baby. It was a long way from the institute. I had to take a metro and then change transport. I strained off my milk in the morning before leaving for the classes so that my neighbor could feed the baby from the bottle. It was so hard to buy things for my baby. I was lucky to buy a swaddle or a baby shirt. After classes there was a ream of laundry for me to wash. I also had to cook food, clean the apartment and do other chores in the house. Our neighbor wasn't a very pleasant man; he constantly had an attitude, being irritated by my baby and me. There were a lot of things for me to do in the room like boil water on the electric cooker, wash the baby, do the laundry and dry it. It was a hard way of life, but in spite of that I went to classes and took exams. When the baby got a little older, it was easier for me.

There were Russian and Jewish girls among my friends. It didn't matter to my parents. That is why I could strongly feel anti-Semitism during the post-war times. In 1946 anti-Semitism was considerably displayed and was felt in every day life. In 1948 it became anti-Semitism on a state-level. Cosmopolitan processes commenced [see campaign againt 'cosmopolitans'] 36, almost every day there were abominable articles in the newspapers about scientists and people in the Arts of Jewish nationality. They were vituperated against and the emphasis was put on their nationality. Jewish students were expelled from the Institute and Jewish teachers were fired. I wasn't a victim, and finally it turned out that I was the only Jew left in the institute. I don't know why I was left in peace, maybe because of my front-line experience and military awards or my husband's position. I can't say for sure, but my name wasn't mentioned at all.

I still remember those teachers and students; they were very good and intelligent people. I was aware that it was an organized baiting of Jews, but I couldn't believe that it had been organized by Stalin. When many Jews were fired from important positions at the Academy of Science, I merely thought that the Russians were after those positions. Dignitary positions were taken by Jews, and ignoramuses and untalented people couldn't achieve that. So there were new opportunities opening up just to get rid of a Jew and take his place. That was the only explanation I could find for that. I knew a lot of cases where the place of a brilliant scientist was taken by a mediocrity, who took advantage of the fruitful work of his predecessor. I was deeply affected by those events as well as my husband and my relatives. There are always a lot of mean people who are ready to achieve the stated goal at any cost, getting rid of those in their way. Such people were happy that the Jews were ousted and took advantage of the situation by taking over their place. I thought that the implication of those people was in the betrayal and maliciousness. I didn't think it to be political.

It was the time when the term Zionists was introduced. The term was used as an aggression towards Jews; before that in the USSR the word wasn't associated with anything bad. Many people

who used that term didn't even know what it meant. The term was used along with Yid [derogatory term in Russian for Jews]. I remember the time when a party activist held a lecture and declared that Zionists forced our great military leaders to marry Jewish women. I was furious and said that they married Jews because they were intelligent and beautiful, and that they weren't forced to get married. After such words I was awaiting big trouble, but it didn't come to it.

My cousin Margarita, the daughter of my mother's brother David was exiled to the Gulag in 1945. She met an English pilot while taking a stroll. They saw each other a couple of times, sauntered along the city. After that she was charged with espionage. Of course, in 1956 after the Twentieth Party Congress 37 Margarita was exonerated and set free. She went back home sick and despondent.

In 1949 I graduated from the institute. I was given a mandatory job assignment 38 in the Moscow Physics and Technology Institute to teach German. I had worked in the Foreign Languages Department for forty years and retired in 1989. In January 1953 the Doctors' Plot 39 started. It was a real horror – unconcealed anti-Semitism. I really took it hard. I didn't believe that those doctors were guilty. It was a continuation of the cosmopolitan struggle, and organized baiting of Jews. Maybe the doctors' cases wouldn't have been the last thing in streamlining anti-Semitism if Stalin hadn't died in March 1953.

At first I was shocked and sorrowed by Stalin's death. Then I thought it was for the better. I was tired of hearing Stalin's name no matter whether it was relevant or irrelevant. All success was connected to him as if he was the only person who was able to think and make decisions. Stalin's portraits were everywhere. Even in the apartments of the people Stalin's picture was a mandatory piece of furniture. Stalin's cult was ubiquitous, and I was annoyed by that. I sighed with relief after Nikita Khrushchev 40 had given a speech and divulged Stalin's crime at the Twentieth Party Congress. I hoped that our country would change and have a better life. I believed every word spoken by Khrushchev. Everything was clear.

I remembered the peoples' enemies' processes very well. There were constant messages of newly disposed plots. I had doubts when in 1937 [Great Terror] they started to exterminate outstanding military leaders. It was hard to believe that those people who put their lives at stake when defending their motherland turned out to be betrayers and spies working for the intelligence of several countries simultaneously. I couldn't help having doubts. Before the war the top commandment of the army was exterminated. Of course, I understood that Stalin did a lot of harm to the country, but I still unfalteringly believed in the party. I thought that the Party should be given the credit for divulging Stalin's crimes and exonerating innocent convicts. I thought that the Party was setting order in the country.

I was always involved in the elections [see Elections of the Soviet Union] 41 as per the assignment of the Party. During elections I was supposed to organize canvassers, was on duty at the district polling station, located in our institute and followed the vote count. But I didn't think that we weren't electing anybody, as there was only one name in the vote list.

After the war I kept on being friends with my Jewish schoolmate Raisa Tevlina. Her father was a tailor and my father used to have his suits made by him. Then their acquaintance was cemented in friendship. They met to have a chat. Raisa's father was religious. When my father died in 1952,

Raisa’s father came to the funeral and read Jewish prayers by my father’s coffin. My father was buried in the common city cemetery. The funeral was mundane.

I was very close with my elder sister Evgenia. After she returned to Moscow from evacuation she entered university [Lomonosov Moscow State University], because the institute she entered before the war had closed down. In 1944 her only son Yuri was born. Evgenia got severely ill. She suffered from constant headaches. After giving birth to a baby she had to quit her studies at university. My mother worked for the publishing house and she was able to provide my sister with works of translation. Evgenia worked at home, she translated fiction. She spent a lot of time with her son. Her excruciating headaches didn’t stop. Finally the doctors found out that my sister had a brain tumor. She was operated on, but the operation wasn’t successful. In 1964 Evgenia passed away. She was buried next to our father.

We marked all Soviet holidays at home – 1st May, 7th November, Red Army Day [Soviet Army Day] 42. Victory Day 43 and New Year’s Day were my favorite. People always used to come to us. On 9th May, our family had a tradition to go to the Grave of the Unknown Soldier. We took flowers there and met with front-line friends.

I tried to pay more attention to my son. My mother was a big help to me. My husband was constantly busy at work and he didn’t have enough time for the family. Sergey was an excellent student at school. He was raised as a patriot of the USSR. He was an Oktyabryonok, a pioneer and a Komsomol member. After finishing school, Sergey entered the Moscow Physics and Technology Institute. He had excellent marks and became a post-graduate student. Sergey became a candidate of science [see Soviet/Russian doctorate degrees] 44 and was employed by the Scientific Research Institute of Genetics and Microorganisms. Sergey liked his job very much. He wrote and defended his doctorate thesis and became a professor. At present Sergey is the head of the institute laboratory. He got married after finishing his post-graduated studies. His wife works with him. I have two granddaughters: Maria, born in 1980, and Yulia, born in 1985. Unfortunately, my mother wasn’t able to see her great-grandchildren. She died in 1972. She was buried next to my father and Evgenia. It was a mundane funeral.

When the state of Israel was founded in 1948 it was a big joy for me. I always used to look for bits of information about Israel in the press and was so happy for the success of this country. Finally the Jews had their own state after wandering for so many years. When the neighboring countries started an aggression campaign against Israel during the Six-Day-War 45 and Doomsday [Yom Kippur] War 46, the term ‘Israeli military clique’ was introduced in our press. I was worried for Israel and wished it victory. I understood that those wars had nothing to do with the things written in our press. I understood that Israel was an original territory. It wasn’t Israel that attacked the adjacent countries to obtain extra territory. It was another case - people were fighting for their lives and for their right to exist. That struggle is continual; the topical issue is in the existence of the state.

I wasn’t going to leave the country when the mass immigration to Israel started in the 1970s. I didn’t judge those who were willing to make a change in their lives. I understood them very well. As for me Israel is a strange country like any other country. My husband and I took trips abroad very often. Almost every year we were invited to Greifswald, where my husband was a commandant after the war. Even after he came back to the USSR, people from Greifswald treated him with love and respect. During our visits we were invited to visit schools, kindergartens, plants, etc. We were

also invited for feasts and banquets. We had a very busy schedule. One week passed and I longed for Moscow. I got really homesick. My roots and my life belong to this country.

At that time we had a very hard life in our country - the counters in our shops were empty. If there was something on sale, there were long lines of people by the store. Nonetheless I wasn't rapt by the abundance of products overseas and their prosperity as it wasn't mine. I failed to understand how a person could deliberately disregard all things precious to him and leave for another country. I kept in touch with all my friends who immigrated to Israel. We wrote to each other on a regular basis, and knew things about each other. At that time I couldn't even imagine that there might be an opportunity to visit them and invite them to come over for a visit. It became possible during perestroika 47, which commenced in the 1980s, initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev 48, the General Secretary of the central committee of the communist party.

In 1977 my husband passed away. I am still overcome with grief, though they say time is a great healer. There are losses, which have always remained painful. My friends and my son are a great support to me.

I was rapt by perestroika. We were able to feel free. We weren't used to that, but at the same time it was very pleasant. We were able to get books, which had been banned by censorship and if they were found, people would be imprisoned. We were interested in reading the newspapers as there was no libel and the information we got was true. Finally there was democracy. I could really feel it, when for the first time the dean of our department was elected democratically. I welcomed all those things. Then gradually we came back to the things which were before. At the end of the 1980s I went to Israel at invitation from my friends. God is helping this country. I worship those first settlers who took every effort and made a blooming garden out of a rocky dessert. They created such a country themselves.

When the guide took us on a tour in Tel Aviv, I was delighted that that there wasn't a single house without flower beds. People had to work hard for that - bring the earth and water the plants for them not to wither. The whole city is a huge, well-kept garden with palms, roses, tropical flowers. Tel Aviv isn't the only city like that, the rest of the Israeli cities are similar. Israeli people deserve a peaceful life, and they will be able to make it good. I admire Israeli people and the country itself, but I understood once again that I wouldn't be able to live there. My place is in my country.

At first I was happy for the breakup of the USSR [1991]. I thought that Russia was a strong and self-sufficient republic, and the rest of them are just pulling money from it either for construction of plants or railroads. I thought that our life would become much better after Russia gained independence. Then I understood that the USSR was one body, which functioned well while it was sole. Some things were given by Russia to other republics, and certain things were obtained from them. It shouldn't be cut drastically. It wasn't only the economy which interlaced; people's lives were interconnected too. So many relatives of almost every Russian man remained in different republics. Now it turns out that they live in different countries. Now I'm sorry for the breakup of the USSR.

Revival of Jewish life started during perestroika, and the development trend remained even after the breakup of the USSR. Different Jewish communities emerged. People got a chance to go to the synagogue and adhere to Jewish traditions openly. The books written by Jewish writers and poets

are published now. Movies about Jewish life appeared. Jewish papers and magazines were issued. The attitude towards Jews changed. Before, people were embarrassed to say the word Jew trying to speak it in sotto, and the word wasn't even heard on radio or television. Now people talk about it calmly and naturally. Then the passports were changed, and the new ones appeared without a line on 'nationality' [see Item 5] 49, and there anti-Semitism was in the wane. How will Jews and Russians be defined now? Before, the documents of the Jews were put aside when they entered university. Now it is more difficult to do that. The most important thing is that people aren't trying to conceal that they are Jews, and I think this is a real determiner that the society has changed its attitude towards Jews.

I take part in the work of two Jewish organizations. One of them is called 'Relations with Israel' by the committee of the veterans of war. There are regular interesting lectures, thematic meetings, and concerts in the Israeli cultural center. I am a member of the society [Moscow Council] of Jewish War Veterans 50 headed by the Hero of the Soviet Union 51 Moses Marianovskiy. Recently a Jewish Community Center was opened. I go there very often. There are interesting classes in the center and everybody can find the classes of his interest. I am very keen on the history of the Jewish people. I take books on Jewish history out from the library and I enjoy reading them. But it refers to the history only; I am still unreligious maybe for the reason of my atheist upbringing in school and at home. I am happy to see children and teenagers, who are willing to know their ancestry and come to the Jewish center.

Glossary

1 Jewish Pale of Settlement

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

2 Cantonist

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

3 Russian Revolution of 1917

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

4 Common name

Russified or Russian first names used by Jews in everyday life and adopted in official documents. The Russification of first names was one of the manifestations of the assimilation of Russian Jews at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. In some cases only the spelling and pronunciation of Jewish names was russified (e.g. Isaac instead of Yitskhak; Boris instead of Borukh), while in other cases traditional Jewish names were replaced by similarly sounding Russian names (e.g. Eugenia instead of Ghita; Yury instead of Yuda). When state anti-Semitism intensified in the USSR at the end of the 1940s, most Jewish parents stopped giving their children traditional Jewish names to avoid discrimination.

5 Realschule

Secondary school for boys. Students studied mathematics, physics, natural history, foreign languages and drawing. After finishing this school they could enter higher industrial and agricultural educational institutions.

6 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.

7 Bolshoi Theater

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

8 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.

9 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.

10 Communal apartment

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

11 Ispolkom

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

12 Pasternak, Boris Leonidovich (1890-1960)

Russian poet and novelist, who stood up for independence in creation. In the times of the Great Terror (1934-38), Pasternak defended the repressed on a number of occasions. He translated modern and classic foreign poetry. His major work was the novel ‘Doctor Zhivago’, depicting the fate of the Russian intelligentsia with tragic collisions of the Revolution and the Civil War. The novel was banned in the Soviet Union, but appeared in an Italian translation in 1957 and later in other languages. In the Soviet Union it was published only in 1988. In 1958 Pasternak was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature, but the furor stirred up in the Soviet Union forced him to reject the award. It was posthumously given to his son in 1989.

13 October Revolution Day

October 25 (according to the old calendar), 1917 went down in history as victory day for the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia. This day is the most significant date in the history of the

USSR. Today the anniversary is celebrated as ‘Day of Accord and Reconciliation’ on November 7.

14 Young Octobrist
In Russian Oktyabrenok, or ‘pre-pioneer’, designates Soviet children of seven years or over preparing for entry into the pioneer organization.

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

16 Komsomol
Communist youth political organization created in 1918. The task of the Komsomol was to spread of the ideas of communism and involve the worker and peasant youth in building the Soviet Union. The Komsomol also aimed at giving a communist upbringing by involving the worker youth in the political struggle, supplemented by theoretical education. The Komsomol was more popular than the Communist Party because with its aim of education people could accept uninitiated young proletarians, whereas party members had to have at least a minimal political qualification.

17 Great Terror (1934-1938)
During the Great Terror, or Great Purges, which included the notorious show trials of Stalin's former Bolshevik opponents in 1936-1938 and reached its peak in 1937 and 1938, millions of innocent Soviet citizens were sent off to labor camps or killed in prison. The major targets of the Great Terror were communists. Over half of the people who were arrested were members of the party at the time of their arrest. The armed forces, the Communist Party, and the government in general were purged of all allegedly dissident persons; the victims were generally sentenced to death or to long terms of hard labor. Much of the purge was carried out in secret, and only a few cases were tried in public ‘show trials’. By the time the terror subsided in 1939, Stalin had managed to bring both the Party and the public to a state of complete submission to his rule. Soviet society was so atomized and the people so fearful of reprisals that mass arrests were no longer necessary. Stalin ruled as absolute dictator of the Soviet Union until his death in March 1953.

18 Enemy of the people
Soviet official term; euphemism used for real or assumed political opposition.

19 Annexation of Eastern Poland
According to a secret clause in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact defining Soviet and German territorial spheres of influence in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union occupied Eastern Poland in September 1939. In early November the newly annexed lands were divided up between the Ukranian and the Belarusian Soviet Republics.

20 Invasion of Poland

The German attack of Poland on 1st September 1939 is widely considered the date in the West for the start of World War II. After having gained both Austria and the Bohemian and Moravian parts of Czechoslovakia, Hitler was confident that he could acquire Poland without having to fight Britain and France. (To eliminate the possibility of the Soviet Union fighting if Poland were attacked, Hitler made a pact with the Soviet Union, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.) On the morning of 1st September 1939, German troops entered Poland. The German air attack hit so quickly that most of Poland's air force was destroyed while still on the ground. To hinder Polish mobilization, the Germans bombed bridges and roads. Groups of marching soldiers were machine-gunned from the air, and they also aimed at civilians. On 1st September, the beginning of the attack, Great Britain and France sent Hitler an ultimatum - withdraw German forces from Poland or Great Britain and France would go to war against Germany. On 3rd September, with Germany's forces penetrating deeper into Poland, Great Britain and France both declared war on Germany.

21 Occupation of the Baltic Republics (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania)

Although the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact regarded only Latvia and Estonia as parts of the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, according to a supplementary protocol (signed in 28th September 1939) most of Lithuania was also transferred under the Soviets. The three states were forced to sign the 'Pact of Defense and Mutual Assistance' with the USSR allowing it to station troops in their territories. In June 1940 Moscow issued an ultimatum demanding the change of governments and the occupation of the Baltic Republics. The three states were incorporated into the Soviet Union as the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republics.

22 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact

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

23 NKVD

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

24 Rehabilitation in the Soviet Union

Many people who had been arrested, disappeared or killed during the Stalinist era were rehabilitated after the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956, where Khrushchev publicly debunked the cult of Stalin and lifted the veil of secrecy from what had happened in the USSR during Stalin's leadership. It was only after the official rehabilitation that

people learnt for the first time what had happened to their relatives as information on arrested people had not been disclosed before.

25 Gulag

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

26 Beriya, L

P. (1899-1953): Communist politician, one of the main organizers of the mass arrests and political persecution between the 1930s and the early 1950s. Minister of Internal Affairs, 1938-1953. In 1953 he was expelled from the Communist Party and sentenced to death by the Supreme Court of the USSR.

27 Molotov, V

P. (1890-1986): Statesman and member of the Communist Party leadership. From 1939, Minister of Foreign Affairs. On June 22, 1941 he announced the German attack on the USSR on the radio. He and Eden also worked out the percentages agreement after the war, about Soviet and western spheres of influence in the new Europe.

28 Blockade of Leningrad

On September 8, 1941 the Germans fully encircled Leningrad and its siege began. It lasted until January 27, 1944. The blockade meant incredible hardships and privations for the population of the town. Hundreds of thousands died from hunger, cold and diseases during the almost 900 days of the blockade.

29 Catherine the Great (1729-1796)

Empress of Russia. She rose to the throne after the murder of her husband Peter III and reigned for 34 year. Catherine read widely, especially Voltaire and Montesquieu, and informed herself of Russian conditions. She started to formulate a new enlightened code of law. Catherine reorganized (1775) the provincial administration to increase the central government's control over rural areas. This reform established a system of provinces, subdivided into districts, that endured until 1917. In 1785, Catherine issued a charter that made the gentry of each district and province a legal body with the right to petition the throne, freed nobles from taxation and state service and made their status hereditary, and gave them absolute control over their lands and peasants. Catherine increased Russian control over the Baltic provinces and Ukraine. She secured the largest portion in

successive partitions of Poland among Russia, Prussia, and Austria.

30 Road of Life

It was a passage across Lake Ladoga in winter during the Blockade of Leningrad. It was due to the Road of Life that Leningrad survived in the terrible winter of 1941-42.

31 Medal "For Liberation of Leningrad"

Was established by Decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet as of 22 December 1942. Over one million and five hundred people were conferred with that medal

32 SMERSH

Russian abbreviation for ‘Smert Shpionam’ meaning Death to Spies. It was a counterintelligence department in the Soviet Union formed during World War II, to secure the rear of the active Red Army, on the front to arrest ‘traitors, deserters, spies, and criminal elements’. The full name of the entity was USSR People’s Commissariat of Defense Chief Counterintelligence Directorate ‘SMERSH’. This name for the counterintelligence division of the Red Army was introduced on 19th April 1943, and worked as a separate entity until 1946. It was headed by Viktor Abakumov. At the same time a SMERSH directorate within the People’s Commissariat of the Soviet Navy and a SMERSH department of the NKVD were created. The main opponent of SMERSH in its counterintelligence activity was Abwehr, the German military foreign information and counterintelligence department. SMERSH activities also included ‘filtering’ the soldiers recovered from captivity and the population of the gained territories. It was also used to punish within the NKVD itself; allowed to investigate, arrest and torture, force to sign fake confessions, put on a show trial, and either send to the camps or shoot people. SMERSH would also often be sent out to find and kill defectors, double agents, etc.; also used to maintain military discipline in the Red Army by means of barrier forces, that were supposed to shoot down the Soviet troops in the cases of retreat. SMERSH was also used to hunt down ‘enemies of the people’ outside Soviet territory.

33 Order of the Red Star

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

34 Order of the Great Patriotic War

1st Class: established 20th May 1942, awarded to officers and enlisted men of the armed forces and security troops and to partisans, irrespective of rank, for skillful command of their units in action. 2nd Class: established 20th May 1942, awarded to officers and enlisted men of the armed forces and security troops and to partisans, irrespective of rank, for lesser personal valor in action.

35 Cossacks

an ethnic group that constituted something of a free estate in the 15th-17th centuries in the Polish Republic and in the 16th-18th centuries in the Muscovite state (and then Russia). The Cossacks in

the Polish Republic consisted of peasants, townspeople and nobles settled along the banks of the Lower Dnieper, where they organized armed detachments initially to defend themselves against the Tatar invasions and later themselves making forays against the Tatars and the Turks. As part of the armed forces, the Cossacks played an important role in Russia's imperial wars in the 17th-20th centuries. From the 19th century onwards, Cossack troops were also used to suppress uprisings and independence movements. During the February and October Revolutions in 1917 and the Russian Civil War, some of the Cossacks (under Kaledin, Dutov and Semyonov) supported the Provisional Government, and as the core of the Volunteer Army bore the brunt of the fighting with the Red Army, while others went over to the Bolshevik side (Budenny). In 1920 the Soviet authorities disbanded all Cossack formations, and from 1925 onwards set about liquidating the Cossack identity. In 1936 Cossacks were permitted to join the Red Army, and some Cossack divisions fought under its banner in World War II. Some Cossacks served in formations collaborating with the Germans and in 1945 were handed over to the authorities of the USSR by the Western Allies.

36 Campaign against 'cosmopolitans'

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

37 Twentieth Party Congress

At the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956 Khrushchev publicly debunked the cult of Stalin and lifted the veil of secrecy from what had happened in the USSR during Stalin's leadership.

38 Mandatory job assignment in the USSR

Graduates of higher educational institutions had to complete a mandatory 2-year job assignment issued by the institution from which they graduated. After finishing this assignment young people were allowed to get employment at their discretion in any town or organization.

39 Doctors' Plot

The Doctors' Plot was an alleged conspiracy of a group of Moscow doctors to murder leading government and party officials. In January 1953, the Soviet press reported that nine doctors, six of whom were Jewish, had been arrested and confessed their guilt. As Stalin died in March 1953, the trial never took place. The official paper of the Party, the Pravda, later announced that the charges against the doctors were false and their confessions obtained by torture. This case was one of the

worst anti-Semitic incidents during Stalin’s reign. In his secret speech at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 Khrushchev stated that Stalin wanted to use the Plot to purge the top Soviet leadership.

40 Khrushchev, Nikita (1894-1971)
Soviet communist leader. After Stalin’s death in 1953, he became first secretary of the Central Committee, in effect the head of the Communist Party of the USSR. In 1956, during the 20th Party Congress, Khrushchev took an unprecedented step and denounced Stalin and his methods. He was deposed as premier and party head in October 1964. In 1966 he was dropped from the Party's Central Committee.

41 Elections in the Soviet Union
They were carried out on single source basis; only one candidate, approved by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, was running in each district. There was no competition, though it was not forbidden by the law. All election committees were established by the party. The results were considered valid if no less than 50 % of the citizens with suffrage rights had caste their votes. According to the official figures almost always 99 % of the voters had voted in the elections. Participation was considered to be the demonstration of loyalty to the regime, and nonparticipation was taken as an affront to the authorities.

42 Soviet Army Day
The Russian imperial army and navy disintegrated after the outbreak of the Revolution of 1917, so the Council of the People's Commissars created the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army on a voluntary basis. The first units distinguished themselves against the Germans on February 23, 1918. This day became the ‘Day of the Soviet Army’ and is nowadays celebrated as ‘Army Day’.

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

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

45 Six-Day-War
The first strikes of the Six-Day-War happened on 5th June 1967 by the Israeli Air Force. The entire war only lasted 132 hours and 30 minutes. The fighting on the Egyptian side only lasted four days, while fighting on the Jordanian side lasted three. Despite the short length of the war, this was one

of the most dramatic and devastating wars ever fought between Israel and all of the Arab nations. This war resulted in a depression that lasted for many years after it ended. The Six-Day-War increased tension between the Arab nations and the Western World because of the change in mentalities and political orientations of the Arab nations.

46 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.

47 Perestroika (Russian for restructuring)

Soviet economic and social policy of the late 1980s, associated with the name of Soviet politician Mikhail Gorbachev. The term designated the attempts to transform the stagnant, inefficient command economy of the Soviet Union into a decentralized, market-oriented economy. Industrial managers and local government and party officials were granted greater autonomy, and open elections were introduced in an attempt to democratize the Communist Party organization. By 1991, perestroika was declining and was soon eclipsed by the dissolution of the USSR.

48 Gorbachev, Mikhail (1931-)

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

49 Item 5

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

50 Moscow Council of the Jewish War Veterans

It was founded in 1988 by the Moscow municipal Jewish community. The main purpose of the organization is mutual assistance as well as unification of front-line Jews, collection and publishing of recollections about the war, and arranging meetings with the public and youth.

51 Hero of the Soviet Union

Honorary title established on 16th April 1934 with the Gold Star medal instituted on 1st August 1939, by Decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet. Awarded to both military and civilian personnel for personal or collective deeds of heroism rendered to the USSR or socialist society.