

# Evgeni Chazov

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Ternopol

Ukraine

Interviewer: Zhanna Litinskaya

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*I met Evgeni Chazov in the Jewish community of Ternopol. Evgeni visited me in the hotel the following morning. He didn't invite me home and we had our meeting in a hotel room. Evgeni is a thin nervous man. He told me that he came from a mixed marriage and was raised by his Russian father. However, he identifies himself a Jew. Evgeni told me that he takes an active part in public activities in the Jewish community and he is actually assistant director of it. He enjoys studying Jewish history trying to fill up the gaps in his education. Evgeni requested me to take an interview with him and talk to him, even though his father wasn't a Jew and he didn't reveal his Jewish origin before the early 1990s and didn't identify himself as a Jew. I found his story to be very interesting. It reflects the epoch in which a few generations of Soviet people grew up.*



I was born in and raised by a mixed family; my mother was Jewish and my father was Russian. My mother's parents came from Krivoy Rog located in the southeast of Ukraine, 350 km from Kiev. It was the center of coal and iron industry. My mother's father Moisey Bragher was born in the 1880s, was a tinsmith. My grandfather Moisey worked very hard before the revolution of 1917 [1](#) and then continued working at a state owned mine. Moisey was a highly skilled tinsmith. He never refused his Jewish or non-Jewish neighbors when they asked him to help and very often he did hard work for free. People liked my grandfather and brought him milk, eggs or bread – whatever they could afford to pay him for work. My grandmother Zlata, whose maiden name I don't remember, was almost the same age as my grandfather. I don't have any information about her family, but from what my mother's cousin sister Bertha Gribovskaya told me my grandmother received common Jewish education at home. She could read prayers in Hebrew and she was a terrific cook like all Jewish housewives. She could also make clothes. She had her customers that paid for her work, but sometimes she made clothes for her relatives or neighbors for free. She was known and respected in her neighborhood. My grandmother had a sister named Golda Gribovskaya. She was about two years older than my grandmother. Golda was married to Mark Gribovski. They died before the Great Patriotic War [2](#), in 1930s. Their daughter Bertha Gribovskaya was married and had two children. They live in Cheliabinsk, Russia, and we correspond with them occasionally. I have no information about grandmother or grandfather's other brothers or sisters.

My grandfather and grandmother got married in 1905. They had a Jewish wedding with a chuppah, signing the ketubbah, numerous guests and Jewish music. We have a photograph of Zlata's and Moisey's wedding. My grandmother had a fancy wedding dress on. One can tell that her parents were far from poor. My grandfather and grandmother lived in Krivoy Rog one or two years. Their first baby, my mother's older brother, whose name I don't know, died in infancy. After he died my grandmother and grandfather moved to Novovorontsovka, Kherson province [150 km from Krivoy Rog and 500 km from Kiev] probably looking for a job there.

My mother Friena Bragher was born in Novovorontsovka in 1908. My mother happened to be the only child in the family. In 1911 the family moved back to Krivoy Rog. I don't know why they returned, probably, things were not going very well. They settled down with Golda Gribovskaya' [the grandmother's sister] family in her house. The families had separate entranceways to their apartments. My aunt Bertha told me that both families observed Jewish traditions, followed kashrut and celebrated Sabbath. On Saturdays Golda's husband and grandfather Moisey didn't go to work. On Friday both families lit candles and sat down to the table set for a celebration. I don't know any details about their celebration of holidays, but I know from aunt Bertha that there was always matzah in the house at Pesach and grandfather Moisey, being the oldest in the family, conducted seder. On Saturdays and holidays they went to the synagogue in the center of the town. Krivoy Rog was an industrial town and there were many Jews residing in it like anywhere else in the south of Russia. [Ukraine] I don't know the exact numbers, but the Jewish population constituted at least 25%. Russian, Ukrainian and Jewish families were good neighbors and respected each other.

I don't know the name of the street where my grandparents resided. After the revolution of 1917 it was given the name of Karl Libknecht. During NEP [3](#) my grandfather worked for a master and later he went to work at a mine. My mother finished elementary Jewish school before the revolution. During the Revolution and Civil War, the period of pogroms [4](#), the family again moved to Novovorontsovka to live through the trying times. It was a small and relatively quiet town. From what I know, nobody in our family suffered from pogroms. After we returned to Krivoy Rog my mother finished a lower secondary school and then entered obstetrics school. She finished it in 1928 and went to work as a physiotherapy nurse in the town hospital in Krivoy Rog. My father was having treatment in this hospital in 1931 and my parents met there.

My father Pyotr Chazov was born in Chusovaya, a distant area near Nizhniy Tagil in the Ural [3000 km from Kiev] in 1900. His father Michael Chazov, my grandfather, was a trackwalker at the station and grandmother Anastasia was an attendant in the railroad hospital. My father didn't have any brothers or sisters. When my father was about 6 years old grandfather Michael died from anthrax and when he was 11 his mother died of tuberculosis. By that time my father had finished the 5th grade in the secondary school. He didn't continue his studies. My father lived with his aunts taking turns with one aunt in Briyansk region and another aunt in Perm region. He followed into his father's steps and went to work in railroad depots. In 1917 my father joined the Red Army along with other workers. Basically, he joined it to get better food. They were also provided clothes and accommodation. My father struggled against White [5](#) units in Siberia. His fellow comrade was a hero of the Civil War [6](#) and a future Marshall of the Soviet Union, Golikov [7](#). Life threw them together several times in the future. My father served in Ukraine and took part in battles in the Crimea and was awarded an Order of Red Star [Soviet Military Order, Instituted in 1930. It was awarded to servicemen of the Soviet Army, Navy, Border Guards, Internal Troops, and Committee

of State Security (KGB) personnel, for personal courage and bravery in battle, excellent organization and capable combat leadership]. There is a photograph of my father and a group of Red Army soldiers awarded orders of Red Star. An outstanding red commander Blyukher [8](#) conducted the award ceremony. During the Civil War my father became a communist. After the Civil War was over my father passed his exams to receive a certificate of a low secondary school and then finished a Higher Party School [9](#). He became a political officer in the Red army. He was sent to serve in Odessa, Dnepropetrovsk and Krivoy Rog. By the time my parents met he was in the rank of lieutenant colonel. When he was in Krivoy Rog he was hit by a car when riding a motorcycle. He was taken to hospital where he had to stay a long time. My father met my mother in the hospital in 1931 and they fell in love with each other.

Both of them came from families of workers and they were a product of the Soviet epoch: they were led by their dreams about socialism and communism, construction of plants and mines and a new life with no exploitation. That was what other Soviet people were driven by. My father fell in love at first sight and my mother returned his love. They met several times after my father was released from hospital and then he came to my mother's parents with a bunch of flowers to ask their consent. Although he wasn't a Jew my grandmother and grandfather gave their consent to their marriage without hesitation. My mother's parents had given up all prejudices associated with Jewish religious life, including mixed marriages. Also, they liked my father as a person. Few weeks later my father and mother had a civil ceremony in the registry office. They didn't have a big wedding party; it wasn't customary at that time. grandfather and grandmother arranged a dinner where my father invited his colleagues and mother invited her friends, about 8 guests in total.

My parents lived in Krivoy Rog another year. They lived in an apartment that my father received at work. In 1932 my older sister Ludmila Chazova was born there. A year later my father was transferred to work in Dnepropetrovsk in 30 km from Krivoy Rog. My mother entered the Medical College there. It was her dream to become a doctor. However, she had to quit the college three years later after my father got another assignment. My mother obtained an assistant doctor diploma [That was issued to students who quit their studies premature but had sufficient knowledge to work as junior medical personnel]. My father got an assignment in Ovruch, Zhytomir region, in 120 km from Kiev. My parents always stayed in state owned apartments with furniture and everything necessary. All these belonged to the state and they only took their belongings with them. Ovruch was a small town with the majority of Jewish population, but my parents resided in the military housing district with its customs and rules. Wives of the military were friends and lived in their own close community. In 1936 I was born.

My father was political deputy of commanding officer of the military unit. He was a colonel. Commanding officer of the division was Golikov, my father's fellow comrade from the period of the Civil War. My mother worked as a nurse in the medical unit of the division. My father was convinced that the wife of a political officer just had to go to work. Around 1937 commanding officer of the division Golikov was sent to a military academy in Moscow to continue his education. My father was appointed commanding officer of the division. This position required a general's rank, my father wasn't promoted at that moment for some reason that I don't know.

We lived in a cottage owned by the division. There were 3 big rooms and a kitchen in the house. The furniture was also owned by the division and each piece of furniture had an inventory number on it. Even curtains and tablecloths were owned by the division. We had a housemaid that did

cleaning and cooking and also looked after my sister and me. My mother said that my father had many friends: they were his comrade officers, for the most part. There were frequent gatherings in our house to celebrate Soviet holidays: 1 May and October Revolution Day [10](#). On Sunday officers' families visited each other and had parties. They usually drank a lot and said toasts 'To Soviet Motherland, to Stalin'. Observation of Jewish traditions was out of the question, but to do justice I must say here that we didn't celebrate Christian holidays, either. Officers that came from the lowest levels of society, workers' or peasants' families, were inclined to sybaritic way of life: they dressed up, smoked pipes and spent a lot of time sitting at a card-table playing. My father's friends called my father Pierre in a French manner for his snobbery and his predilection to nice clothing and good eau-de-cologne.

My mother's cousin Bertha Gribovskaya told me many years later about what happened in our family further on. Our parents never shared this with us. At that period arrests [Great Terror] [11](#) and show trials against so-called 'enemies of the people' [12](#) began. People disappeared without any trial or investigation. They were arrested at night. The majority of commanding staff of our division disappeared forever then. My mother told me that they didn't get together with friends that frequently since a word said at the wrong time or a joke might have caused an arrest. In early 1939 my father had a telephone call. He was ordered to make an appearance in the division headquarters in Zhytomir. This happened on Sunday. My father and mother were used to sudden calls and their commandment habit to work on holidays and at night like their chief. There was no indication of the forthcoming trouble and my mother even went with father to do shopping while he was at work. They agreed to meet when he finished work, but my father didn't show up on time. My mother waited until evening and then called the headquarters, but they told her that my father was busy and that he sent her a message to go home without him. My mother called them again when she arrived home and then she gave few more calls on the following days. She wasn't worried since it happened before that my father disappeared every now and then: the military have their own complicated life. Two days later, when my mother called the headquarters again they told her that she should come to see her husband and she suspected that something was wrong. She gave Nadezhda Smirnova -a typist in the headquarters of my father's division and a close friend of the family- my father's award documents, family albums and photographs where my father was photographed with Golikov and commander Blyukher, who had become 'enemies of the people' and were executed. Besides, she gave Nadezhda my father's collection of stamps. This was his hobby. My mother was concerned that these documents might become evidence against my father and she was convinced that something terrible had happened to him.

In the vestibule an officer on duty met my mother and then an NKVD [13](#) officer approached her and asked her to follow him and he would show her to where my father was waiting, but she was actually taken to be interrogated. They were trying to force her to slander my father and acknowledge that he was an enemy of the people and a French spy. Perhaps, one of my father's friends that called him Pierre reported on him. The interrogation lasted few hours, but my mother refused flatly to sign an accusation against the man she loved. During the interrogation they treated her with respect, but when she left the room, two officers took her to another room and from then on she couldn't remember anything. She recovered her conscience in NKVD hospital: her knee didn't bend and her face was injured. Her first words were about my father, but they didn't tell her where he was. When she asked about her children they told her to not worry about us and that we were in our nanny's care. We were staying with the nanny and she kept telling us that our

parents were in business trip and that there was nothing to worry about and we didn't worry, being small children. We lived our usual life. When my mother returned she told us about interrogation, but she plainly said there was a search at home after a false accusation of my father and that authorities 'worked on' her in their office. She didn't mention that my father was arrested. My mother stayed in hospital and her doctor was her former co-student at the Medical College in Dnepropetrovsk. One day she asked my mother to come to her office. She closed the door and said: 'Frien, if you want to rescue the children you need to go to a distant place before they arrest you'. When she was released from the hospital my mother went straight to her father in Krivoy Rog. She stayed with her father a day and then decided to follow his advice to go to a distant place since her father's house might be the first place they would be looking for her.

My mother returned to Ovruch and packed within one day without telling us any details. We moved to Lysva Molotov (present-day Perm) region in the Ural, 3500 km from home where my father's aunts lived: Natalia Schipanova and Anna Gluchova. However, we didn't stay there long. Probably my father's aunts were concerned about their own safety and they advised my mother to go to work in the 'Sokol' military recreation center located in the woods near Lysva. They believed she would not be discovered there. I wouldn't judge them for what they did: they feared that my mother might be discovered and they would suffer for giving shelter to the social dangerous elements that we had become. This was what this period was like when people were afraid of giving shelter to their close ones. We left our father aunts' house and my mother never contacted them again. My mother didn't tell my grandfather where we were staying to keep him safe. She sent him a cable to let him know that we were all right.

In this new place nobody knew our story. My mother didn't talk about her husband and we believed that our father was doing his job and would be back soon. My mother got a job of a nurse in the recreation center. I don't know how she managed to get this employment when our father had been arrested. I know that doctor Shtabskaya, a Jew, helped my mother get this job. I don't remember our life in this recreation center. I know that during the Finnish campaign [14](#) this recreation center was transformed into a hospital and my mother went to the front several times with a medical team. Therefore, she was given the status of a veteran of the Finnish War.

Shortly after beginning of the Great Patriotic War in 1941 there was a military training camp organized in the woods near the recreation center to train recruits. My mother and other medical employees went to work in this camp and the recreation center was again transformed into a military hospital. I remember this camp very well. It was divided into two parts with a ground road: one part was for reserve military training units and another part was for a medical unit and other facilities of everyday use. Employees also resided in earth houses in this part. My mother and we also lodged in an earth house. Soldiers arranged a small vegetable garden for us where they grew potatoes and vegetables. My mother couldn't do any hard work. She was an invalid and had heart problems, but soldiers helped us a lot. There were small potatoes growing, but we were glad to have them. There was also cabbage, carrots and beetroots growing in the garden: all small size due to the lack of sun. This first winter of the wartime was difficult. Of course, we didn't starve as much as those that evacuated from their homes. My mother received food packages and bread provisions for my sister and me as her dependents. In spring my sister and I went to the woods looking for herbs: sorrel, oxalis and nettle. We brought them home and my mother made soup with them. Our situation was more difficult than the situation of wives of the military that had special

provision certificates. My mother didn't have any information about my father, but she told us that he was at the front bravely struggling against the enemies of the Soviet power: fascists. My mother didn't have any information about her father or other relatives in Krivoy Rog.

I was just a boy and the word 'war' was very familiar to me. It was often spoken in the military unit. I knew that soldiers trained in the camp were going to the front. They had left their homes and their children and they spent time with us making toys for us from wood, twigs and cones. I also strove to them missing my father's are. My friends and I played the 'war' game throwing cones at one another. During the winter of 1942-43 I fell ill with scarlet fever and almost lost my hearing due to it. Few months later, when my friends and I were playing in the woods an old tree fell on me and I had both legs broken. I was a weak child and when I went to school in 1944 my teachers treated me with warmth and sympathy. I went to school in Lysva. We drove there on a truck. Senior children of the 4th grade and up walked to school along the railroad track and in winter they just crossed a lake. I cannot remember any of my classmates: I was often ill and stayed away from school. I had cold or something, besides, it was difficult to travel to school in winter.

I remember Victory Day on 9 May 1945 very well. How happy adults were singing and laughing. Radios in our camp played Soviet songs 'Katyusha' and 'Zemlianka' and 'Siniy platochek' that we liked for the rest of our life. The camp was still there, but there were no newcomers. The military and civilian employees were going to their homes. We had nowhere to go. Then my mother made up her mind regardless of how hurt she felt to visit my father's aunts in Lysva. How happy she was to hear that my father was alive. He was released in late 1940, but he couldn't find us: my grandfather didn't know our whereabouts and when my father wrote his aunts they couldn't give him a definitive answer either. When they saw my mother they cried of feeling sorry. They wrote my father our address in the camp. He arrived few days later. He said that he was trying to find us, but he didn't really have time for search. After he was released he was reduced to junior political officer in the rank of captain. When the war began my father went to the front. He was lucky and his life was merciful to him: he didn't even have a scratch through the whole duration of war. When my father appeared in the doorway of our earth house my mother ran toward him, my sister fell on his neck and I didn't remember my father and took shelter in the forest from shyness. My father found me, hugged me tight and carried back home. My mother and father stayed awake all through the night telling each other about the years that passed. However, even then we didn't know that my father had been arrested. At the end of the war he was in the rank of major. He got back his awards from the Civil War and was awarded an Order of Lenin and Order of the Combat Red Banner [Order of Lenin - Established in 1930, the highest award in the USSR for both military and civilian people and collectives. It is awarded for outstanding services to the revolutionary movement, labor activity, defense of the Homeland, and strengthening peace between peoples. Order of the Combat Red Banner - Established in 1924, it was awarded for bravery and courage in defense of the Homeland.] He was a military. On the next day we left the camp. We dropped by my father's aunts and stayed few hours with them. I don't know what they discussed, but I never again saw my relatives on my father's side: they never visited us.

My father got an assignment in Sambor, Lvov region, [600 km from Kiev]. About two months later my father was transferred to Lvov. We were in Lvov a little longer than six months. We were accommodated in suite in a hotel. I went to the second grade of school in Lvov. My mother kept writing to Krivoy Rog trying to find out what happened to her father. She found her cousin sister

Bertha Gribovskaya in Cheliabinsk and Bertha told her the terrible news that her father had perished. My grandfather Moisey and other Jews were thrown into a shaft alive shortly after the town was occupied. It was horrific news for my mother. She cried a lot when father was not at home, but when he came she wiped off her tears. He had a strong character and demanded that she showed her strength, too.

In February 1946 my father was appointed as deputy chief of political department of the regional military registry office in Ternopol in the West of Ukraine [450 km from Kiev]. It was a high position at that time and was promoted to the rank of colonel soon. When he received a one-bedroom apartment in early fall our family joined him in Ternopol. Shortly afterward he received a two-bedroom apartment with big rooms with much light and a kitchen. My father bought the first furniture in his life at the age of 46: a sofa, wardrobe, a table and coaches for my sister and me. My sister and I went to school and my mother went to work as a nurse in the surgery department of the railroad hospital.

My father worked a lot. He often went on business trips in Subcarpathia [15](#) that was annexed to the USSR in 1939. [Editors' note: Subcarpathia was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1945.] There were remaining gangs in the woods in Western Ukraine. They had chauvinistic moods and were against the establishment of Soviet power. Young people refused to serve in the Soviet Army and joined partisans in the woods. Once the trophy 'Willis' where my father was traveling some partisans who were local residents opened fire on the car. There were many such groups in the woods. They struggled against Soviet power and its representatives. They killed the driver and wounded another officer sitting in the car. Nothing happened to my father. We heard about this accident from the officer that had a surgery in the hospital where my mother was working. My father omitted such 'incidents' despising the danger and performing his duty for his Motherland.

My parents had many friends. They were usually my father's co-officers and their families. They got together in our home to celebrate Soviet holidays: 1 May, October revolution Day and the Soviet army Day [16](#). On weekends my father and mother went for a stroll. They went to the park where a symphonic orchestra was playing. It was a tradition. My sister and I also joined them when we grew older. Nadezhda Smirnova, a former colleague of my father, also lived in Ternopol. She kept our photographs and family archives. She often visited us and I think she talked with my mother about what had happened to my father, but we didn't know anything about it. I don't remember any Jews visiting us. Probably there were no Jews in this military and political group where my father was.

Our family was an exemplary Soviet family. My father and mother supported any actions initiated by higher authorities. My father devotedly believed in Stalin and thought that arrests in the late 1930s happened due to Yezhov [17](#), Berya [18](#), whoever, but Stalin. However, when in the late 1940s-early 1950s the campaign of state anti-Semitism began - it was called struggle against rootless cosmopolites [19](#), even my father expressed his bewilderment. Especially it was true about the 'doctors plot' [20](#). My father that had finished only five grades at school and took so much effort to find his place in life didn't believe that professors and doctors could be enemies of the people. He shared this opinion of his even with us.

At that period I also got to know what it felt like to be a Jew, even when only my mother was Jewish. I was called 'zhyd' [kike] at school, even though my father had a high position and was

known in the town and I had his Russian surname. I didn't do well at school due to my loss of hearing. My teachers treated me nicely, but I never gave it a thought of whether their attitude was sincere or it was dictated to them by my father's position. I liked literature, history and geography. I didn't do that well with natural sciences. I was a pioneer and a Komsomol member, but I didn't actively participate in public activities. I didn't have many friends, either. I spent most of my time with mother at home.

My father grieved a lot when Stalin died in 1953 and so did all Soviet people. I remember standing on the watch by the portrait of Stalin at school. There was a mourning meeting in the main square of the town: Stalin's square. Many leaders, including my father, spoke at this meeting. Even in 1956 when after the 20th Party Congress [21](#) official denunciation of the cult of Stalin began my father was faithful to him and believed these talks to be slander.

In 1956 my father demobilized and became responsible for religion in Ternopol region at the Council of ministers of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. He dealt with religious cults and sects. This was hard work associated with disclosure of the sects forbidden by the state, identification of their status and their attitude to the state. My father retired from this work in 1965. The town party committee offered him to organize and head the commission working with letters from working people. This commission received many letters from people. They complained about their everyday problems looking for help and support. This commission also worked as an arbiter to resolve disputes or conflicts between people or organizations. He organized this commission and worked there for free until 1973. People knew and loved my father. He was awarded the title of honored citizen of Ternopol and he was proud of it as much as he was of his combat awards.

After finishing school in 1953 I entered the Faculty of Russian Philology in Rivne Pedagogical College. There was no such college in Ternopol and I left for Rivne in 200 km from Ternopol. There was a Jewish girl in my college and we got along well with her. My sister and I were registered as Russian in our documents, so I didn't face any anti-Semitism since my co-students didn't know my mother. Although I identified myself as a Jew I didn't disclose my identity. I lived in a hostel and shared a room with three other students. We supported each other, had meals together and missed lectures together. In summer we had practical training in a school in Rivne and then I went to Ternopol on vacations. We often spent vacations together. My father obtained free trips to the Crimea and Caucasus. Sometimes my father and mother went on vacation together. He never spent time away from her, he was probably trying to make up for the years when they were apart.

After finishing college in 1958 a group of 16 volunteers volunteered to Tashkent [Uzbekistan, 3000 km to the South-East] to teach Uzbek children Russian. I went with this group. This was a Komsomol call. We traveled via Moscow where we were solemnly greeted. We stayed in a hostel three days and went on city tours. In Tashkent we met at the railway station and I was sent to a school in a small district center. I don't remember the name of this town. I taught Russian literature and language and since there were other teachers missing I also taught history, geography and German. We were treated with respect, but life was difficult there. I rented an apartment with another teachers, the Uzbek Bulat and the Mordvinian Nikolay. They also came to work there and it was less expensive for us to share an apartment. Bulat taught me to speak fluent Uzbek. I worked in Uzbekistan two years. My mother had an heart attack and I obtained a permit to quit work before my 3-year assignment was over [Mandatory Job Assignment in the USSR] [22](#).



My sister Ludmila finished Pedagogical College in Lvov and married Alexandr Borisenko, her former schoolmate. He was Ukrainian. He was at the military and had an assignment in the Caucasus. They often moved from one location to another: Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Poti [in Georgia] and other towns where her husband was on service. Ludmila had a small child and she couldn't leave her family to come to look after our mother.

I returned to Ternopol in 1960 and lived here ever since. At first I couldn't find a job for a long time. At that time society was opposing young fops wearing stylish clothing and I was one of them. This became a motive for them to refuse to employ me. It didn't occur to me at that time that this was another demonstration of disguised anti-Semitism. Then finally, after a long period of suspension, I was sent to work at a school. Later I became chief of studies and I think that I chose my profession rightly. I like children and find working with them interesting.

Before 1967 I lived with my parents. In 1967 I met my future wife Ludmila Pristupa, Ukrainian, born in a village in Volyn. She was 6 years younger than me. By the time we met Ludmila had finished a Polytechnic College and became a communication engineer. One month later Ludmila met my parents and then we went to her home village. I was amazed that her parents, pain farmers, met us with bread and salt [traditional Russia welcoming]. They knew that I had a Jewish mother, but they didn't care. We got married in 1967. We had a wedding party in our apartment in Ternopol. We invited our rinds to the wedding. Shortly afterward my wife and I moved into the apartment that I received.

In 1973 our son -named Pyotr after my father- was born. We had a good family. In summer I had long vacations and we went hiking on the bank of a river where I installed a tent or to the south. Once I obtained a cheap trip to a recreation center. A full-price stay was expensive and I couldn't afford it. My salary was just enough to support our monthly living, but many Soviet people lived like that. We went to the cinema every week and attended first night performances in Ternopol Drama Theater. We went to pop concerts. We celebrated New Year, 7th November, 1st May at home with the family and relatives. We had many friends; my wife's colleagues and my colleagues. We liked spending time with them.

In 1973 my father fell ill with cancer. He died in 1974. In 1977 my sister Ludmila died. She had taken tuberculosis treatment for few years: she went to health centers and stayed in hospitals, but it turned out she had tumor in her lungs. She died in Ternopol when she was visiting her mother. Her husband and his family were raising Ludmila's daughter Natalia. She lives in Moscow Region with her family now. My mother's cousin Bertha Gribovskaya came to my sister's funeral. Aunt Bertha stayed with my mother. My mother fell ill after her daughter died. She died a month later. After my mother's funeral aunt Bertha revealed our family secret to me about my father's arrest. We were sitting in the kitchen through the night. Aunt Bertha told me what she knew from my mother: about his interrogation, beating of my mother and her escape to the Ural with us. It was a blow for me: the fact that my mother and father went through such hardships and that they kept it a secret from their closest people - their children. This showed how much scared people were, that they were afraid of sincerity even with their closest people. Even aunt Bertha told me to not disclose it to anybody. Though it was 1977 she was still afraid of something. Only after aunt bertha told her story I began to understand many things in our household: that my parents never discussed actions taken by the Party or government and if they did talk about it my father's opinion was always similar to the baseline of the Party. Also, that my mother didn't have Jewish friends and

even her relative Bertha never visited us before my sister died. My father wasn't anti-Semitic, but I don't think he appreciated my mother's relationships with her relatives, just in case. I feel very sorry for my mother. She must have had a steel heart to live this kind of life and keep things in secret.

Back in the 1970s I developed interest toward Israel. I believe all decent people supported Israel in its struggle during the Six-Day War [23](#) and during other conflicts. Of course, I didn't share my thoughts with my father, but my Ukrainian wife always shared my opinions and we even considered moving to Israel. Then I began to have heart problems and I could not survive the climate of Israel. Now I am trying to make up for what I didn't have in my youth. I am a member of the Jewish community of Ternopol. I try to celebrate Sabbath and we celebrate Jewish holidays in the community: Pesach, Rosh Hashanah and my wife is always with me. I fast on Judgment Day. [Yom Kippur] I study Yiddish and Jewish traditions in the community. I am interested in the history of Jewish people and Judaism. I think that it is the greatest, bit a single achievement of perestroika [24](#) and independent Ukraine that various nations residing in Ukraine got an opportunity to develop. As for the rest of it perestroika it turned out to be a hardship for our family and for many others. I retired in 1986, but I give private lessons and prepare applicants to colleges. Our pensions are low and my wife and I have to work to make ends meet. Our son Pyotr quit his college after two years of studies. He works for a commercial company now. Pyotr lives with us. His marriage failed. He supports us. Pyotr identifies himself as Ukrainian. Hesed, Jewish charity center delivers food packages and medications to us and we participate in its cultural program.

GLOSSARY:

### **1 Russian Revolution of 1917**

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

### **2 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.

### **3 NEP**

The so-called New Economic Policy of the Soviet authorities was launched by Lenin in 1921. It meant that private business was allowed on a small scale in order to save the country ruined by the October Revolution and the Civil War. They allowed priority development of private capital and

entrepreneurship. The NEP was gradually abandoned in the 1920s with the introduction of the planned economy.

#### **4 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.

#### **5 Whites (White Army)**

Counter-revolutionary armed forces that fought against the Bolsheviks during the Russian Civil War. The White forces were very heterogeneous: They included monarchists and liberals - supporters of the Constituent Assembly and the tsar. Nationalist and anti-Semitic attitude was very common among rank-and-file members of the white movement, and expressed in both their propaganda material and in the organization of pogroms against Jews. White Army slogans were patriotic. The Whites were united by hatred towards the Bolsheviks and the desire to restore a 'one and inseparable' Russia. The main forces of the White Army were defeated by the Red Army at the end of 1920.

#### **6 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.

#### **7 Golikov Philip Ivanovich (1900-80), Soviet commander, Marshall of the Soviet Union (1961)**

During the Great Patriotic War in 1941-43 he was commander of several armies and Bryansk and Voronezh Front forces, in 1943-50 chief of staff headquarters, in 1958-62 chief of political headquarters of the Soviet army and Navy.

#### **8 Blyukher Vasiliy Konstantinovich (1890-1938), Soviet commander, Marshall of the Soviet Union, hero of the Civil War, the first one to be awarded an order of Red Banner, in 1921-22 Minister of Defense, chief commander of the People's Revolutionary army of Dalnevostochnaya Republic**

In 1929-38 commander of Special Dalnevostochnaya army. Arrested and executed by Stalin.

#### **9 Higher Party School - Party schools were established after the revolution of 1917**

Major subjects were social economic and political disciplines. Those schools trained Party activists from agitators and propagandists to Party leadership.

## **10 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.

## **11 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.

## **12 'Enemy of the people'**

an official way mass media called political prisoners in the USSR.

## **13 NKVD**

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

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

The Soviet Union attacked Finland on 30 November 1939 to seize the Karelian Isthmus. The Red Army was halted at the so-called Mannengeim line. The League of Nations expelled the USSR from its ranks. In February-March 1940 the Red Army broke through the Mannengeim line and reached Vyborg. In March 1940 a peace treaty was signed in Moscow, by which the Karelian Isthmus, and some other areas, became part of the Soviet Union.

## **15 Subcarpathia (also known as Ruthenia, Russian and Ukrainian name Zakarpatie)**

Region situated on the border of the Carpathian Mountains with the Middle Danube lowland. The regional capitals are Uzhhorod, Berehovo, Mukachevo, Khust. It belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy until World War I; and the Saint-Germain convention declared its annexation to Czechoslovakia in 1919. It is impossible to give exact historical statistics of the language and ethnic groups living in this geographical unit: the largest groups in the interwar period were Hungarians, Rusyns, Russians, Ukrainians, Czech and Slovaks. In addition there was also a

considerable Jewish and Gypsy population. In accordance with the first Vienna Decision of 1938, the area of Subcarpathia mainly inhabited by Hungarians was ceded to Hungary. The rest of the region, was proclaimed a new state called Carpathian Ukraine in 1939, with Khust as its capital, but it only existed for four and a half months, and was occupied by Hungary in March 1939.

Subcarpathia was taken over by Soviet troops and local guerrillas in 1944. In 1945, Czechoslovakia ceded the area to the USSR and it gained the name Carpatho-Ukraine. The region became part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1945. When Ukraine became independent in 1991, the region became an administrative region under the name of Transcarpathia.

## **16 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'.

## **17 Yezhov, Nikolai Ivanovich (1895-1939)**

Political activist, State Security General Commissar (1937), Minister of Internal Affairs of the USSR from 1936-38. Arrested and shot in 1939. One of the leaders of mass arrests during Stalin's Great Purge between 1936-1939.

## **18 Beriia, 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.

## **19 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 antisemitic 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'.

## **20 Doctors' Plot**

The Doctors' Plot was an alleged conspiracy of a group of Moscow doctors to murder leading government and party officials. In January 1953, the Soviet press reported that nine doctors, six of whom were Jewish, had been arrested and confessed their guilt. As Stalin died in March 1953, the

trial never took place. The official paper of the party, the Pravda, later announced that the charges against the doctors were false and their confessions obtained by torture. This case was one of the worst anti-Semitic incidents during Stalin's reign. In his secret speech at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 Khrushchev stated that Stalin wanted to use the Plot to purge the top Soviet leadership.

## **21 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.

## **22 Mandatory job assignment in the USSR**

Graduates of higher educational institutions had to complete a mandatory 3-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.

## **23 Six-Day-War**

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

## **24 Perestroika**

Soviet economic and social policy of the late 1980s. Perestroika [restructuring] was the term attached to the attempts (1985–91) by Mikhail Gorbachev 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 democratise the Communist party organization. By 1991, perestroika was on the wane, and after the failed August Coup of 1991 was eclipsed by the dramatic changes in the constitution of the union.