

Hertz Rogovoy

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Kiev

Ukraine

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Interviewer: Ella Levitskaya

Hertz Rogovoy was interviewed by me in Hesed [1](#), after Hertz went through with reception of patients. He works as a volunteer doctor in Hesed. Hertz is a middle-aged man, with a mop of grey hair, bright young eyes and a splendid smile. As a consequence of a severe battle injury Hertz became handicapped. He is afflicted with lameness and leans on a stick. Nonetheless, Hertz is a very sociable and brisk man. He is very pleasant-looking man, an interesting personality and a good company. He has a great sense of humor. Hertz was an interesting interlocutor, having his own view on the events, with unusual interpretation of familiar notions and events.



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My family background

My father's family lived in Kiev before revolution of the year of 1917 [Russian Revolution of 1917] [2](#), during the times of pale of settlement [Jewish Pale of Settlement] [3](#). Only few Jews were allowed to live in Kiev. The privilege was given to the lawyers, doctors, merchants of the 1st and 2nd Guilds [4](#) and certain craftsmen, whose services were in demand. Craftsmen were allowed to reside on the streamside part of Kiev, Podol [5](#). This latter is now the center of Kiev being the outskirts back in those times. My father's family used to live on Mezhygorkaya street. My father's parents passed away by then. There is nothing I know about my grandmother. I do not even know her name. My grandfather's name was Hersh, judging by my patronymic. All I know about my grandfather is that he worked in the brewery, and that he died in 1911. My grandfather's grave was on the Jewish Lukyanovskoye cemetery [6](#) in Kiev. When the cemetery was destroyed in the 1960s, I took my grandfather's ashes and his tombstone to the Jewish plot of the city cemetery. That is all I can say about my father's parents.

My father came from a large family. My father eldest brother's name was Hertz, and I was named after him. My father, Moses Rogovoy, was born in 1879. Apart from two sons, my grandparents had three daughters- Golda, the eldest, Berta, the middle, and Feiga, the youngest. I do not know when they were born.

My father's family was by all means religious. At that time there were no unreligious families. I do not know what Jewish education my father got. I know he knew how to read Hebrew and pray. He had, as all religious Jew was supposed to have, tallit, tefillin, prayer books. The family stuck to Jewish traditions, and children were raised as Jews. My father went to Realschule [7](#), but I do not think he finished it. Of course, he was fluent in Yiddish [it was his mother tongue] and he was also proficient in Russian, and wrote literately.

Before 1917 my dad worked as salesman in the store that belonged to Swarzman, the Jewish manufacture, merchant of the 1st Guild. His store was located in Podol. Swarzman highly appreciated my father, and in course of time he even promoted my father to the title of the merchant of the 2nd Guild

Hertz, my father's eldest brother, worked with my grandfather at the brewery plant. He was married and had three sons: Moshko, Shulim, Boris and one daughter Sarah. According to the Jewish laws my father was not entitled to get married before all his sisters had been married, because he was younger than them. [Editor's note: this interdiction was probably a local tradition, as it doesn't appear in halakhah.] Golda and Feiga got married off quickly. I do not remember Golda's husband. Kiev Jew Mendel Lipskiy proposed to Feiga. They had daughter Bronya and son Grigoriy. It was difficult for the father to marry off Berta. She was very homely, and there were no wooers. That is why my father could not get married. Finally, my father was able to find a fiancé for Berta, whose name was Lisyanskiy, an elderly Jew, Nikolay's army soldier [8](#), who served full term in the army, i.e. 25 years. My father married off Berta, and in the end, he was able to think of his marriage. He was 33 by that time [1912]. Almost all marriages were prearranged. My father rendered to a matchmaker [shadkhan], who told him about a beautiful eligible maid in Zhitomir [Ukraine]. My father went to Zhitomir [140 km from Kiev] to propose to her.

Zhitomir was one of the most ancient cities in Ukraine. At the beginning of the 20th century its population was a little less than 100 thousand people. Zhitomir was mostly inhabited by Russians, Poles and Jews. Jewish population made 30% [Editor's note: In 1897 the Jewish population was 30 748 comprising 46.6% of the general population. In 1910 they numbered 38,427.] Jews lived in the downtown area along with the representatives of Russian and Polish intelligentsia and well-off people. The downtown houses were mostly two-storied and made of stone. Zhitomir Jews were mostly craftsmen and merchants. There were also Jewish intelligentsia: doctors, lawyers and teachers. Most Russians and Poles lived in the outskirts of the city. They dealt with agriculture. People were friendly, many generations lived in one place. There was a large Jewish community in Zhitomir. There were a lot of synagogues. Even after the Great Patriotic War [9](#) and struggle against religion [10](#), carried out by Soviet regime, there were at least five synagogues left [Editor's note: Zhitomir Jewish community was so large and influential that even during and after struggle against religion there were five acting synagogues, which was unusual], while originally there were way more of them [about 50]. There was cheder in the city and Yeshiva. The Jewish community in Zhitomir was very large, which focused on charity, assisting the poor and indigent. There was Jewish orphanage, alms house and hospital. During the Civil War [11](#) there were pogroms (bashings)

[12](#) in Zhitomir. The local people usually harbored Jewish families.

My maternal grandfather's name was Sheftel Knopp. He was born in Zhitomir. I do not remember his birth date. I did not know my grandmother's name. Before 1917 my grandfather owned glass workshop and a store, where glassware, produced in workshop, was on offer and the orders were taken. Grandmother helped my grandfather with the workshop and the store. Once, either in 1914 or 1915 a customer asked to a glaze the icon [Christian families traditionally had icons in their homes, unless some of their members were convinced communists. Most older people in villages remained religious]. Grandmother fulfilled the order the way the customer asked. And when the customer came to pick up the order, he either had not paid or underpaid my grandmother, I cannot tell for sure. Grandmother was enraged, grabbed the icon and hurled so hard that the glass got broken. She was blamed in sacrilege and insult to the Orthodox sacred thing. The customer filed a charge against my grandmother, and as a consequence she was to be exiled in Siberia. Grandfather spent a lot of money on attorneys, but his efforts were futile. The authorities were willing to make an ostentatious trial so that other Jews would in no way insult Orthodoxy. Revolution saved my grandmother, the soviet regime started a struggle against religion, and my grandmother's culprit was overlooked. But due to constant worries grandmother got afflicted with breast cancer and passed away a rather young woman in 1919.

From grandfather's kin I just knew his brother, Reuben Knopp. Reuben's house was by grandfather's house. Reuben had many children, he himself did not remember their names. At times he would call some of his kids: 'Hey you. What's your name?' 'Haim' 'Haim, go and tell mama, that I am hungry.' Grandfather was very tidy, but Reuben was ill-kempt, wearing his pants unzipped. Grandfather used to joke that his brother did not zip up his pants, because he did not have time for it since he was making children.

The Knopps had six children. My mother Bella Knopp (Jewish name Beila) was the eldest, she was born in 1891. Then her sister Khasya was born, brothers Boris, Mikhel, Grigoriy, Hersh and the youngest sister Manya. Everybody in the family spoke Yiddish. In Zhitomir even many non-Jewish people were fluent in Yiddish, and Jews in its turn were fluent in Ukrainian and Polish. All children knew how to read and write Yiddish. I do not know what education my mother and her siblings got. I would say it was rudimentary. Anyway, I remember the fact that my mother corresponded with her kin only in Yiddish. Later in the post-war period my mother started writing in Russian.

All mother's brothers and sisters left paternal home. Mother's sister Khasya married Grouzer and lived in Kiev. Her husband Motl Grouzer worked as an electrician on the shoe factory. Khasya was a house-wife. They had two children. The daughter Liya was born in 1923 and the son Naum in 1924. Boris lived in Donetsk. He was married and had children. Mikhel lived in Vinnytsia with his family. He had a son Shunya, born at the end of the 1920s. Grigoriy abandoned his father, because grandfather was a private entrepreneur and it would stand in the way of his career. Grigoriy left for Moscow, graduated from Polytechnic institute. He lived in Moscow with his family. Mother's younger sister Mayna lived in Kiev with her family. Her husband was a professional military. Manya had two sons. Yuri was born in 1934, Yan in 1938.

Of course, the entire family was religious. It could not have been otherwise in such a city as Zhitomir. Nevertheless, I did not happen to meet such a religious man as my mother's father. My grandfather always wore kippah on his head. He took it off only before going to bed. My

grandfather kept to praying and reading religious books. I remember a huge bookcase in his room very well. There were a lot of religious books in it. My grandfather was an inveterate stickler of all Jewish traditions. Sometimes my mother took me to Zhitomir, when she went there to visit her family. Once we came for Pesach. I remember how my grandfather carried out first paschal Seder. Grandfather clad in white attire was sitting on the pillows, as it was supposed for a king. I remember all Seder rites- when I was to steal a piece of matzah, afikoman from my grandfather. I also recollect the wine glass for the Elijah ha-nevi, placed in the middle of the table. Grandfather told me to look at the glass. I was looking very closely, and it seemed to me that there was getting less wine in the glass. I was sure it was Elijah ha-nevi who sipped wine from the glass. I remember wine goblet, placed on the table- they were beautiful, made of blue glass. Seder lasted for a long time, and it was tiresome for everybody, but grandfather did not admit any reductions. During the war grandfather was evacuated. When he came back, he had not found his books. He began to collect religious books once again. I cannot perceive how he could manage to get such books in former USSR. He was able to collect many antique religious books.

Father's wooing was successful and at the beginning of 1912 my parents got married in Kiev. It was a traditional Jewish wedding. Parents had a marriage certificate issued by rabbi. My elder brother Grigoriy was born on December 28, 1912. In the year of 1917 my second brother Lev was born. He died the year when I was born, 1924. Mother and Lev went to Zhitomir to see her relatives, and Lev died there as a result of either meningitis or heliosis [sunstroke]. He was buried in Zhitomir in Jewish cemetery, next to my grandmother.

Growing up

I was born in August 1924. I was named Hertz after eldest brother of my father, who died a year before, 1923. He was buried in Lukianovskoy Jewish cemetery in Kiev.

Father told me about Jewish Pogroms in Kiev. They started before revolution and lasted until 1919. I learnt from my father certain things I was not aware of. I always thought that pogroms were made by denikintsy [henchmen of Denikin] [13](#), petliurovtsy [henchmen of Petliura] [14](#), makhnovtsy [henchmen of Makhno] [15](#) and other gangs [16](#) being hostile to the soviet regime. It turned out that soviet militaries, Schors [17](#) troops and other were involved in pogroms. They also plundered and often murdered Jews. It was a hard time, both revolution and civil war. Power in Kiev often changed, circulating between regimes. The order in city was established only in 1919.

Unfortunately, I know hardly anything how my family lived in that period of time. By the fragmental recollections I can only say that it was a hard time for my dad. The store where my father worked was most likely nationalized by new regime. My father could only regain footing due to NEP [18](#). First he began working as a salesman in the store, gradually became the owner of the store. He bought a good apartment at Bolshaya Podvalnaya street, in the center of Kiev. Unfortunately, NEP period was of short duration. When the soviet regime decided to do away with private entrepreneurship and transfer to planned economy private entrepreneurs, so-called nepmans ['NEPist, people dealing with NEP' in Russian] at that time were suffocated by taxes. Those taxes could be changed 3-4 annually. Hardly had one tax been paid, when another was levied, exceeding the preceding one 2 or 3 times as much. Smart people dropped everything and escaped abroad. Unfortunately my father did not turn out to be sagacious. He was arrested as an offender of tax laws. He went through a trial and was sentenced to 3 years in GULAG [19](#). After the trial my father was sent to the camps in Solikamsk [Russia, about 2000 km from Kiev]. Even after he was

released, he was not entitled to return home, he had to be exiled for a while.

I remember myself from the six-year age. My father was exiled at that time, and my mother and I lodged in Podol, at Obolonskayka street. My elder brother Grigoriy had become adult by that time and moved from Kiev. He finished secondary school and wanted to go on with education. Father was repressed, and it would be an obstacle for Grigoriy if he stayed in Kiev. He had to conceal father's arrest. Moreover, only children of proletarians and peasants were accepted in vocational schools and institutes [Family of persons arrested as "enemy of the people" [20](#) was deprived of many civil rights and their children were allowed to study in higher educational institutions only accordingly to predetermined quotas. By this kind of quotas communists declared themselves to protect the interests of the oppressed working class and peasants.]. It goes without saying that nepman's son, whose father was convicted for tax dodging, could not be accepted. It was called 'suppression of rights'. Brother left for a small town Konstantinovka [about 550 km from Kiev], located in Donetsk oblast and entered chemical and silicate vocational school, the faculty of construction materials manufacturing. Nobody knew about our family in Konstantinovo, therefore my brother was accepted. Of course, he filled in certain entry in the form by writing that his father was a worker. Grigoriy rarely came to Kiev for a day or two, but he did it stealthily so that the neighbors could not see him. Brother got married at a young age during his studies in vocational school. His wife's name was Anna. She was a Jew, and her father was also repressed. Brother stayed to work in Konstantinovo after he had finished his studies.

Mother did not work before father's exile. When my mother and I were left on our own, she found a job in some sort of workshop. I do not know what her job was like. The most important that she was paid. Of course we lived from hand to mouth. The most jovial event for me was when mother took me to the market, which was located close to our house, and bought me a big rice patty. It was a real feast! We were starving. But my mother strove to support me. It is the most delighted recollection from those times, but there are others. I remember there was a tram line near our house. The trams were remade from horse chaises. There were no doors, and the steps were along entire train. I remember that there were very many homeless children. At that time streets started being asphalted. There were large cauldrons, where asphalt and pitch were melted. The melted mass was ladled and rolled manually with the rollers. In the evenings when the workers left, vagrants were warming in the cauldrons. I remember the famine of 1932-33 [famine in Ukraine] [21](#). There were a lot of peasants in Podol, who left villages for the city, trying to survive from starvation. Their bodies were swollen from famine. Some of them could not walk, stretching their hands for alms, others kept lying, without being able even ask for alms. In the morning there were found corpses of people who died by hunger. They were taken away. I remember that near our house the columns of 'dispossessed' [Kulaks] [22](#) went by being escorted by militia. Militiamen were in blue caps with red bands, carrying pistols in their hands. I remember the first loud-speaker in our house, a big black wall plate.

In 1932 mother took me to Zhitomir. We went to the wedding of my mother's younger sister Manya. The wedding was traditionally Jewish, despite of the times, when the soviet regime streamlined struggle with religion. Everything was the way the Jewish wedding should be. I remember chuppah, placed in my grandfather's yard. Manya and her groom David were walking under chuppah, then the rabbi pronounced a traditional wedding formula. I forgot the details, but they stuck to tradition.

In 1938 father returned from exile. Parents lodged in private house on the left bank of Dnieper river. Now it is the recreational area of the Kievites-Hydropark, back in those times that district was called Predmostnaya Slobodka ['outskirts' in Russian]. Father found a job to sell newspapers and magazines in a kiosk.

After father's return my brother Grigoriy moved to Kiev with his family. At that time there were few people who even got the middle technical education. In spite of the fact that my brother graduated from a mere vocational school he worked as a chief engineer for a construction trust in Kiev. In 1936 Stalin constitution was brought into action [on 5 December 1936 the second Constitution of the Soviet Union was adopted and it was commonly called the Stalin's Constitution. It existed till 1977], which abolished 'suppression of rights'. My brothers had nothing to fear. Grigoriy's elder daughter Tsilya was born in Konstantinovo in 1935, and the younger daughter Liudmila was born in 1937. Brother was very talented, he had a wonderful voice. He was sent to talent contests in Moscow, where he won 1st prizes. There were articles about him in the paper Izvestiya [one of the most popular communistic papers in the USSR, issued in the period of 1917- 1980s, with the circulation exceeding eight million copies]. If brother had finished conservatoire instead of technical vocational school, he would definitely become a well-known singer.

As a rule my parents spoke Russian to me at home, and they spoke Russian between themselves. If they wanted to conceal something from me, they spoke Yiddish. I felt insulted because they kept secrets from me. That is why I voluntarily got the rudiments of Yiddish, and later on I began to comprehend all they were saying. Of course, I pretended I did not understand a thing. I was pleased to find out their secrets without them knowing about it.

My parents were not very religious. The life was hard and it was difficult to stick to all Jewish traditions. I do not remember if we observed kashrut at home. But my father never missed any religious holiday in the synagogue. He obligatorily celebrated Yom Kippur, fasted the proper way. It was sacred to him. My mother and I always went to meet father on his way back from the synagogue. It was in the post-war period, when I was the student of the medical institute. We always celebrated Pesach at home. Beforehand we cleaned the house from chametz. During all Pesach days we used to eat only matzah instead of bread. All holiday were celebrated strictly according to the traditions. Father knew how to read Hebrew and pray. I do not remember how other holidays were celebrated. All I remember is that I was given money by father for Chanukkah.

I went to school at the age of seven. At that time the first grade started at the age of 8, and I was accepted in the pre-school. It was a Russian-speaking school. I cannot say that I was an outstanding pupil, but I was a pretty good one. I liked such subjects as literature, history, geography, natural studies. I always got excellent marks for those subjects. Mathematics was not my favorite. I became an inveterate philatelist at school. Many boys had a hobby to collect stamps, but the passion to collect stamps had not gone. Probably this is the part of childhood that has remained with me by now. Later during the war, I started to collect awards. My collection started when I removed Iron Cross from the first and the second class and Austrian military medal from a captured German. Those 'trophies' were taken near Kursk in 1942. Our reconnoiters took a captive, cross-examined him and shot. The commander allowed me to take his military awards. Even when I was severely wounded I preserved such precious things. They were the grounds for my post-war collection and I still keep them.

There were a lot of Jewish children in our class. Neither teachers nor other pupils pointed at us. They were not antagonistic. Sometimes during the street frays you could hear the word 'zhyd' ['Zhyd' abusive nickname of Jews in the Soviet Union], blurted out in the ardent fray, but it never happened in school. I do not remember pre-war anti-Semitism. I think it did not take place.

I became oktyabrenok [Young Octobrist] [23](#) in school, then pioneer [All-Union pioneer] [24](#). It stood to reason. Nobody objected to it. You could refuse, but those who did naturally became "black sheep". Even a child knew you should not do so. Moreover, in the peoples' psychology it was singled out: those who are not with us, are against us — the old slogan of the communists. Everybody understood it, even children.

In 1935 I went to another school to the 6th grade. That school grew with us. We finished the 6th grade, and they opened up the 7th etc. I sat at a desk with Jacob Koffman, and we have remained friends until now. At present we keep in touch, call each other.

In 1936 repressions started [Great Terror] [25](#) and lasted until Great Patriotic War. There were a lot of children in our class, whose parents had been arrested. Probably those made about 2/3 of the class. People treated them in a normal way, nobody abandoned friends, just because their father or mother got arrested. Jacob Lidov was my friend. His father was a driver of Balitskiy, NKVD [26](#) minister, a slaughterous hangman. Stalin had a certain system: a person had a leading position in NKVD for 2-3 years, and then he was removed and put to trial as "enemy of the people". He was replaced with a new one. Balitskiy in his turn became enemy of the people and was shot. His driver, Jacob Lidov's father, was imprisoned. Jacob's mother came to NKVD with the fairing for her husband, and she was told that he was not alive. She died there in the reception office. Jacob remained an orphan, he was raised by an old grandmother. There was a Ukrainian girl in our class, named Galina Uschipovskaya. Her mother was shot, and her father was put in jail. There were many such kinds of families. It even had not caused any emotions. The savage to us was that very often the teacher began the lesson by telling us to turn out from the textbook the page with the picture or information about a well-known person. In case we could not remove the page, because there was something useful overleaf, we were told to delete or to paint in blank ink or to clout that piece. Once we learned at a history lesson: Blyukher [27](#), the great commander, marshal of the Soviet Union, and the next day we would have to cover his portrait with black ink. Today he is a loyal communist, a struggler for the revolution, the hero, and tomorrow he turns out to be enemy of the people, betrayer, spy, coward or other riff-raff. The best people of the country, renowned revolutionaries, commander Yakir [28](#) – there were so many of them... Of course our children's minds could not comprehend it. I could acutely feel such an inconsistency.

Sometimes there were ridiculous things. Father worked as a salesman in the newspaper kiosk, located on the central market in Kiev. Close to him there was a table of an elderly Jew, who sold the portraits of the politicians, which was customary at that time. His table was placed inside of the roofed market next to the counter. There was a sign over the counter 'Slaughtered poultry'. And it happened so that the portrait of some member of the Central Committee was hanging right under that sign. Such a nebbish salesman was taken away by NKVD people, and nobody had never seen him since then.

My father and I were very close. He loved me very much, maybe for the reason that I was the junior. Father was a very intelligent man, well-read and politically-minded. My friends respected

him, even when we became adults. My friends took humiliation of the Jewish peoples very hard. I remember he often used to say: 'Why Tartar and Gypsy songs are broadcast on the radio, and there are no Jewish songs? Shall we have lived by the time when it happens?'. Of course I was moved by that spirit of my father. Of course after all father had to go through, he did not trust the soviet regime very much, and due to that we argued with my father, if a discussion of a 14-15 years old boy with a wise grown-up man can be taken for a dispute. Father mocked at my ideals. I remember how I used to prove that Dzerzhinskiy [29](#) – the chevalier of the revolution, whose motto was: 'warm heart, sober mind and clean hands'. But my father objected to me, telling that Dzerzhinskiy was a bandit, who shot innocent people. How could I independently think at that time? Propaganda and slogans reverberating all day long thought for us. At times I was even ready for Pavlik Morozov's feat [30](#), I wanted to stooge for my father, but probably the sense of decency, inherited from my parents, stopped me. 1936, 1937 ... these were the years, when children were called upon and encouraged to betray their parents. Such disputes were not occasional. I was brought up by the soviet school, in a certain spirit. Knowledge came much later, when I learnt from life. At that time my life was short, tiny and unperceived.

During the second half of the 1930s anti-fascist propaganda started. In 1933 Hitler came to power in Germany. First it was spoken about casually. Then fascist speeches were broadcasted on the radio. Articles appeared in the papers. But my father was so anti-soviet, that he did not believe a thing. I remember his phrase: 'If they implied «yes» in the official propaganda, I take it as «no».' He considered all anti-Hitler slogans as propaganda. In the cinemas anti-fascist movies were demonstrated, such as «Professor Mamlok» [31](#) and others, where atrocity of the fascists was shown. At that time there were only soviet movies. A new film appeared once a month, which was viewed many times. We had a particular clear vision of fascism, when the war in Spain [Spanish Civil War] [32](#) was unleashed. Documentaries were cast, showing bombings and battles. Bereaved children were brought from Spain. Of course, Hitler caused antipathy with most of people. I remember how everybody was confounded when in 1939 Stalin signed a peace treaty with Hitler, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact [33](#). I was so perturbed and shocked when at school we were crossing out from the books the names and portraits of the former greats and the greatestes, now being enemies of the people. I could not perceive how Hitler, the fascist and criminal in our propaganda, turned into a great politician. Stalin and Hitler immediately started to divide Poland [Invasion of Poland] [34](#), and torn into pieces. At that time there was a joke about Polish sausage: 'What is the name of Polish sausage now? Russian and German'. People were aware that for such an anecdote they could be put in jail, but they still cracked that joke. Friendship and affection between USSR and Germany was demonstrated. The articles appearing in the papers with the stories how brave sailors of the German cruiser sunk British vessel. We were shocked, and it was very hard to «swallow» it. All anti-fascist movies were banned, as if they never existed. And then appeared films, stolen by the soviet troops from the occupied Poland, forcedly joined Baltic countries [Occupation of the Baltic Republics] [35](#) and Western Ukraine: a magnificent movie «Great Waltz» [melodrama, shot in 1938 by Julien Duvivier, the American producer], Charlie Chaplin's movies [36](#) «City Lights» [Chaplin, 1931] and «Modern Times» [Chaplin, 1936], new German movies appeared.

During the War

My father was given lodging by local authorities. It was one-room in the wooden house in the center of Kiev, Krasnoarmeyskaya street [present Bolshaya Vasilkovskaya street]. The room was in

a terrible condition, without lavatory and water. But at least it was our lodging, not the rented. We lived there before Great Patriotic War started. Then I went to the Army.

In 1941 when I was in the 9th grade, I joined Komsomol [37](#). It was natural for me: I believed in communistic ideas and I honestly considered Komsomol to be the vanguard of the youth. I could not imagine myself not being in Komsomol. In June 1941 I finished the 9th grade. Summer holidays were to start. There were a lot of military trainings and maneuvers by Kiev. We were used to shooting and blasts. That is why when we heard the remote sounds of the blasted shells in the morning on 22 June, we did not react to it. We thought those were routine trainings. Only when we heard Molotov's [38](#) speech on the radio on 12 p.m., we found out that the war was unleashed with fierce battle, and that Germany attacked USSR at 4 a.m. without declaring war. I remember how we crowded by the black wall loud-speaker to be listening to Molotov's speech with our hearts sinking.

On June 21, 1941 my elder brother was called up in the army. When we learned about the war, my brother's wife Anna and I went to see my brother in Solomenskiy [district of Kiev] military quarters. Grigoriy was not allowed to get out from there, and stayed behind the fence and spoke to us.

Very quickly all students of the senior grades, who did not reach the age of the draftees, got the notices from military enlistment offices to be involved in construction of defense fortifications around Kiev. Some pupils were sent to Svyatoshino, others, including me to Goloseyevo [at that time remote districts of Kiev, today central districts]. We were given the spades, which were very heavy for us. We had to dig anti-tank trenches. Nobody made us work very swiftly, but we, the boys, were trying to outdo each other, and it all crowned with cuts and blisters. We bandaged injured hands and kept on digging. It lasted for couple of days, and then we had the first baptism of fire. At night we could hear the humming of plane. We were woken up, and told that Germans sent landing troops. We were given training with drilled barrel so we could not shoot and told us to run in the indicated direction as if we were chasing wolves. At dawn a grenade exploded close to me. I deafened from the blast, and could not hear anything. They let me go home to recover. I could not hear anything for three days, and then I got my hearing back. On July, 10 we received official notices to appear in military enlistment office, and take a spoon, a mug and provision for three days.

In 1941 the draftees were to be those who were born in 1922, but the notices were received by those who were born in 1923, 1924 and 1925. Of course, we all strode to the military enlistment office. After that we walked along Krasnoarmeyskoye, Pechersk [district of Kiev] to the bridge across Dnieper, crossed the river and moved on. We had been walking for several days, covered about 70 km and reached Yagotin. Then for the first time I saw a crashed plane, and I was astounded. I used to think our planes MIG, bombers to be powerful planes, and there I saw that they were made of thin painted plywood with tarpaulin wings. [The plane MIG-3 was the most numerous fighter-plane in soviet air force. Due to frequent operation and considerably low applied altitudes MIG-3 did not have a sufficient combat efficiency and was of inferior quality as compared with the German planes. It was out of production at the beginning of 1942.]. Such a stump, wide plane was on the ground. There was no pilot on the plane. In Yagotin we were placed in freighter cars to go to miners' town Slovyansk [550 km from Kiev], not very far from Donetsk. Then the entire crowd strode to military enlistment office. I weighed a little over 40 kilos, I was not plus-figured, but minus-figured, and most of my coevals were the same. They did not send us to the

mine, even to the surface. They understood that we were not workers. Almost everybody was allotted to the collective [Kolkhoz] [39](#). We worked in good faith.

In September, 1941 we founded out that Kiev was occupied by German troops. We started a siege in Donetskiy, asking to be taken in the army as volunteers. The military enlistment offices were overwhelmed with work: hectic mobilization and evacuation. They scolded us and sent us away, but showed up again. In the end, our aim was achieved. At the age of 17 I joined the army as a volunteer. First I was sent to the reserves troops, but in 1941 I was sent to Moscow whereabouts. They fought for Moscow. I was there being a boy. There were four lads my age in our squadron. I made friends with two of them, Esikov and Khabarov. They were Siberian volunteers. One of them finished 8 grades, the other - 9. We belonged to 42nd army. We began from Mozhaisk and reached Istra. These were my first battles. We were armed with huge triple passage rifles, the ones used during World War I. We also had gun machines of the same epoch. There were few guns in 1941. The battles were fierce. But the frosts were the most gruesome for me. The winter of 1941-42 was severe and cold. First our uniform was not apt for such winter. Then we were given felt-boots and sheepskins, so we did not suffer from cold so much. Strange as it may be, provision, ammunition and armament were way better in the period as compared to Stalingrad [40](#) and Kursk Battle [41](#).

There are people who say they felt no fear in the battle. I do not know, all bread is not baked in one oven. But I do not believe those who say that they were not scared in the battle. Yes, I would not depict myself as a hero. I was very scared. During the air raids, especially during the first one, I had such a feeling that a bomb was going right after the crown of my head. I wanted to dig up and hide. Germans used additional gadgets for determent. They attached sirens to the bombs, which produced a terrifying howling sounds. Sometimes they threw empty barrels just to appall with a terrible whistle. We had the sense of fear, and it was very hard to get over it. Later on, of course, when I was a battle-seasoned old-stager, the fear was not so acute. At the beginning it was a feeling of consternation. Sobriety from my hurrah-patriotism was over very quickly. When your wounded friend cries from pain close by, you do not think with the slogans. I was in platoon troops. Of course, we had to attack. The head of our squadron raised us, buried in the snow, with the 'Get up!', with swear words, brandished with his pistol behind our backs. And then, of course, hurrah! – and ahead. Though, we could not move forward very quickly, the snow of waist length was a good hinder, so we could not run. Besides out of Moscow, the Germans made good posts, so it was useless to ardently cry out hurrah and run forward. People close by fell wounded or dead. But we had to move on, and we went. There were times when they cried 'For the Motherland, for Stalin', but most often they swore. My friend Khabarov fell in one of the battles. The battles were fierce. There were many casualties. But there were no so many burnt villages as I was to see later. On our way we came across safe villages. There we could spend the night in the warm place. At that time I got my first military award, the medal «For military merits» [42](#). I was wounded close to Istra during the air raid. During bombing the shell fragment pierced my shoulder-blade. I took it out somehow, but later it started to suppurate heavily and I was sent to the hospital. I stayed there for a month and then I was sent home, because I was not the age of the draftees.

I did not keep in touch with my parents, but I corresponded with the relatives, who told me that parents were evacuated in Voronezh oblast [Russia]. I went there. It was very hard to get there -- on the freight platforms with the iron dust. I was stopped for couple of times. I had my passport by me, I even did not show my military documents, only passport for people to understand that I was

not of the drafting age. I was rather appalled at that time knowing what war was, so I did not want to complicate things.

My parents survived by miracle. My father's castigation of the soviet regime was about to kill him and mother. He did not believe any radio broadcasts about atrocity of the Germans, killings of Jews and civilians. He decided to stay in Kiev. Father remembered Germans from World War I. That is why he thought that they should wait for the Germans as they would not do harm. Only in August, 1941 when most Kievites [people from Kiev] had been evacuated and Grigoriy went to the army and I went to the front, my father was dawned. He said to mother if Germans had occupied Kiev, we would have appeared in one state, and mother and he in another state, and they would have never seen their sons again. And only for the reason to live with my brother and I in one country, they decided to evacuate. So, by miracle they escaped Babiy Yar [43](#). Meanwhile father's sister Golder, a widow by that time, perished in Babiy Yar together with unmarried daughter and son.

My parents and I settled in a village not far from Voronezh, 650 km to the east from Kiev. I decided to finish the 10th grade, but did manage since I received the notice to appear in the military enlistment office in 1942. It was drafting of my age. I turned 18. The draftees were brought together on the collecting point, and from there were supposed to go Lipetsk [about 640 km from Kiev] mostly on foot, at times in carts. There was a training regiment in Lipetsk, where we were trained to march in a squadron before being dispatched to the front. We were inquired about our education. Since I finished 9 grades, it was decided to send to the military school. Again, I headed on the road - by trains, steam boat and car. We were brought to the military school in Balakhna [Russia, 1100 km from Kiev], a town about 50 km away from Nizhniy Novgorod. It was Simferopol gun and mortar military school, evacuated in Balakhna. My recollections about that military school are even more hideous than war. We had such a skimpy food, that we were running amuck from famine. We begged on the streets, trying not to be nabbed by the commanders. Once I went to the shanty to ask for food, where our commander was with his lover. He saw me and recognized me. I was lucky not to get into trouble. We found ingenuities to get some food. At school we were given a tiny bar of soap. We collected that soap. Then we took wooden bars, soaked them in water and coated in soap.

Then we sold so-called soap on the markets to buy food. We tried hard to survive from hunger. We were given the uniform made of thin felt. It was winter time, and we got very cold. Our boots were horrible and left blue paint on our legs and were not waterproof. Former junior commanders and employees of the schools teased us a lot. Junior commander Garbuz was the head of our squadron. He recognized a Jew in me, and it was another reason for his hatred towards me, the first reason was that I was "too educated", he finished only two or three grades. He had never missed a chance to let me crawl over puddles: "Rogovoy, belly-crawl!". I had to fall and crawl in that puddle, and then he gave me extra duties because I marred my uniform. The easiest punishment was to clean frozen outhouse without a spade, just by using a board from the fence to have been removed beforehand. His mocking was boundless. But cattily to him, I learnt well. I did not write to my parents, I did not want to hurt them. They found me somehow and wrote to the head of the school. He called me and asked to write home, and then praised me. The studies lasted for 5 months, and then we got the rank of the junior lieutenant. It was the 3rd months when the horrible battle by Stalingrad started. The entire school, 450 people, was sent to Stalingrad. I had a dream that as soon as I got the rifle I would kill Garbuz before the Germans did. It dreamt of that seriously,

because I could not forget his teasings. I think I was not the only one, who brooded on that. But no matter what all junior commanders were left in school, including Garbuz. The rest were dispatched to Stalingrad.

As compared to the majority of school leavers, I was an old-stager. I went through hell by Moscow, but it was not to be compared with Stalingrad. I had never felt more fear, terror and hatred to the Germans during entire war experience. The city was devastated, shells and mortar bombs were aimed at one and the same place, making a powder out of sand, which could be compared to that sold during my childhood in Kiev, finely fine brick powder for samovar cleaning. We went by Kalach and I saw the camp of our captured soldiers, frozen to death in dug-outs, with frozen blood, with wounds not being bandaged. I saw the tiers of frozen, coated in ice cadavers of the captured soldiers together with the wood for burning. I saw huge moats with corpses. Just imagine a moat as deep as 3-storied building, and not the house length, but the block length. In spite of the winter time we could feel cadavers smell.

Each regiment had the representatives of the special department SMERSH [SMERSH is the abbreviation of 'Smert Shpionam' ("Death to Spies" in Russian), special secret military unit for elimination of spies. SMERSH is actually the Ninth Division of the KGB, originally divided into five separate sections. The first section works inside the Red Army]. It was known that in 1941 Germans captured 2 or 3 millions people. If in the military unit there was somebody who appeared, from blockade or fugitive from captivity, SMERSH officers were supposed to check that person. It was natural, it could not have been otherwise at war. I do not know whether SMERSH people were performing NKVD functions referring to the militaries. I was a private, so those things were way beyond me. There might be SMERSH stooges among us, but it was very hard for me to believe that. There were a lot of casualties, the division was replenished each time. I cannot imagine anybody to be able to stay in one platoon for a long time. There was not a single week with fewer casualties, than up to 75% of the military personnel. Divisions were constantly replenished with new people. If the circumstances permitted, people were sent to reformation, if not the squadron moved forward. Often the replenishment was made for the sake of the wounded, let out from the hospital, and minutemen, e.g. people who did not reach drafting age, who were involved in work, and then later they became soldiers.

I remember one battle. We were brought together, the entire platoon of 45 people and were given 3 gun machines, each weighing 62 kilos, 32 out of them was the weight of the machine with rollers, and theoretically it could be rolled. But when we were crawling, it was impossible to roll the machine, we had to drag it. Barrel was another part of the gun-machine, and it had to be filled with water for cooling the gun. It was a famous gun-machine, the main weapon of World War I and the Great Patriotic War. The advantage was in its heavy weight that made it steady for precision fire. We were shown a semi-destroyed building, and were ordered to crawl there, set the gun-machines and not to let the Germans in the building. The latter could not even be called a house, because only walls remained from it. The house could be left without the order of the commander. At that time Stalin's order № 227 as of 1942 was enforced 'No retreat'. And according to the latter the so-called defensive squadrons were formed, which were to follow regular troops, and start fire if there were any attempt to retreat. That is why there was no way we could leave that house. Almost all of us were lean and emaciated boys, weighing not more than 45 kilos. It was unbearably hard for us to carry the parts of a machine-gun, each of them weighting a little bit less than each of us. But we

could not violate the order, especially if it was fortified by the defense squadrons. We were able to stay in that house either 5 or 6 days, I do not remember for sure. By that time 2 or 3 of our gun-machines had been crashed. 7 people remained alive out of 45. Then we ran out of cartridges for our gun-machine. Then we ran out food and water. Then the mortar bomb hit the house, and our last gun was destroyed. The shell hit the gun jacket, where the water for cooling was filled, and we remain unarmed. We could not go back, there was no communication, and we could not get the order to retreat. What were we supposed to do?

At night German fire was feebler, so as in the day time it was very strong. We saw the hole in the floor, the passage to the basement and crawled in there. We decided that we would sit there for some time and find a solution what to do next. But in no less than 30 minutes another shell or mortar bomb hit, and we were dug. There was no light, the air penetrated through some crevices. We crawled in the basement like blind mice, trying to find a cleft or a passage, but our efforts were futile. I do not know how long we stayed in that basement. It was impossible to observe time there. I think one day passed, but I am not sure. We had a feeling of being buried alive. At times I cried out of despair. The guys were alive. We talked. We would have probably died there, but the miracle happened. They say, one shell never hits the same funnel twice. I know for sure that it is not true. A shell or a mortar bomb hit the basement again, and a big hole was made, that emanated light. We were saved. I thought a fragment from the shell pierced my buttock, but it was a trifle as compared to what might have happened to us. After that, 6 people out of 7 were given the order of Red Banner [44](#), but I somehow was given the medal 'for Valor' [45](#). Later I submitted a report to the commander, and justice prevailed. I was given two awards for the battle, i.e. medal "for Bravery" and the Order of Red Banner, the second high award after Lenin Order [46](#). Chuikov, commander in chief [Chuikov, Vasiliy Ivanovich (1900-1982) prominent military commander, conferred of many Soviet and foreign orders and medals], shook my hand. I was sent to the medical and sanitary battalion. I spend there more than two weeks. On February 2, 1943 I was discharged from the sanitary battalion and attended the meeting, devoted to the exemption of Stalingrad. Only 45 out of 450 people, sent to the front from our school were present at the meeting. I do not know who from the absentees was killed or who was wounded.

After this battle I was to be conferred the rank of a lieutenant. I was appointed the commander of the 112th platoon the regiment of the 37th Stalingrad Guards division 62, 8, and was dispatched to the command in Balashovo. By the way, later on that 8th Guards army was the main occupational army in Germany after the war was over. We stayed there for about two weeks. The regiment had a lot of casualties, and it had to replenish both with people and ammunition. They sent about 100 Uzbeks, who were mere boys. We teased them and jaunted as we thought they none of them wanted to speak Russian. We were furious that such words as 'kotelok' ['pot' in Russian], 'kasha' ['porridge' in Russian], 'kasha malo' ['not enough porridge' in Russian] they pronounced excellently and understood them very well. We were irritated that they were able to understand things, connected with food, and at the same time they refused to understand the simplest commands of the officers, addressed to them. We thought they were pretending, but they just did not know Russian. We were given arms for the squadron: 60 triple - passage rifles with a bayonet, "the miracle of 1891" [The so called Russian Mosin-Nagant Bayonet had a integral push-button/spring latching mechanism instead of a locking ring, and the tip of these bayonets can be used as a screw-driver. The Mosin-Nagant Model 1891 Bayonets - and variants - were used from 1891 into World War II, also by Austria and Finland.], 6 subguns, 2 guns, 3 heavy machine guns, 3 sniper

rifles. All Uzbeks flung to take guns. But there were heavy discs for 75 cartridges in the set with the guns, and Uzbeks took the guns, throwing away the disks. We scolded them. It led to their death in the first battle. None of them survived. They were used as cannon fodder, I cannot put in otherwise. When I recollect that I am cursing myself. Such a contagious feeling of nationalism: if a person is not like me, it means he is homely and inferior. That was the way we treated those boys. These were young guys, full of sap, all they were "guilty in" that they did not know Russian, and were totally unprepared to what was ahead of them there. We were trained and battle-tried and teased them instead of helping them out and supporting them. What a shame, even now I feel ashamed!

The squadron was replenished and we went to Yelets by train. We stopped there and got off the train, since the railroads were crashed from German bombing. We walked for 300 kilometers or so. From the first days Germans were bombing so hard that we did not have a single field kitchen left. We had nothing to eat. First the sacks with the rye rusks were brought. Tarpaulin sacks for gas masks were attached to our belts. We removed the gasmasks and filled the sacks with the rusks. But these reserves did not last long. We were constantly hungry. We shot the crows and cooked them in fire. There were a lot of carcasses of huge German horses on the ground. We crawled to them, cut a piece and then boiled it. The carcasses were decomposing, producing a terrible stench. Nonetheless we ate that concoction. Sometimes we found potatoes and beets in the villages. It was a feast for us. I could not eat uncooked potatoes, others ate it raw. In Kursk oblast, that we went through, there were no safe villages. That oblast was divided, in some villages there were partisans, in others politsai [Russian for betrayers who joined the Nazi-run militia]. Politsai burnt partisan villages [villages controlled by partisans], and partisans in its turn burnt politsai villages [villages controlled by politsai]. It was difficult to find a place to spend a night. We were really lucky if we could find cellars, where vegetables were stored for winter. That was the place to stay overnight. We often slept straight on the snow. Filth and lice were absolutely unbearable. We could not even think of a bath. We were exhausted. We had to walk only at night as in the daytime there were bombings. The columns stretched, people lacked behind. Once I walked by half asleep and fell asleep. I woke up in the car of the commander of our division, the general. It turned out that I was hit by his car. I did not remember all that. The general asked me: 'What's up with you, son?' I could not remember anything, it all happened in my dream. The general took me to the place, where our squadron was located, and gave me a piece of pig's fat and a loaf of bread. Of course I shared with my friends. But I found out in horror that I had lost my gun. Probably it happened when I was hit by car. If somebody lost his weapon, he was shot immediately in spite of the military merits. I was scared, I just had one thought –how to save my life. We walked in a column by burned hay storage. There was a fire in the center, and the soldiers were sitting around it. The weapon was placed along the wall. I crawled to the storage, saw the gun and stole it. I wanted to remain alive. And in a day, we walked by battle sites, where the weapons were piled ...

We moved forward with the battles. These were the times of my hardest recollections. We came to one village, occupied by Germans and started squeezing them out of there. I saw a German running ahead of me, and I understood that I could chase him down. I was shooting and running, and because of my running I missed all the time. The German came to the destroyed house. I could see the basement. I approached him, when he was walking down to the basement. He might have wanted to hide there. I spent all cartridges left in my disk. The German fell down. His back was torn to pieces. When he was dying he turned to me, and I saw his face with a bristle. I think he was an

elderly man of 40-45. Before that, I never shot from a close distance. I shot figures from remote distance without seeing the faces. And here I saw the face of a dying man, killed by me... and this face is in front of me even now... Is he an enemy? He is the same poor, emaciated soldier. Yes, I shot the German, and killed a man. It was the first time in my life. I was sick. Of course later on I had to kill Germans from close distance, too. But such an acute reaction never occurred to me again. I would never forget that first time.

Beginning of 1943 was characterized by fierce battle. It was the period when Germans captured Orel and we had Kursk. At 6 a.m. on March 6, 1943 we called to attack. The snow was dazzling white. It melted a little bit in the day time and got frozen a little bit overnight, making a shiny ice coat. We did not have camouflage cloaks, and we stood out in the usual uniform and looked like flies on the white wall. We crawled forward. Germans noticed us around 9 a.m. and started such a fire that there was no way we could cover. The bullet hit my gun, I bent and the splinter from my butt reached my face, and I still have that scar. The bullet hit my shoulder on the tangent. I did not feel pain, just a burring, like a burn from cigarette. The hand got numb and hung like a whip. I crawled back. The squadron commander cried out 'Where are you going?!', I told him I was wounded, and he let me crawl back. Of course, I was moving very slowly, and the fire was so intensive that I had to be devious. Besides, I did not see where the shooting was coming from. Then the mortar bomb landed by me, and the fragment of the bomb pierced my left thigh. I was in felt pants, but they could not absorb blood. The hemorrhage was severe. I lost conscience from and acute pain.

When I came around, I began to crawl. I lost the boot and froze left foot. I could crawl propping on write leg and left hand. What was I to do? ... Finally, I crawled to the trench, where our gun soldiers were and besought: 'brothers, help me out of here!' and they replied that they were not entitled to leave their positions. Then they took away the gun machine. Then, I think I was noticed by a sniper. It was getting dark, and I was on the woodland. He was aiming at me from the wood with the tracer bullets. I did not move. One bullet hit right in front of me, the second on the rear, and the third hit my leg. It was a percussion bullet, which hit my tibia, and exploded when it came out. I saw a huge torn hole in my felt pants. Later I found out that the bullet exploded and tore 10,5 cm of tibia. Spell bone was safe and served as a natural frame. My leg was saved for the sake of that, though it became crooked. I fell in the trench without any thoughts and stayed there for 24 hours or more. I could not put a bandage with my healthy hand, I could not even unbutton my cloak. I lost conscience, then I came around. And there in the trench being feeble, wounded, with forlorn hope, I believed in God, he was my only hope. I needed to pray. I was praying, lost the conscience and came around. I kept on praying. I told the God that I was young, and had not seen anything in life, and would have made my parents suffer, if I had died ... My thoughts gadded, I was very scared and became even feebler. I remembered for all my life the gorgeous blue sky, with flashing lights from the tracing shells and bullets. I could not hear the explosion, it was all so far away, and over my head celestial flights were scintillating in the sky. My mouth got dry because I lost a lot of blood, so I ate snow from time to time. Then the hemorrhage stopped as I have a high coagulability.

Besides, I was arid and dehydrated. Certainly, I would have died there if there were not six people from our squadron who were on the way back on the same route. As it turned out, I unwittingly was crawling on the same route that we took when we were to attack. They were not able to take the

village, but came back alive. They put down 4 long rifles. One of them took uniform jacket off and put over the rifles. They carried me to the village on those impromptu stretches. An old peasant lady came to the hut, where my stretches were placed, and asked me: 'Are you hungry, son?' and gave me a slice of bread. I could not eat, and she gave me water. Then she went out, and came back right away. I do not know, where she was able to get milk. She brought me a mug of milk. I was taken to medical battalion. They bandaged me. There were no bandage materials. They used white moss instead of cotton wool, instead of frame - bars and sticks, bandages were laundered. The whole village was infected with typhus fever. Four wounded people and I were taken to the cottage, where the owner died from typhus before we came. We were put on the floor. The surviving members of the family were looking after us. The ordeal was more coming from the lice than from the wounds. They liked white and clean, and settled in the moss, which was used in the bandage. When I was trying to scratch, the splinters rubbed against each other, caused such an excruciating that I lost conscience. They did not bring food to us. The hosts had potatoes, but there was no salt. They fed us potatoes without salt. May be this is the reason why until now I eat oversalted food. I do not know how long we stayed there. Then I was to undergo the operation. I remember that the tools were boiled in samovar. The narcosis was not ether, but obsolete chloroform. When I was given narcosis, I felt as if I was sinking. Then I was told that I was swearing like a bargee. I do not know how it could be in my unconsciousness, because I did not swear. My leg was cut and cleaned.

Then we were taken to the same hut, and then they must have forgotten about us. We stayed there for 12 more days, and nobody changed the bandages. I do not know what was happening with my wound. Meanwhile my neighbor died. I woke up at night. Because, he fell dead on me. His leg was amputated, and it might be improperly bandaged. He died from hemorrhage. In 12 days they remembered about us, put us in the truck and took us somewhere. Then the bombing started, and the driver sped up so that we were jolting and crying from pain. The driver stopped the car, and the accompanying registered nurse gave each of an injection of morphine. It was the greatest bliss I ever felt in my life. My leg was cast hither and thither, but I felt no pain. I was only a little bit sleepy. We were brought to Kursk and put in the hospital. But my suffering was not over. I had a fever, and the wound had not healed up. I could not eat anything and was totally emaciated. The nanny, that was looking after me sympathized with me. She bought me a lemon with her own money. I cannot perceive where she could possible buy it. I was moved to tears. Again, I was convinced that the God was helping me. Hospital personnel were thinking that I would not survive, and I was placed separately from other wounded, in the pigeonhole. There was a show window covered with boards. During the bombing it fell down on my bed. Of course, it would crush me, but I landed on the iron back-rests of the bed. One of those rests crashed, but another was not harmed and stopped the show window. Again, I remained alive. I was taken out from Kursk. They moved me from one hospital to another. I was operated on, and cured... I was in Moscow, Vladimir and Kaluga hospitals. In the last hospital, Izhevsk, I stayed the longest. I traveled for over 1500 km being wounded, moving from one hospital to another. In Izhevsk I was commissioned and sent home. I was awarded the Order of the Great Patriotic War [47](#) second degree for the battles on Kursk Curve. I got Order of the Red Star [48](#) for the last battle.

I felt unbearable, horrifying hatred to the Germans after everything I was put through at war. How could have felt different, after the scenes of trenches filled up by frozen corpses to be burned, Kalach camp of militaries captives, with no survivors, villages burnt to ashes, piles of cadavers of

the hung civilians ... Frankly speaking I had to force myself not to shoot the captured German to take it to the headquarters. Such hatred remained with me for a rather long time after war. I calmed down only after 1965. Before, I could not stand hearing German language, I could not stand seeing Germans.

I came to Semipalatinsk [Kazakhstan, about 3000 km from Kiev], where my parents moved from Voronezh oblast in 1942. When I was on my way, the wound was open, and I had to go to the hospital in Semipalatinsk. My parents were very indigent in the evacuation. They sold everything they had, even the wedding rings, which were sacred to them. All - clothes, linen was sold and exchanged for bread.

After I was discharged from hospital I began to work at school as a military training teacher. I finished 9 grades before war, but I could not be studying and sponging on my parents. I asked my colleagues for assistance. They helped me out to get the certificate for 10 grades. The time I spent in hospital influenced by choice of the future profession. I was firm – if I were to survive, I would become a doctor. In August 1944 I went to Kiev to enter the Kiev Medical Institute. I sent the documents in Kiev beforehand. My parents still stayed in Semipalatinsk. When I was looking through the list of the those who were enrolled on the first course, I did not see my name. I went to the admission board. They told me that I was not admitted for the reason of health, because I would not be able to become a doctor with my crippled hand. I was infuriated. Then I asked whether my crippled arm would be good to beg on the street. So, I was admitted.

After the War

All those years I got excellent marks. Of course it was difficult. I had been walking on crutches for all those years. Often my wound was open, and the splinters were coming out, causing acute pain. Of course I was young, and I wanted to appear a hussar in front of girls, and leave the crutches. I made a stick with a handle myself, so I could prop on it with both hands. I had used by the fifth year. At that time, I was able to walk, not only without a crutch, but even without a stick. There were 850 ladies and 40 men in my graduation year. Those guys were mostly handicapped like me. Those who were healthy then in 1944, were at war. There were armless and legless people among us. I entered psychoneurotic department. I had studied there for years. Then it was closed down, and I became a therapist. There was no other way out.

Our pre-war apartment was occupied by other people. Probably I could fight for my rights and file in court, but I was too weak for that. I stayed with my father's sister Feiga for some time, who came back to Kiev from evacuation. Then I was given a room in the hostel of the medical institute. The handicapped in war were given the whole floor. During the last courses we were given the cards for dinner. But it was later. At the beginning, we just used to starve. I being unsettled, feeling hunger and cold by all means decided to graduate from school. So, I kept on learning hanging on by skin of teeth. I was good student, remaining the monitor of the group through all students' years. The clothes that I had was ill-kempt- my military uniform from war. I wore military jacket, received at war in 1941. I never took off my jacket, even during the classes, because my army pants were torn on the back side, and on the knee area. I was not ambidextrous at that time, so with my left hand I sawed patches made from my green tunic on my black pants. I did not have any other clothes. My parents were in evacuation. In Kiev there was only my aunt Feiga, who would rarely cook something for me. My scholarship was enough to buy the beans, the cheapest product at that time

and a little bit of fat. The bread given by cards [Card system] [49](#) was not sufficient, 300 or 400 grams. I never could take it to the hostel from the store, I ate it on my way. I could not die. Sometimes the ration included herring and sugar, so I stood by the store and tried to exchange them for bread. In 1946 my parents came back to Kiev from evacuation. They did not have a place to stay. First they found a poky apartment for rent, and then bought it from the landlords. It was a tiny room, without conveniences, with no water and toilet. They had a hard life. They were indigent. But still I would come to see them and take the pot luck with them, no matter how skimpy it was. My brother came from the front twice and made great feasts for me. First he came in 1945, brought me new uniform - English boots, uniform and pants. When I saw a hen on the table, I burst into tears. Tears were streaming from my eyes, and I am not a susceptible and a mawkish boy. I practically did not have any other food, but bread. And I was not willing to eat anything else but bread. Then as a doctor I found out that a hungry person craved for bread more than for meat because of lightly digested carbohydrates. And during my student's years I would have survived without faith. Of course I did not divulge it, but in God was always in my soul.

My brother took part in defense of Kiev during the first war months. During retreat he was in blockade, being imminent with capture. If that happened, he would not survive. They were in blockade in August, 1941 and broke through in September. In period of September-December he was in Ukraine with a group of people, hiding in the woods, bogs and haystacks. In winter they swam across unfrozen Don and found the location of our troops. Grigoriy was afflicted by an acute joint rheumatism and was about to die. After that he was transferred to noncombatant troops. Brother was a wonderful singer. There were times when he with the front-field band was giving concerts for the soldiers. In the course of time Grigoriy managed to return to combatant troops. As during peace times he was in construction, he appeared in armored engineering troops. He was a color sergeant. Grigoriy was in the infantry of the 62nd army on the front-line of Voronezh. He took part in Stalingrad battles. To my surprise I learnt from Grigoriy, that we were both in the same army, the 62nd. We were close by, but never met, and did not know about each other. After Stalingrad brother fought by Rostov on the Southern front, on Caucasus, during setting Kiev free. He was in Poland and fought for Poland with our troops. He freed Budapest and Berlin, took part in the fights for Prague. At that time he was the deputy commandant of the Czechoslovakian city Brno, which was a pretty high position. Taking into account his education, brother was recurrently offered to stay in the army as a professional military. My brother objected to that, because he had two children and wanted to come back to them. Nevertheless, Grigoriy was demobilized only in December 1946. He started his service in the army on June 21, 1941 on the eve of war and finished it a year and a half after war. He got very many awards. After he came back to Kiev, he started working and studying in engineering and construction institute. He became a construction engineer after graduation. He worked in many design constructions organizations such as: «Mezhkolkhozstroy», «Kievgorstroy» etc. What really appealed to him was participation in restoration of Kiev, devastated by war. He was a gifted engineer, had a lot of reasonable propositions on manufacture of construction materials, in particular brick. He was generating good ideas. He was a great expert. He was very valued at work. He was often given bonuses.

I remember pre-war time very well, when anti-Semitism did not take place. I was shocked when I found out that our neighbors being friendly with Jewish families, shamelessly disposed them Germans or Polizei ['police' in German], hired from local people. I remember our anti-war life very well, and there was no place for anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism was mostly likely buried at the back

of their minds, and with the right circumstances flourished well. My cousin Boris, son of my father's elder brother, was drafted in the army in 1941 before war. After our troops left Kiev, Boris appeared in blockade by Borispol. He was lucky to break through blockade, and he came home. He was recognized by the janitor, and she disposed him to the Germans. Boris was nabbed and hung on the gate of his own house as an edification for others. After war the janitor was put to trial and sentenced to 10 years in jail. She did not come back to Kiev.

The younger sister Khasya, who married Grouzer, had two children: daughter Liya and son Naum. They both were brilliant at school. They loved theatre, went into sport-swimming, skating and skiing. Liya took an active part in the social program of school. Naum was the secretary of Komsomol organization at school. After finishing school Liya entered Kiev chemical technological institute. She finished first year in June 1941. In 1942 she went to the army. She appeared in air defense regiment, which only consisted of girls. The regiment was based to the North from Stalingrad. Germans were trying to exterminate all air-defense batteries. In September 1942 Liya perished by Stalingrad, in the village of Orlovka. None of the girls in her regiment survived in the battle with the German tanks. They were buried in the communal grave in the village of Gorodische. Liya's younger brother, Naum left school in 1941. With the outbreak of war mother and he evacuated to the Central Asia. In 1942 he was drafted in the army. At the end of 1942 he was reported missing after Stalingrad battles. There are Liya's and Naum's pictures on the tomb of their father on the cemetery in Kiev.

Father's second sister Berta, who was married to the retired soldier, had only daughter Zilya. Berta's husband was much older than she and died a long time before war. Zilya got married and gave birth to two daughters. Her family name was Konstantinovskaya. Zilya's husband died in the first days of war. She never got married again.

Grigoriy, elder son of my father's sister Feiga, also perished together with my father's sister Golda and her children. Grigoriy caught meningitis during childhood and remained mentally retarded and sick. He stayed in Kiev and was shot by Germans in Babiy Yar.

Babiy Yar is still a pain to me. Over 60 years have passed, but I still cannot think calmly about that event. I envisage those people being led along familiar streets, and they probably knew that they were walking for the last time. A bleeding wound in my heart is the way they were beaten up and shot. I understand that Babiy Yar did not come out of nothing. Why most of concentration camps were in Poland? Why almost all Polizei were Poles, Ukrainians or people from Baltic countries? Because this was the right territory and right people. Here Jews were mostly hated. Here were most people who were willing to tease and kill them. This is my subjective opinion.

My friends went to war, too. My classmate and friend Jacob Koffman, who shared one desk with me at school, in July 1941 went to the army as a volunteer. He took the surname of our common friend, Lidov, whom I mentioned before, not to die in case he became a captive. Jacob defended Kiev, participated in Kursk battles. He was given the rank of a sergeant and was awarded with the Order of the Great Patriotic War first degree and with the medal «For military merits». In October 1943 Jacob was heavily wounded and after staying in the hospital he was dispatched from the army for being handicapped. When he came back to Kiev, he graduated from the geological vocational school and worked for construction companies. We still keep in touch. My friend, Mikhail Shukhman, two years older than me, was drafted in the army in 1941. He was awarded with two

Orders of the Great Patriotic War on February 23, 1943. His right hand was torn during explosion of the shell. After his return home, he graduated from the motion-pictures engineers' institute. He had been working at Kiev furniture factory as a power engineer. Mikhail died in 1978. Jan Bardakh also was drafted in the army in 1941. He was sent to military school and graduated with the rank of lieutenant. He was awarded with the Order of Red Star and medals. In 1943 he was severely wounded in the knee. After staying in the hospital, he was demobilized. Jan's right leg became shortened because of the wound, which had not healed up. After his return in Kiev, he graduated from the institute. He had worked as an engineer for many years. He died in 1979.

In 1948 «cosmopolite processes» [Campaign against 'cosmopolitans'] [50](#) started. It was the time when anti-Semitism was not concealed, and even flourished. There talks that Jews did not go to war and stayed the whole time in Tashkent [Tashkent is a town in Middle Asia, where many people evacuated during the Great Patriotic War, including many Jewish families. Many people had an idea that all Jewish population was in evacuation rather than at the front]. I have never heard anything like that from people, who were at war. But those who were evacuated, were not shy to speak about it. Cosmopolite processes, where Jewish names were being constantly mentioned, streamlined anti-Semitism.

In 1948 another prominent event happened – the state of Israel was founded [May 15, 1948]. 2 thousand years ago the Jews were expelled from their land and scattered all over the world. I think foundation of Israel to be a miracle, witnessed by me. The independent state of Jews, created by us is our pride and happiness.

In 1948 another important event took place, important for our family though. My maternal grandfather Sheftel died in Zhitomir. My parents went to the funeral in Zhitomir. I had to stay as I could not leave classes. Grandfather was buried at the Zhitomir Jewish cemetery according to the Jewish rites.

I did not join communist party [51](#), as I was not the eligible for age. I became the candidate to the party in 1949, the year I graduated from medical institute. I joined the party in 1951. I have not done it because I was stickler of the party's ideas. Everybody knew that the person who was not the member of the party, did not have any prospects, and could not even dream of career. I wanted to become a doctor and achieve something in my profession. That is why I joined the party. Though, at the back of my mind at that time I was prone to believe that internationalism was the major principle of the party. Of course, when cosmopolite processes were in full swing, I was aware of my mistake. But there was no way back. I became Komsomol member with the ardent belief, and I could leave the organization because of age, when I was offered to join the party. It would be the real fling of the gauntlet and demonstration of one's «unreliability». And if you were a Jew to boot. ... I understood that I had to go with the tide. I was not a dissident. Even if I were, I would not be strong enough for fight. I had to get over my disability.

In 1949 I graduated from medical institute. I was allotted to work as a therapist in Podol. My district was: Zhdanov street [today Sagaydachnogo street] and adjacent streets to the right: Andreyevskiy street, Pokrovskiy lane. Those who lived or visited Kiev know that those streets are on the steep upland. It would be hard even for a healthy person to go up those streets without gasping for air and stopping for a respite. In winter when the earth is covered with ice, such an ascension would almost like a mounting climbing. It was difficult for me walk, the leg did not heal up. I propped on a

stick, having a constant pain. Nonetheless I had worked on that district for 25 years and 3 months, before 1975.

When in January 1953 «doctors' case» [Doctors' Plot] [50](#) commenced, I had worked in the polyclinics for almost 4 years by then. My patients treated me very well and trusted me. There were few male doctors in the polyclinic, and I was appointed the head of the district being a veteran and the member of the party. But as soon as there appeared the article about the doctors poisoners, I was immediately called to the head of the polyclinics and dissolved from my position. I never was a go-getter for administrative positions, and it did not perturb me. What really perturbed me was that many patients all of a sudden changed their attitude to me. An old communist Voronkov lived on my district. He joined the party in the 1920s and enjoyed talking about it. Once he attended me with complaints of windiness. I advised him to be on diet, but he wanted me to prescribe medicine for him. I prescribed a very simple medication—absorbent carbon and he left. In some time I went to the first floor and saw the door wide open. I went by and saw Voronkov in the office of the head of the polyclinic brandishing with my prescription and saying: 'Have a look, what that zhyd prescribed me, may be is on the point to poison me?' I will never forget that.

Of course, such attitude was not only towards me, it was also towards my colleagues-Jews, and it was not coming only from patients. I remember a terrible article about a wonderful gynecologist Kresson. I knew him very well. In the article he was accused of murdering fetuses in the mother's womb. It was a horrible accusation. And what really happened? In any book on obstetrics, the section covering pathological delivery reads: in case the fetus improperly develops or in case of untimely determined pathologies of the mother, hindering normal parturition and Caesarian section, mother's life is chosen, if it were to choose between the mother's life and the fetus's. In this case decollation is made. Of course, it is barbaric, but at times doctors have to use the decollator to decollate the fetus and then remove the body. Such a live-saving operation was performed by doctor Kresson. He was charged with infanticide and put in jail, only after 20th [Twentieth Party Congress] [53](#) he was released from prison, being ill, preliminarily enfeebled and spavined. Then I remember how cardiologist, the professor, was accused of doing harm, because contacts to be attached to the patient's body came off cardiographer machine. I, a beginning doctor, was observing all that. I also saw the way Jewish doctors were treated. A young doctor Dmitrienko worked with us. Every time another dirty article appeared in the paper she discussed it with everybody and exclaimed: 'Have a look what they are doing!'. Then in several years those doctors were exonerated after Stalin's death. She was astounded and used to ask: 'What am I to believe in?!' It means that it was easy for her to believe that such outstanding experts in medicine, the writers of students' manuals as Kogan-Yasnyi, Vovsi, Vinogradov and others were murderers. But she could not abide by the written facts that those formerly called murderers had been totally innocent. What can I say? Let bygones be bygones. I got it over. But God had not just saved my life, he also let me keep my memories. After the case with the doctors I started being very cautious with people, and not always trusted good words spoken about me. But I take pride that those people who I had grounds to consider anti-Semites, thought me to be a good doctor, and trusted me their health.

Stalin died on March 5, 1953. I cannot say that his death was unexpected. When there were reports on Stalin's state in the bulletins, I, being a doctor, was aware that he was on the brink of death and I was ready for that. I cannot say I was grieving over Stalin's death. Of course, I did not

demonstrate it to many of those, who were bursting into tears. My father made me buy and wear a red mourning crape with black bands. Such bands were worn on sleeves, and it was a sort of a proof of loyalty. My friend Peter Hitelman told me that when everybody was whimpering, an elderly Jew Khalemskiy, the doctor in our polyclinic said: 'Why are crying, idiots?! You've got to be laughing and rejoicing, it will be better to live now!'. He was right. People got over the mourning rather soon, after 20th party convention. As for me, 20th convention and Khrushchev's [54](#) speech were more shocking than Stalin's death. First Khrushchev's report on the offences was not disposed to public, it was read only at secretive party convention. Then it was revealed. I was deeply impressed by Khrushchev's speech. When certain NKVD leader became peoples' enemy, they used to mention his abuse of power. Only from Khrushchev we heard about Stalin's role in criminal repressions of the year of 1937. Of course, I believed everything Khrushchev said. I recognize that Stalin was an extraordinary man. He was not merely a despot, he was an exceptionally intelligent and guileful leader.

In 1946 I met Elena Cherevo, my future wife. Elena studied at medical university. She was born in Kharkov in 1925. She was evacuated with her family during war, and they moved to the freed Kiev. In 1951 we both started practicing medicine, and then got married. Elena was not a Jew, and my parents were against our marriage. What could they have done... I was a grown-up, a battle-seasoned awarded old-stager, a doctor. I did not accept any objections. Moreover being at war right out of school, going through hospitals, hard years of studies gave me no experience with women. Elena was my first woman, and of course it was a pivot. After getting married we lived with Elena's parents for a while. Unfortunately we could not make a family. We did not get along, having quibbles since the first day of our life together. Our only daughter Irina was born 1952. I loved my daughter very much. I tried to spend with her a lot of time. She was reciprocal. Being a veteran of war, I got a two-room apartment in Kiev on the left bank, Darnitsa. But it did not help, we had no mutual understanding. By the way, Elena's parents were also against our marriage. Only later I understood that they were inveterate anti-Semitists. My father-in-law used to say: 'Go to your zhyds' meaning my parents. Our divorce was spurred by arrests of the well-known numismatists in 1969. I knew many of them. They were imprisoned for any precarious accusations. It was difficult to overcome that time. I was interrogated, but was not accused. Those imprisoned under pressure had to give away their collections, and then they were released as there was no corpus delicti. During such arrests Elena filed for divorce in court. It was not mandatory, I would never object to giving money for my daughter. Nevertheless, we were divorced. The daughter stayed with her mother.

I left them apartment and came to live with my mother. She stayed by herself as my father died in 1962. We buried him at Jewish lot of the city cemetery, where grandfather tomb was moved after Lukianovskoye cemetery was liquidated. Father was buried according to the Jewish rite. His grave is next to my grandfather's, where the name of my father is written. I keep both of my father's prayer books as precious things. My father's picture and the calendar leaf dating his death - March 28, 1962 - are glued to in his prayer book. This is a keepsake of a wonderful man, my father.

It was difficult to get registered [Residence permit] [55](#) in my mother's apartment, as it was considered that I had a place to live, and there was no room for another person in her apartment. But I was a rather known doctor, so I was given a hand. I was registered in my mother's poky communal apartment [56](#) without toilet and running water. I started to look into making out lodging

better. In three years I was given a two-room apartment, no matter how hard it was. At the meeting of the district executive committee [57](#), when my issue was under table, there were people who asserted that my divorce was fictitious for the sake of getting apartment. How could I leave the apartment, without hearing in court on division of the apartment. It was the first time my mother lived with conveniences. Unfortunately, she had lived only for 2,5 years in the new apartment, and passed away in 1976. My mother was buried at the Jewish lot of the city cemetery. It was important for her to be at the Jewish lot. I reserved a burial place for me close to my mother.

I always remembered about God, who rescued me at war when I was dying. My faith did not weaken. I was getting more ascertained of God's assistance in hard times of my life. Here is another example. In 1955 I had a severe jaundice. I was on the brink of death, my liver was below umbilicus. I was puking not only from food, but with the thought of food. I had a strong biliary intoxication with toxic psychosis. I was in such a terrible state, that even my loving father did not believe in my survival after the ambulance had taken me to the hospital. That case was probably more severe than the one when I, being wounded at war was beseeching God to help. I started praying. I was still young, only 30. And again I asked God for help and care. God rescued me again, like in the first time. It was a miracle. Being a doctor I understand it even better. It was another proof that God loved me. He might be saving me for certain purpose that I do not know of. My miraculous survival strengthened my believe. I did not mark Jewish holidays, did not attended synagogue, worked in Sabbath and ate everything, but I always felt in my soul that there was God. Of course, you could ask how I could have been a member of the party and a believer? These two things seem to be incompatible, but not for me. I was the member of the party, only in my card. There has always been God in my soul.

Being divorced I was not going to get married soon. There were quite a few ladies, who wanted to marry me. After first bad experience I was certain that my wife would be only a Jew. I did not want to make another mistake. I was lucky to meet Sofia, my wife-to-be. She was born in Kiev in 1934. Her father Naum Shekhtman was born in the village of Gornostayevka [420 km from Kiev], Kherson province in 1908. He was a great mahogany joiner. There was time when his apprentices were problem children. Mama, Feiga Shekhtman (née Zlobinskaya) was born in 1910. She became a housewife after getting married. Sofia has two sisters: the older, Bella Matskina (née Shekhtman) born in 1929, and the younger, Zhanna Shekhtman born in 1945. Russian is Sofia's mother tongue, but she also understood Yiddish, as her parents communicated in Yiddish. In 1941 Sofia's father was drafted in the army. As a lieutenant he fought for Kiev, took part in the battles on the South-Western and 2nd Ukrainian fronts. He became disabled because of a severely wounded leg. He was awarded with Orders of Red Star and of Great Patriotic War and many medals. The family was evacuated to the Uzbek town Andizhan. In 1944 Sofia's father was charged from hospital and called his family in the liberated Kiev. Sofia's father started to work at a glass plant. Mother was a housewife. Sofia's elder sister Bella studied in Kiev University, at Philosophy department. After graduation she was sent [Mandatory job assignment in the USSR] [58](#) to Dneprodzershinsk to teach history. She married a Jew, Jacob Matskin and gave birth to daughter Alla in 1960. Sofia's younger sister Zhanna finished drama school and was the head of drama studio in cultural center. She married a Jew, Aron Elkin. In 1970 she gave birth to elder son Konstantin. In 1979 another son, Alexander, was born. Now both of my wife's sisters live in Israel with their families. Sofia entered Kiev dentists' institute. At the beginning of 1950s her father was arrested, and Sofia was expelled from the institute as cosmopolite's daughter. Sofia left Kiev for a town of Rovno [Ukraine, 370 km

from Kiev] entered Rovno Geological Technical School there and obtained secondary technical education. After graduation she was assigned to Chita [Buryatia, 5700 km from Kiev], in Zabaikal expedition. She had stayed there for two years. She got married in Chita. Her family name was Burmanova in her first marriage. Sofia and her husband moved to Kharkov from Chita. In 1952 she gave birth to an only daughter Irina. After Sofia moved to Kharkov, there were conflicts with her husband. She wanted to go on with higher education, but her husband wanted her to be a housewife and raise their daughter. But Sofia was very stubborn and straightforward. She studied extramurally in Kiev Geological gas exploration University. She became a geologist, expert in gas exploration. She divorced with her husband. She was offered a job in Kiev Geophysics Institute, and she moved to Kiev with her daughter. We met in Kiev, in some of our friend's house. We got married on November 4, 1978. We have been together for 26 years, and I've never questioned my choice.

No matter that my daughter lived separately, I always kept in touch. We were and are getting along. I never wanted to change my name for Russian, so Irina accordingly has a Jewish patronymic Hertzevna. That is why when my daughter finished school with a silver medal [the second highest distinction in USSR secondary schools. A student was supposed to have straight excellent marks (100%) to get the golden and 90% of excellent marks to get silver medal], tried to enter Kiev university, she was not accepted. [Entrance interview] [59](#) And next year she failed to pass entry exams. At her third attempt she was accepted to the evening physics department. She worked in the day time, and after work she attended classes. Irina got married after graduating from the University. She kept her maiden name, Rogovaya, after getting married. Both of her sons took the father's name Khokhlov. Yuri was born in 1980, and Igor in 1984. Irina worked as an engineer in X-ray diagnostics. She is retired now. Radiographers retire at the age of 45 as their job is harmful to health. Both of my grandchildren study. Yuri got the Master's degree in Kiev polytechnic university, and works there as an assistant. The younger, Igor, is studying in Kiev polytechnic institute. My daughter and her children are very dear people to me.

In 1970s there was an outburst of mass immigration of the Jews in Israel. It was happy news. I craved for immigrating to Israel, but my mother would not allow. There was no way my brother would leave, and even spite of that my mother would not let me go as she thought she would never see me again. We should never have thought that there would be times when one could go to Israel for a visit, invite your kin and friends. [Keep in touch with relatives abroad] [60](#) At that time people left for ever, and it was good if they wrote. I could not leave my mother. And my second wife flatly refused to leave. Israel still remained a dream. Of course, it might sound preposterous that I am an ardent patriot of Israel sitting here in Kiev. And now I am even doing Israel a favor that I am not importuning myself as a pensioner to be given dole. By the way, when in the '70s Jews started a massive immigration, anti-Semites all of a sudden understood that practically all good doctors were Jews. And they started complaining: which doctor to go to, there would be no one we could trust our health ...

In 1975 I left polyclinic. I found out that there was a vacancy of a therapist in the sanatorium of Ministry of Defense in the Kiev suburbs, Puscha-Voditsa. I went there and I was offered a job. I had worked there for 23 years and retired at the beginning 1998. They treated me in a great way during my working years. I was a civilian, but still I was given vouchers for treatment in the best spas of USSR. I was always selected in the honorable presidium at general meetings. I am not vain,

it was just a demonstration of the positive attitude. They still keep a show-case devoted to my battle experience. I exerted every effort and used my knowledge to the benefit in my job, in treatment of patients, and I am given credit for it. Many retired militaries still remember me and render to my assistance. I have forgotten many of them, but they still remember me.

I went off war as a lieutenant. But since doctors are liable for military service no matter what they are specialized in, my rank periodically changed. The last rank was obtained this year – lieutenant colonel of the medical service.

It turned so that three granddaughters of my wife were brought up by us mostly. Irina, Sofia's daughter lived in Kharkov. Her married life was not happy, so we took three of her daughters. They went to the kindergarten, to school. I liked tendering them. I treated them as my own grandchildren, and they treated me accordingly. Elder granddaughter Yulia, born in 1978 left for Israel when she was 16. At that time there was an educational program in Israel. She worked as a waitress in Israel and took a preparatory course by Haifa university. Then she entered Haifa university and married a military man. Yulia graduated from the university and is working as a programmer at a very prestigious company. My wife is a greatgrandmother: Yulia gave birth to a boy, and she is pregnant again. She is expecting a daughter. My wife and I are looking forward to seeing her. The second granddaughter Svetlana, born in 1983, followed Yulia. She is also studying in Haifa university and is going to become a programmer. She was supposed to be drafted, but she recently got married, so she was given an adjournment. And the youngest, my favorite Anastasia, born in 1991, has just recently left for Israel. Irina married for the second time and left for Israel with her husband and a younger daughter. Anastasia goes to school. My wife often goes to Israel to see them. Both of my nieces, Grigoriy's daughters live in Israel, in the town of Karmiel. They are prosperous, that this makes me happy. My brother died in Kiev in 1978, long before they left. There are my relatives in the United States, too, viz. both sons of my mother's younger sister Manya. The elder, Yuri, lives in New-York, the younger - in Chicago. Both of them are younger than me, but they are not youths. We keep in touch, write and call each other from time to time.

The fall of Communism

When at the end of the 1980s perestroika [61](#) started in the USSR, I was delighted. We, USSR citizens, were not used to the absence of censorship in the press and literature. We were not accustomed to open honest public sources. I was happy with those events. It was marvelous that there was no iron curtain [62](#), severing our country from the rest of the world for many years. All it was new and delightful. But my euphoria did not last long, and my attitude to perestroika became negative. The consequences from perestroika brought to the breakup of USSR [1991], and I still regret it. Yes, I am still yearning for the Soviet Union like many of my contemporaries. Yes, it was a terrible empire, but it was a forceful foundation. And what is it now? We could easily go anywhere on the territory of the USSR, and now with a course of time it is getting more and more difficult to visit any of CIS countries. Of course, each type of society has its own disadvantages. I do not compare the independent Ukraine with such a monster as FSU used to be. I have few grounds why independent Ukraine should exist. How did the world benefit by from breakup of the USSR? There was one monster- Soviet Union, and now there are 15 instead of 1. We could forecast before, and now if the steps of one state could be forecasted, the other state would remain totally unpredictable. I would have never believed that the USSR will be deleted from the worlds map. The country that went through such a calamity as a patriotic war and was on the brink of defeat ...

Frankly speaking, there were moments when I did not believe that we would win that war. How could I believe when I retreated from Stalingrad, interminable retreat, starting from the Western borders of Ukraine, when Germans reached Volga and we had way many casualties and remained stern? After that there was a huge socialistic empire, including the countries, which did not belong to the USSR: Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, half of Germany. And suddenly such a country broke up. It was hard to believe in it.

What I like in the present Ukraine is that the Jewish life revived. Though, I understand that the current and coming leaders are not giving such a freedom out unselfishly. They just understand very well, that they depend on American and other capital, and they would not get anything if they demonstrate anti-Semitism. Various articles in the papers and speeches of the deputies at the Supreme Council speak for the existence of anti-Semitism. I even like those more who speak publicly on anti-Semitism, than the rest who just conceal their thoughts and remain anti-Semites. I am positive in that. This is the time, when we, the Jews are needed. That is why I do not believe in the ardent love for Jews, demonstrated by our government. I am not the only one, who thinks that. The figures speak for me. At the beginning of the 1990s there were 400 000 Jews in Ukraine, and according to the latest census (in 2003) only 100 000 remained. There were 100 000 Jews in Kiev, and now there are only 17 000.

When Ukraine was declared independent, a lot of Jewish communities appeared. There is a cultural center, which I like, and Hesed [63](#), performing great useful work. I do not trust other societies because I do not understand what they are dealing with. Why there are at loggerheads with each other, and what are they trying to divide. I am a member of the Kiev organization of Jew-veterans of war (Kievskoy Organizaciya Yevreyev – Veteranov Vojni) [64](#). I deal with medicine. I attend sick people in the hospital, officially receive war veterans. I have my reception hours. I am «a call-doctor» - veterans call me at any time when they require a medical consultation. There are getting less and less people in our organization. I was confounded at the last meeting. If earlier I used to come to the meetings beforehand, so I could occupy a seat as the hall was crammed, at that time there were only 35 people or so. People are getting older, die, but the organizations grow. I am very grateful to Hesed, and to those people, who give money to support its work. I know about Hesed not by hearsay. I have been working here since my retirement. I am taking patients in Hesed medical office every day. My conscience is clear, I am a volunteer and work for free. I consider, that my work, and the work of Hesed on the whole are needed. I see those who come here. These are indigent and miserable lonely people, who cannot make a living with their pension. One can judge it by the clothes they wear, and how during free dinner they eat potatoes in the canteen and put fish cutlet in a bag and take it home. They even take slices of bread home. They are not just given dinner, they also receive provision and clothes, medical care, medicine. We have day hospital, I also work there. There one can be examined and treated. Another important thing is that Hesed provides the opportunity for those lonely old people to communicate with each other. People suffer from loneliness more than from diseases and poverty.

My wife is also working. On Aug 5, 2004 she turned 70, but they do not let her retire. Though she does not have any scientific degrees, she was conferred the most prestigious award in geology- Silver Geological Cross given by the state. Apart from Sofia 2 or 3 people were conferred this award in the institute. She is a great expert, and now they talk her into teaching students, so she can share her experience with them. It is hard for her to work full-time. She is working half -time.

Recently in the honor of the Victory Day [65](#) and for my volunteer work Hesed gave me a wonderful present - paid for my trip to Israel. I have dreamt of it for so many years, and now my dream came true - I saw this beautiful country. I admired everything I saw. I stayed with my younger niece in Karmiel. Besides, I saw many cities and historical places in Israel. All I could physically visit, considering my weakness, and pain in my leg. I attended museums. I was in Yad-Vashem [66](#). But I was most deeply impressed by Wailing Wall. I still cannot forget that. I am not very susceptible and superstitious, but when I was by that wall, I thought that the air there was unusual and dense. It seemed to me that the wall emanated special blessing. For two thousand years people have been praying by it for the temple to be restored and the state of Israel to be revived, so it imbibed their prayers and hope. I was happy to see that the cities in Israel were clean and well taken care of - an apple-pie order. The most important was that I saw Israeli felt them home. Veterans have a serene and worthy life. They deserve it. It was painful for me to compare the life of the veterans in Israel with Ukraine.

I still remain religious. Though, there are only two holidays that I mark - Pesach and Yom Kippur. I certainly go to synagogue during those holidays. I attend the synagogue my father went to, the one located at Shchekavitskaya street. Unfortunately I do not know Hebrew, but I have a contemporary prayer book with Russian translation. I have not always fasted for the Yom Kippur, but for the last 35 years I keep a tradition not to eat or drink during Yom Kippur. This year I fasted, too, even though I turned 80, and then I took my economy car, given to me as a handicapped during Great Patriotic War, and went to the synagogue. Though, I understand that I should not drive. I cannot stay there for the whole day, so I go there by 4 and stay by the end of the praying. Then I go home for the feast. This is the day of our family get-together. My grandchildren come. My daughter, though half-blood, always attends synagogue with me. My wife is aloof to that. She went there with me for two or three times. My daughter supports me and goes there with me. She knows how important it is for me. This is our tradition, along with the 9th of May, the victory day's tradition. The whole family gets together to go to the monument of the military honor. This tradition will be kept on, until I am alive.

I think my life has not been futile. I have witnessed three important events, which never happened before in the world. I, having read about a man landed on the moon in science fiction books, witnessed that it happened in real life, not in the novels. The second - foundation of the state of Israel. The third, the epochal, was the breakup of the USSR. Those three events are not interconnected, but they were unique in the world. I am happy to observe those events trying to be useful to people the best way I could.

Glossary

[1](#) Hesed

Meaning care and mercy in Hebrew, Hesed stands for the charity organization founded by Amos Avgar in the early 20th century. Supported by Claims Conference and Joint Hesed helps for Jews in need to have a decent life despite hard economic conditions and encourages development of their self-identity. Hesed provides a number of services aimed at supporting the needs of all, and particularly elderly members of the society. The major social services include: work in the center facilities (information, advertisement of the center activities, foreign ties and free lease of medical

equipment); services at homes (care and help at home, food products delivery, delivery of hot meals, minor repairs); work in the community (clubs, meals together, day-time polyclinic, medical and legal consultations); service for volunteers (training programs). The Hesed centers have inspired a real revolution in the Jewish life in the FSU countries. People have seen and sensed the rebirth of the Jewish traditions of humanism. Currently over eighty Hesed centers exist in the FSU countries. Their activities cover the Jewish population of over eight hundred settlements.

2 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.

3 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.

4 Guild I

In tsarist Russia merchants belonged to Guild I, II or III. Merchants of Guild I were allowed to trade with foreign merchants, while the others were allowed to trade only within Russia.

5 Podol

The lower section of Kiev. It has always been viewed as the Jewish region of Kiev. In tsarist Russia Jews were only allowed to live in Podol, which was the poorest part of the city. Before World War II 90% of the Jews of Kiev lived there.

6 Lukianovka Jewish cemetery

It was opened on the outskirts of Kiev in the late 1890s and functioned until 1941. Many monuments and tombs were destroyed during the German occupation of the town in 1941-1943. In 1961 the municipal authorities closed the cemetery and Jewish families had to rebury their relatives in the Jewish sections of a new city cemetery within half a year. A TV Center was built on the site of the former Lukianovka cemetery.

7 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.

8 Nikolai's army

Soldier of the tsarist army during the reign of Nicholas I when the draft lasted for 25 years.

9 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.

10 Struggle against religion

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

11 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.

12 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.

13 Denikin, Anton Ivanovich (1872-1947)

White Army general. During the Russian Civil War he fought against the Red Army in the South of Ukraine.

14 Petliura, Simon (1879-1926)

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

15 Makhno, Nestor (1888-1934)

Ukrainian anarchist and leader of an insurrectionist army of peasants which fought Ukrainian nationalists, the Whites, and the Bolsheviks during the Civil War. His troops, which numbered 500 to 35 thousand members, marched under the slogans of 'state without power' and 'free soviets'. The Red Army put an end to the Makhnovist movement in the Ukraine in 1919 and Makhno emigrated in 1921.

16 Gangs

During the Russian Civil War there were all kinds of gangs in the Ukraine. Their members came from all the classes of former Russia, but most of them were peasants. Their leaders used political slogans to dress their criminal acts. These gangs were anti-Soviet and anti-Semitic. They killed Jews and burnt their houses, they robbed their houses, raped women and killed children.

17 Schors, Nikolai (1895-1919)

Famous Soviet commander and hero of the Russian Civil War, who perished on the battlefield.

18 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 Revolution of 1917 and the Russian 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.

19 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.

20 Enemy of the people

Soviet official term; euphemism used for real or assumed political opposition.

21 Famine in Ukraine

There was dreadful deliberate famine in 1930-1934 in the Ukraine. The authorities took away the last food products from the peasants. People were dying in the streets, whole villages became deserted. The authorities arranged this specifically to suppress the rebellious peasants who did not want to accept Soviet power and join collective farms.

22 Kulaks

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

23 Young Octobrist

In Russian Oktyabrenok, or 'pre-pioneer', designates Soviet children of seven years or over preparing for entry into the pioneer organization.

24 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.

25 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.

26 NKVD

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

27 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.

28 Yakir

One of the founders of the Communist Party in Ukraine. In 1938 he was arrested and executed.

29 Dzerzhinskiy, Felix (1876-1926)

Polish communist and head of the Soviet secret police. After the Revolution of 1917 he was appointed by Lenin to organise a force to combat internal political threats, and he set up the Cheka, the Bolshevik secret police. Lenin gave the organization huge powers to combat the opposition during the Russian Civil War. At the end of the Civil War, the Cheka was changed into the GPU (State Political Directorate) a section of the NKVD, but this did not diminish Dzerzhinskiy's power: from 1921-24 he was Minister of Interior, head of the Cheka and later the KGB, Minister for Communications and head of the Russian Council of National Economy.

30 Morozov, Pavlik (1918-1932)

Pioneer, organizer and leader of the first pioneer unit in Gerasimovka village. His father, who was a wealthy peasant, hid some grain crop for his family during collectivization. Pavlik betrayed his father to the representatives of the emergency committee and he was executed. Local farmers then killed Pavlik in revenge for the betrayal of his father. The Soviets made Pavlik a hero, saying that he had done a heroic deed. He was used as an example to pioneers, as their love of Soviet power had to be stronger than their love for their parents. Pavlik Morozov became a common name for children who betrayed their parents.

31 Professor Mamlock

This 1937 Soviet feature is considered the first dramatic film on the subject of Nazi anti-Semitism ever made, and the first to tell Americans that Nazis were killing Jews. Hailed in New York, and banned in Chicago, it was adapted by the German playwright Friedrich Wolf – a friend of Bertolt Brecht – from his own play, and co-directed by Herbert Rappaport, assistant to German director G.W. Pabst. The story centers on the persecution of a great German surgeon, his son's sympathy and subsequent leadership of the underground communists, and a rival's sleazy tactics to expel Mamlock from his clinic.

32 Spanish Civil War (1936-39)

A civil war in Spain, which lasted from July 1936 to April 1939, between rebels known as Nacionales and the Spanish Republican government and its supporters. The leftist government of the Spanish Republic was besieged by nationalist forces headed by General Franco, who was backed by Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. Though it had Spanish nationalist ideals as the central cause, the war

was closely watched around the world mainly as the first major military contest between left-wing forces and the increasingly powerful and heavily armed fascists. The number of people killed in the war has been long disputed ranging between 500,000 and a million.

33 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.

34 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.

35 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.

36 Charlie Chaplin

(Chaplin, Charles 1889 - 1977) Chaplin was one of the greatest and widely loved silent movie stars. From "Easy Street" (1917) to "Modern Times" (1936), he made many of the funniest and most popular films of his time. He was best known for his character, the naive and lovable -- Little Tramp. Born in London in 1889, Chaplin first visited America with a theater company in 1907. His early silent shorts allowed very little time for anything but physical comedy, and Chaplin was a master at it. Though Chaplin is of the silent movie era, we see his achievements carried through in

the films of today. To maintain the audience's attention throughout a six-reel film, an actor needed to move beyond constant slapstick. Chaplin had demanded this depth long before anyone else. His rigor and concern for the processes of acting and directing made his films great and led the way to a new, more sophisticated, cinema.

37 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.

38 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.

39 Kolkhoz

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

40 Stalingrad Battle (17 July 1942- 2 February 1943) The Stalingrad, South-Western and Donskoy Fronts stopped the advance of German armies in the vicinity of Stalingrad

On 19-20 November 1942 the Soviet troops undertook an offensive and encircled 22 German divisions (330 thousand people) in the vicinity of Stalingrad. The Soviet troops eliminated this German grouping. On 31 January 1943 the remains of the 6th German army headed by General Field Marshal Paulus surrendered (91 thousand people). The victory in the Stalingrad battle was of huge political, strategic and international significance.

41 Kursk battle

The greatest tank battle in the history of World War II, which began on 5th July 1943 and ended eight days later. The biggest tank fight, involving almost 1,200 tanks and mobile cannon units on both sides, took place in Prokhorovka on 12th July and ended with the defeat of the German tank unit.

42 Medal 'For military merits'

Was given since October 17 1938 as an award to the soldiers of the Soviet army, fleet and frontier guards for their bravery in the battles with the enemies of the Soviet Union and during defense of

the immunity of the state borders and struggle with divershionists, spies and other peoples' enemies

43 Babi Yar

Babi Yar is the site of the first mass shooting of Jews that was carried out openly by fascists. On 29th and 30th September 1941 33,771 Jews were shot there by a special SS unit and Ukrainian militia men. During the Nazi occupation of Kiev between 1941 and 1943 over a 100,000 people were killed in Babi Yar, most of whom were Jewish. The Germans tried in vain to efface the traces of the mass grave in August 1943 and the Soviet public learnt about mass murder after World War II.

44 Order of the Combat Red Banner: Established in 1924, it was awarded for bravery and courage in the defense of the Homeland.

45 Medal 'For Valor'

Established October 17, 1938. The medal was awarded for personal courage and valor in the defense of the Homeland and the execution of military duty involving a risk to life. The award consists of a 38mm silver medal with the inscription "For Valor" in the center of the award and the letters "CCCP" at the bottom of the award in red enamel. The inscription is separated by a Soviet battle tank. At the top of the award are three Soviet fighter planes. The medal is suspended by a grey pentagonal ribbon with a 2mm blue strip on each edge. The medal has been awarded over 4,500,000 times.

46 Order of Lenin

Established in 1930, the Order of Lenin is the highest Soviet award. It was awarded for outstanding services in the revolutionary movement, labor activity, defense of the Homeland, and strengthening peace between peoples. It has been awarded over 400,000 times.

47 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.

48 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.

49 Card system

The food card system regulating the distribution of food and industrial products was introduced in the USSR in 1929 due to extreme deficit of consumer goods and food. The system was cancelled in 1931. In 1941, food cards were reintroduced to keep records, distribute and regulate food supplies

to the population. The card system covered main food products such as bread, meat, oil, sugar, salt, cereals, etc. The rations varied depending on which social group one belonged to, and what kind of work one did. Workers in the heavy industry and defense enterprises received a daily ration of 800 g (miners - 1 kg) of bread per person; workers in other industries 600 g. Non-manual workers received 400 or 500 g based on the significance of their enterprise, and children 400 g. However, the card system only covered industrial workers and residents of towns while villagers never had any provisions of this kind. The card system was cancelled in 1947.

50 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'.

51 Communist Party of Western Ukraine

It was founded in Lwow, Poland and spread its activities to the areas populated by Ukrainians in Poland. Their goal was national unification and the annexation of the Ukrainian territories of Poland to the USSR. After the annexation of Eastern Poland (1939) it merged with the Communist Party of the USSR and many of its activists were arrested and persecuted.

52 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.

53 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.

54 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.

55 Residence permit

The Soviet authorities restricted freedom of travel within the USSR through the residence permit and kept everybody's whereabouts under control. Every individual in the USSR needed residential registration; this was a stamp in the passport giving the permanent address of the individual. It was impossible to find a job, or even to travel within the country, without such a stamp. In order to register at somebody else's apartment one had to be a close relative and if each resident of the apartment had at least 8 square meters to themselves.

56 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.

57 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.

58 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.

59 Entrance interview

graduates of secondary schools awarded silver or gold medals (cf: graduates with honors in the U.S.) were released from standard oral or written entrance exams to the university and could be admitted on the basis of a semi-formal interview with the admission committee. This system exists

in state universities in Russia and most of the successor states up to this day.

60 Keep in touch with relatives abroad

The authorities could arrest an individual corresponding with his/her relatives abroad and charge him/her with espionage, send them to concentration camp or even sentence them to death.

61 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.

62 Iron Curtain

A term popularized by Sir Winston Churchill in a speech in 1946. He used it to designate the Soviet Union's consolidation of its grip over Eastern Europe. The phrase denoted the separation of East and West during the Cold War, which placed the totalitarian states of the Soviet bloc behind an 'Iron Curtain'. The fall of the Iron Curtain corresponds to the period of perestroika in the former Soviet Union, the reunification of Germany, and the democratization of Eastern Europe beginning in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

63 Hesed

Meaning care and mercy in Hebrew, Hesed stands for the charity organization founded by Amos Avgar in the early 20th century. Supported by Claims Conference and Joint Hesed helps for Jews in need to have a decent life despite hard economic conditions and encourages development of their self-identity. Hesed provides a number of services aimed at supporting the needs of all, and particularly elderly members of the society. The major social services include: work in the center facilities (information, advertisement of the center activities, foreign ties and free lease of medical equipment); services at homes (care and help at home, food products delivery, delivery of hot meals, minor repairs); work in the community (clubs, meals together, day-time polyclinic, medical and legal consultations); service for volunteers (training programs). The Hesed centers have inspired a real revolution in the Jewish life in the FSU countries. People have seen and sensed the rebirth of the Jewish traditions of humanism. Currently over eighty Hesed centers exist in the FSU countries. Their activities cover the Jewish population of over eight hundred settlements.

64 Kiev organization Jew-veterans of war (Kievskoy Organizaciya Yevreyev - Veteranov Vojni) was founded in 1990 by Kiev municipal Jewish community

The organization consists of the Jews, who participated in world war two. In 1990s the organization numbered 1500 people and in 2003 the total number of Jewish veterans was 350. The main purpose of the organization is mutual assistance as well as unification of front-line Jews, collection and publishing of recollections about war, arranging meetings with the public and youth.

65 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.

66 Yad Vashem

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