# Tibor Gohman

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*Tibor Gohman lives with his wife Valentina in a standard two-bedroom apartment in a 1970s 9-storied building in a new district of Uzhhorod. There is typical furniture of this period in their apartment. It's old, but well preserved. It is clean and cozy in their apartment. Visitors pay attention to many pot plants in the rooms. They are on the floor, on windowsills and on stands. This is Tibor wife's hobby. They are a loving couple. He is athletic, very tall and taciturn and his wife is short, plump and always smiling. Tibor is laconic and brief and likes to joke. He has thick curly hair with gray streaks and bright young eyes. His age did not wear him out. His favorite outfits are jeans and sweaters and these clothes become him.*



## My family background

My father's parents lived in Mukachevo [Munkacs - until 1918, Munkacevo - from 1918 till 1939, Munkacs - from 1939 till 1945, Mukachevo - since 1945. 40 km from Uzhhorod, 660 km from Kiev], in Subcarpathia 1. I don't know whether they were born in Mukachevo, but my grandmother and grandfather were born in Subcarpathia. My grandfather's name was David Gohman. I don't know my grandmother's name. My parents and I called her 'granny' and her children called her 'mama'. I don't know my grandmother or grandfather's dates of birth. My grandfather was a neolog 2 shochet and my grandmother was a housewife.

Mukachevo was a Jewish town. Jewish constituted about 50% or more of its population. There were two streets where only Jews resided: Yevreyskaya [Jewish street in Russian] and Danko Streets. Jews also lived in other streets in the center of the town with neighboring Hungarian, Czech, Ukrainian and gypsy families. There was a big synagogue and a mikveh at the beginning of Yevreyskaya Street. There was also a fish market and Jewish kosher butcher stores. There were many synagogues in Mukachevo. I don't know the exact number. There must have been about 20 of them. There was a big central synagogue with a Hasid 3 rabbi Haim Luzer Shpira. Mukachevo was a Hasidic 4 center. Hasidim had their synagogues and cheder. There was a huge Hasidic education complex in Danko Street, a big cheder and yeshivah.

There were few Zionist organizations in Mukachevo. There was continuous ideological fighting between Zionists and Hasidim. Hasidim believed that Messiah would come and lead Jews to Israel, the Promised Land and all they had to do was praying and waiting for him. Zionists didn't wait for

Messiah to come. They established children's and young people's clubs where they involved Jewish children in sport activities and gave them vocational education teaching them professions that were in constant demand in Israel and they supported relocation of Jewish young people to Israel. There was also a secular Jewish grammar school in Mukachevo. They studied contemporary Ivrit spoken in Israel while in cheder schools children studied Hebrew. There was the best football team in town in this grammar school. They only slightly touched upon religious subjects in this grammar school and rabbis were rather unhappy about it.

Almost all craftsmen in the town were Jewish. Jews also dealt in trades. There were few non-Jewish stores, but they were located on the outskirts of the town. On Sabbath all Jewish stores were closed and non-Jews also got adjusted to this. They did their weekend shopping before lunch on Friday. There were also Jewish doctors, teachers and lawyers. There was no anti-Semitism in Mukachevo during Austro-Hungarian or Czechoslovakian rule 5.

My grandfather and grandmother had 8 children: 4 sons and 4 daughters. My father Ignatz, Itzhok was his Jewish name, was the oldest. He was born in 1898. I don't know when my father's brothers or sisters were born. All I can say is that babies wee born every 1.5-2 years.  After my father Aron and Solomon, whose Jewish name was Shmuel, were born. Then four daughters were born. My father sisters' names were: Frieda, Fanni, Regi, her Jewish name was Reizl, and Eszter. The youngest was son Jozsef.

My grandmother and grandfather were religious. My grandfather didn't have payes, but he had a small beard neatly cut. He didn't wear all black clothes like Hasidim. My grandfather wore common dark suits, not necessarily black. He also wore a common hat, different from Hasidic hats.  In my opinion, my grandmother was too religious. She wore a wig and close fitting long black gowns. My grandmother prayed whenever she had free time. She had two books of prayers in Hebrew, one for home and one for the synagogue. I don't know whether my grandmother knew Hebrew, or just could read without understanding the meaning of words like many women at the time. Of course, they celebrated Sabbath and all Jewish holidays at home, but I don't know about holidays in my father's family. We only visited them to greet on holidays. All I remember is that grandmother always treated us to the plenty of food. My grandfather went to the synagogue every day. Probably the shochet had to attend the synagogue regularly. My grandmother went to the synagogue on Sabbath and on holidays, but she prayed at home several times per day. My father's parents followed kashrut, they were strict about it. They spoke Yiddish and sometimes Hungarian at home. When we visited my grandma and grandpa, they spoke Hungarian with me and my brothers and with my mother and father they sometimes spoke Yiddish and sometimes Hungarian. I don't know what my grandfather thought about Hasidim.

I don't know whether my father and his brothers studied at cheder. I don't know at all what kind of education they got, but they must have studied in cheder. Considering their religious parents it couldn't have been otherwise. Of course, they also finished a general education school.  I don't know where my father continued his studies. I don't remember any talks about my father's childhood or youth. He was taciturn like my grandfather. My father worked as mechanic at the power plant in Mukachevo. There were big diesel units generating power for the town and my father was responsible for their maintenance. He must have had some special education to do this job.

At the time that I remember, my father's brothers and sisters had their own families and lived separately from their parents. Daughters Frieda and Fannie and sons Aron and Iosif were single and lived with their parents. Aron was a shop assistant in a garment store. He was chronically ill since childhood. Probably due to his health condition he wasn't married. Another son Shmuel, Solomon, owned a butcher store. There was a small sausage shop in this store where they made kosher sausage. There were 3 employees working in this shop. His wife was Jewish and also came from Mukachevo. I don't remember his wife's name. She was a housewife. They had two children. Iosif worked as a shop assistant at a household goods store. My father's sister Frieda helped grandmother about the house. Fannie was a dressmaker receiving orders at home. Regi married an owner of a confectionary store. I don't remember his surname. Regi was helping her husband in the store. She was rather good at baking. Eszter married a Hungarian man. His last name was Szerenti. I don't know what my grandmother or grandfather thought of her marrying a goy, but later as I remember, they got along well. Eszter's daughter Anna lives in Mukachevo now. She is 80 years old.

My father and his sisters and brothers were not so religious as their parents. They observed Jewish traditions and religion to some extent, but they only did it at their parents' insistence. They only went to the synagogue at Yom Kippur. My grandfather didn't force them to go there, but my grandmother did. The only demand my grandma had was to celebrate Yom Kippur according to the Jewish tradition.

I know very little about my mother's family. They lived in Mukachevo. I didn't know my mother's parents. They died long before I was born. Their last name was Berghida, but I don't know my grandmother or grandfather's first names. My mother Eszter, her brother and 2 sisters were born in Mukachevo. My mother was born in 1899, but I don't know her brother or sisters' dates of birth. It seems, my mother was the youngest. My mother brother's name was Yakov, one sister was Frieda, but I don't remember her second sister's name. I hardly know anything about my mother's life or her family before she got married. My mother and her sisters were very beautiful. My mother's sister Frieda even won the first place at the beauty contest in Paris in 1912, but I don't know any details about it. My mother loved Frieda dearly and often talked about it. My mother's sisters got married and became housewives. I also knew stories about my mother brother Yakov's military accomplishments. He was in the Hungarian army [in the KuK] 6 during World War I. He returned a hero from the war: there were awards all over his chest. Of course, I don't remember his tales that he told us when we were small, but I remember that we were always eager to hear his stories about the war and listened to him ardently. Brother Yakov worked at a meat factory. My mother worked for a dressmaker before getting married. I don't know what language my mother, her sisters and brother spoke in their parents' home when they were children. In their adulthood they spoke Hungarian to one another. They only switched to Yiddish when they didn't want their children to understand the subject of their discussion.

I don't know how my parents met. After a traditional Jewish wedding in 1922, and it couldn't have been otherwise in their time, they rented an apartment. We lived in this apartment until 1944. This was a one-storied house divided into two parts. One part had one room, a kitchen and a storeroom that occupied half of a house.

## Growing up

There were three children. Miklos, born in 1924, was the oldest. His Jewish name was Azril-Mayer. I was born in 1928. My Russian name was Tiberiy and Jewish name – Yisruel. My younger brother Adalbert was born in 1934. I don't remember his Jewish name. We were called by our Hungarian names in the family. We all had brit milah according to the Jewish tradition, but perhaps, this was done to please my father's parents. We spoke Hungarian at home and only when our parents didn't want us to understand the subject of their discussion they switched to Yiddish. They didn't teach us Yiddish. Most of my childhood friends were non-Jewish. It was because there were 1-2 Jewish families in our street, but they didn't have children of my age. My paternal grandmother, when she visited us, told my mother that she didn't like it that she allowed us to play with goy children, but my mother had a strong opinion about it: her children should play where she could watch them from a window. Playing in another street was out of the question.

My father's sisters or his brothers' wives or my mother didn't wear wigs or kerchiefs. My mother had lovely hats, but they were a tribute to fashion rather then her desire to have her head covered. My mother only wore a kerchief once a year, at Yom Kippur. She had nice chestnut hair and she made nice hairdos. My mother liked perfume and jewelry. She wore fashionable clothes. When short skirts were in fashion she wore short skirts, especially in summer and she wore light clothes and high-heeled shoes. My father wore suits with colorful shirts, ties and hats.

Now recalling my past I understand that our family observed many Jewish traditions, but really they didn't accentuate their attention on them. For example, my mother always prepared for Sabbath. She baked challahs on Friday morning and cooked food for Sabbath. On Friday evening she lit candles. So we had candles lit on Sabbath and there was a challah for dinner, but it was a usual dinner: no blessing of the food and no prayers. This was the end of Sabbath. [Editor's note: this was the end of Sabbath in the Gohman family but Sabbath ends on the evening of the next day after the Havdalah ritual.] And the following day nobody thought that they shouldn't do any work. My father worked on Saturday and had a day off on Sunday. There was one crew working on this day, Sunday, but when there was a need, they called my father to work. My father worked as diesel generator mechanic. This power plant supplied power to the whole town. It was work for the government that was of high value. My father wouldn't lose this job for the sake of observing all rules on Sabbath. We, boys, were happy that we didn't have to do our homework, but that was about it.

For Pesach my mother had special crockery that was kept in the attic. We only took it down before holiday and put away our everyday dishes. My mother bought matzah for all days of the holiday in the store. We didn't eat bread on Pesach. Everything else was like every day. We didn't have seder at home. Of course, my grandma didn't approve of it and never visited us. We sometimes visited them, but never on the first day of Pesach. We usually went on the fourth or fifth day.

At Chanukkah my mother lit another candle in a chanukkiyah every day. At Rosh Hashanah we always had honey and apples on the table. I don't think we did it because my parents had a need in observation of traditions. Knowing my grandmother I would rather think that my mother observed rules on the outside since if grandmother had come unexpectedly on a holiday and saw that something wasn't done for a holidays there would have been a lot of yelling and lecturing… My grandmother's daughters and daughters-in-law did the same. They observed rules on the outside and grandmother didn't look into details.

Yom Kippur was the only Jewish holiday that our family celebrated according to all rules. There was a kapores ritual before the holiday. My mother bought a white hen for herself and white roosters for my father and her sons. The hen was to be slowly turned around the head and we had to say: 'May you be my atonement'. I don't know what happened to these roosters afterward. Probably we just ate them. Before Yom Kippur my mother cooked a very sufficient dinner. It was allowed to eat before the first star appeared in the sky and then a 24-hour fast began. [Editor's note: actually it is a 25 hours fast.] We, children, didn't fast, but our parents strictly observed the fast. I remember my grandfather visiting us at home before Yom Kippur saying strictly: 'You must be at the synagogue tomorrow!' My parents spent a whole day at the synagogue and returned home after the first stars appeared in the sky. Then the fast was over and we could eat together with parents.

When I went to the first form, my father sent me to cheder. I studied there two weeks and decided it was enough for me. Probably this was my first personal decision in my life. My mother insisted that I went back to cheder, but my father said that if I didn't want to study there it was going to be a waste of time anyway. I remember that he said to my mother: 'He can live his life without cheder!' Of course, my grandmother was very angry about it. She blamed my parents that they raised a goy of a boy, but then things smoothed down and I didn't go to cheder again. My older brother Miklos studied in cheder.

I went to a Czech school at the age of 6. My older brother Miklos also went to this school. There were few Jewish children in my class and teachers and other schoolchildren had a good attitude toward them. There was no anti-Semitism during the Czech rule and they supported Jews in every way. I was doing well at school, although I wasn't an industrious pupil. I preferred playing with my friends outside rather than sitting at home with my textbooks. I had Jewish and non-Jewish friends. There was no segregation among us, we were just friends. I sang in our school choir and we sang on all school holidays. I finished three forms in the Czech school.

In 1938 Subcarpathia fell under the Hungarian rule [in Subcarpathia] 7. Residents of Mukachevo accepted this change calmly. Many were born and lived during Austro-Hungarian rule and were sure that it was going to be good with the Hungarian rule. Many older people who had lived under the Czech rule for over 20 years didn't even learn Czech and spoke Hungarian. My father had fluent Czech being a state employee, but my mother only knew few words in Czech.

## During the war

I went to the 4th form in a Hungarian school. We didn' face any anti-Semitism for about a year after annexation of Subcarpathia to Hungary. In 1939 they began to introduce anti-Jewish laws 8. There was anti-Semitism on a state level. One of the first laws issued was a ban to buy goods in Jewish stores. Storeowners were ordered to reassign their ownership to non-Jews, but they could stay and work there. Then they began to expropriate other property from Jews: factories and shops. If Jewish owners were not quick enough to reassign their property the state expropriated it without compensation. Jews were not allowed to study in higher educational institutions and were not recruited to the army, but they served in forced labors.

Since my father was a qualified employee he avoided service in a work battalion. Hungarian authorities preferred to have my father continue his work at the plant rather than start training a newcomer and let him work at the plant without any previous experience. My father's brother Aron died of a disease in Mukachevo in 1939. I don't remember his funeral, but since his parents

arranged the funeral, I believe, it was in accordance with Jewish traditions. Brothers Shmuel and Iosif were recruited to forced labor in 1941. Shmuel was sent to Ukraine. I don't know where Iosif was at first. All I know is that since 1943 he was on the territory of Yugoslavia. Shmuel fell ill with typhus at the front. Typhus was so spread at the front that there was a hospital for patients with typhus from the front opened in Mukachevo. Shmuel was taken to Mukachevo in 1943 and he soon died in hospital. Iosif perished somewhere in a forced labor in Yugoslavia in early 1944. My father sister Regi's husband and my mother sister Frieda's husbands also perished in forced labor.

My brother Miklos couldn't afford to continue his studies after finishing school. The family of five of us could hardly manage on my father's salary. In 1941 Hungarians introduced food cards. Jews received rationed food by these cards. Food was very expensive at markets. Miklos became an apprentice with a tailor. I finished school in 1942 and had to go to work. I became an apprentice of a joiner. I had a one-year training and in 1943 I began to work as a joiner in a shop. In 1943 Jews were ordered to have yellow stars on their clothes, on the chest and on the back. It was not allowed to be outside without stars. Any Hungarian soldier could kill a Jew even without taking them to the commandant's office.

In spring 1944 a ghetto was established in Mukachevo. Yevreyskatya and Danko Streets were fenced with barbed wire and they ordered Jews to move therein. It was allowed to take some food and few clothes for luggage. There were many people in the ghetto. There was at least one family or more living in one room. Then it turned out that this ghetto was too small for all Jews of Mukachevo. Then they made another ghetto near that one. It wasn't allowed to leave the ghetto or even to go from one ghetto to another, but it was allowed to move within one ghetto, go from one house to another. We were in the ghetto with my father's parents, his sisters Frieda and Fannie, my mother's brother Yakov and sister Frieda. Later I got to know that Hungarians did not take Jews who had awards of World War I to ghettos or concentration camps. But this was in Hungary and in Subcarpathia they moved all Jews to ghettos. [Editor's note: This concession of the 1st and 2nd Jewish law was changed in 1941, when nobody was an exception.] My father's sisters Regi and her family and Eszter were in another ghetto.

We stayed in the ghetto few weeks. Then near the gate to the ghetto they placed an order for inmates of the ghetto to pack some food and clothes for moving to another place. We were taken to Uzhhorod [40 km from Mukachevo, 680 km from Kiev] to a brick factory. Jews from Uzhhorod and the rest of Subcarpathia were taken there. Jews from a village or a town were grouped in one area. We lived in an open air. There were brick drying chambers, but it was impossible to stay inside. They were ruined and damp and there were broken bricks on the ground and there was no ventilation. There were other facilities with 3 walls left and no roof. Families tried to find space between those partition facilities. They were no protection from the cold or drizzling rain. Perhaps, all they gave was a relative feeling of protection. There was no food given in the ghetto. We ate what we had with us, but we ran out of food promptly. Occasionally people came from Uzhhorod and threw some food behind the walls. Some came to support their friends or acquaintances, but some of them were angry about this treatment of Jews and wanted to help unknown Jews in ghetto. Just outsiders were angry about this maltreatment of Jews and wanted to support the inmates. The inmates of the ghetto were sent to work. Few crews of the inmates of the ghetto, with Hungarian gendarme supervisors made the rounds of Jewish houses sorting out clothing, furniture, utilities, pictures, etc., and hauled these to a storage facility. Nobody from our family was taken to do this

work.

We stayed about 10 days in the ghetto in Uzhhorod. There was a railroad spur near the brick factory used for shipment of bricks and supplied when the factory was in operation. In April 1944 railcars for cattle transportation arrived at this spur. We were taken to these railcars together, a group of us as we were in the ghetto: 5 of us, my father's parents, his sisters Frieda and Fannie, my mother's brother Yakov and sister Frieda. There was no room to lie down, people could hardly find space to sit on the floor. There was a hole made in the center for a sewer. There was no way of going to the toilet in hiding and it had to be done before the eyes of others. We were not given water or food. I don't remember how long the trip lasted, but it seemed eternity to me. We knew that we were taken to a concentration camp: there were rumors about concentration camps in Mukachevo, but nobody knew those were extermination camps. We were sure those were forced labor camps, something like work battalions.

We arrived at Auschwitz early in the morning. There were German soldiers standing near each railcar. They had machine guns. There were also people in white robes, probably, doctors. People were sorted: old men separately, women with children, young people and middle aged ones – separately.  I was almost 16 and I was strong and big. They separated me and my brother Miklos from our parents. My parents and younger brother were taken to a group guarded by Germans with machine guns. We were in Auschwitz until night and then we were ordered to border a train and taken to Katovice, a work camp of Auschwitz. My brother was taken to another camp. I didn't know what happened to my dear ones. I didn't know that my parents and my younger brother Adalbert, my father's parents, my mother's brother Yakov and my mother's sister, whose name I don't remember with her husband and children and my father's sisters Frieda and Fannie were sent to a gas chamber when our group was waiting for departure from Auschwitz.. My father's sisters Regi and her husband and the children and Eszter and her children, who were in another ghetto, also perished in a gas chamber. Only my mother's sister Frieda survived in the concentration camp. She was very pretty and they probably felt sorry for her and didn't send her to a gas chamber. She worked somewhere there, but her children perished.

In Katovice we were accommodated in very big plank barracks. There were narrow two-tier plank beds. It's hard to say how many inmates were in barracks. I think there were about 500 inmates in one. The majority of inmates were Jews, but there were also Polish, Czechs, Slovaks, Austrians and people from other countries. I talked with Hungarians and Czechs knowing both languages.  There was a senior inmate in each barrack. Management of the camp knew those headmen. German soldiers with machine guns and trained dogs guarded the camp. Since it was a work camp Germans gave us food to be able to work. We had three meals per day: in the morning we had a cup of surrogate coffee with bread, then we had lunch at work site delivered from the camp. In the evening we had some boiled cereal and a little soup. Of course, there were bed sheets or pillows, but each of us had a blanket. Every morning after breakfast we marched to work sites. Katovice like other Polish towns was ruined. Almost a whole town was in ruins. We were to remove this debris. We piled bricks and debris to be loaded on trucks hauling it out. So we were cleaning up the town, street after street. We were given spades, picks and crowbars in the camp.  After work we carried our tools back to the camp. We worked without days off and didn't know the count of days or months.

In January 1945 Soviet and American troops began to advance. The front line was approaching Auschwitz. We were formed in columns and marched to Mauthausen under convoy having weapons. We were not given any food or water on the way. About 5 thousand people left Katovice, but less than a thousand reached Mauthausen. Many died of hunger. The convoy was shooting those who were too weak to go. They shot them in the head and pushed corpses aside the road. There was a crew walking behind us. They buried the corpses, but later they stopped doing this. It was already cold. It was January. We were in our camp robes, and our convoy allowed us to wrap our blankets around our shoulders. We slept on the ground or sometimes they took us to abandoned stables or sheds. People happened to freeze to death at night.

We didn't work in Mauthausen. Occasionally guards chose few inmates to clean up the territory, but we didn't go to work systematically. We were provided one meal per day: it was some kind of soup with half-rotten beetroots. There was no bread. We spent almost all time lying on our plank beds. There was no heating in barracks. There were many barracks. There were English prisoners-of-war in one barrack. They were treated a little better. Once per month they were allowed to receive food parcels and they got better meals than we were. In our barracks inmates died of diseases and emaciation every day. We understood that the front line was coming nearer and that the end of war was close. There were rumors in the camp that Germans were going to exterminate all inmates before leaving the camp. We didn't consider escape. There were guards on towers who shot inmates even when they came out of their barracks at a wrong time. There were patrol dogs running across the camp. They jumped on inmates, bringing them down and tore them to pieces. We were too weak to walk away and we understood it well. We were lying on plank beds shivering from cold. We were weak and knew that death was unavoidable; one way or another we were going to die either from hunger or the guards would kill us. It lasted until 8 May 1945. On this day US troops entered the camp. This was our liberation day.

## After the war

I was exhausted and they sent me to a hospital in Hirschwang near Vienna. There was a big aerodrome and a hospital nearby. They brought me to recovery there. I stayed in hospital two months. Americans visited this hospital asking patients where they came from and where they wanted to live. We could change any country. They were trying to convince us to go to USA and promised to help with lodging, study and work. I didn't know that Germans exterminated almost my whole family and my relatives. I was dreaming of coming home and embracing my dear ones and seeing my friends. When they were making lists I said I was a citizen of Czechoslovakia, a resident of Subcarpathia and said that I wanted to go back to Subcarpathia. The officer making this list told me that Subcarpathia did belong to Czechoslovakia any longer and that it was annexed to the USSR. I knew very little about the Soviet Union. I knew that this country overtook the heaviest burden of the war and that this country struggled against fascism – and this was all. It wasn't much, but I was eager to go back to Subcarpathia and it couldn't have changed much. So I stood my grounds. Few other people wanted to go to Subcarpathia. We were taken to Budapest where we were transferred to Russian officers. They gave us tickets and some food to go. We were allowed to stay in Budapest for few days. I decided to go to a public bathroom. Before going into the bathroom I left my clothes and underwear to the laundry. I washed myself and went to pick my clothing, but it wasn't ready yet. I was sitting there wrapped in my towel waiting for them to bring my clothes, when all of a sudden my older brother Miklos came in. Of course, he was thin and he changed, but I

recognized him immediately. He recognized me, too. We started talking and were afraid to lose the sight of each other even for a minute. We went home together.

We arrived at Mukachevo in July 1945. Our house was locked and the doors were sealed since we were taken to the ghetto. Any belongings were gone. Probably, they took away things from abandoned Jewish houses in Mukachevo like they did in Uzhhorod. Only what seemed to have no value to gendarmes remained in the house. Our neighbors sympathized with us and at the beginning tried to help us as much as they could. We lived in our house. There were many Jews who returned from camps there. After the war, my mother's sister Frieda returned to Mukachevo. She told Miklos and me about what happened to our family. Frieda settled down alone in her house. She was agonizingly ill and died in 1949. When we returned Miklos went to work as a tailor in a fashion shop.  People wanted to dress nicely. The war was over and it seemed that life was beginning anew. It was hard to buy something in shops: there was one thing about the Soviet regime that we had never known before regardless the regimes: empty shops. Therefore, having a tailor make clothes was the only opportunity. Miklos had many orders and earned well. I went to work as a joiner in a shop. We received Soviet passports and became citizens of the USSR. From Tibor I had the name of Tibor written in my passport and Miklos became Nikolay.

Many people from the USSR, particularly from Ukraine, moved to Subcarpathia. Many of them came to live here being professionals and others were Party activists who were to establish the principles of the Soviet power in Subcarpathia.  It's hard to say, probably some of them wanted to start a new life. My brother and I began to study Russian. It's easy to pick up a language when one is young. Besides, Russian has much in common with the Slovak language. Of course, even now I speak Russian with a slight Hungarian accent, but then this accent was much stronger. However, I understood what people wanted to say and they understood me. Those newcomers from the USSR were seemed to have come from a different world. They found it strange that in Subcarpathia even young people were religious. They found this strange and we believed that what was happening when Subcarpathia became Soviet was strange. Soviet authorities began struggle against religion 9 in Subcarpathia. They were closing all religious temples. They treated believers almost like criminals. The USSR didn't appreciate people having relatives abroad and contacts with them 10. We found it strange, but for newcomers from the USSR it was absolutely natural. My brother and I had somewhat skeptical attitude to this world, but we looked at it with interest. We understood that our past life was over and we had to adjust to life in the USSR.

All citizens of the USSR were subject to military service after turning 18 years of age.  A military registry office acknowledged that Miklos was unfit for military service, while I was registered for future service. In autumn 1948 they sent me a notification to make my appearance at the registry office where they announced that I was recruited to the Soviet army. All recruits were taken to Byelorussia where they were forming a military unit and from there we moved to Khabarovsk in the Far East, in 7000 km from home. In Khabarovsk I had some training and then was assigned to the Pacific Ocean Navy. It was an electric engineering battalion dealing in installation of electric equipment on aerodromes. Our battalion was sent to Uglovaya station in 30 km from Vladivostok. Although I was the only person in my battalion who was not a Komsomol 11 member they appointed me chief of a logistics platoon. I was in command! A year later I was promoted to the rank of sergeant. We lived in barracks. I was the only Jew in my battalion, but I never faced any anti-Semitism at that period. I had friends of many nationalities, but none of them gave much

thought to my Jewish identity. My management also treated me well.

I corresponded with my brother, my only kinship. He wrote that a cotton wool factory was opened in Mukachevo and my brother became its director. He was seeing a Jewish girl in Mukachevo. She was also in a concentration camp. Her name was Fiera, but I don't remember her surname. In 1953 they got married. Fiera's parents were religious and observed Jewish traditions. Even after World War II, during the Soviet period, they spoke Yiddish at home and celebrated Jewish holidays. Fiera's parents arranged a traditional Jewish wedding for Miklos and Fiera. They registered their marriage in a registry office and had a chuppah at home. Shortly after the wedding the family moved to Uzhhorod. Miklos went to work as a shop assistant in a store. The service term in the Navy was 5 years at that time. I had one 10-day leave plus travel time through this whole period. A trip from Novosibirsk to Uzhhorod lasted over a week and maybe for this reason I wasn't that eager to travel.

I met my wife to be when I was in the army. Valentina Novikova studied in the Electric Engineering Technical School in Vladivostok. I occasionally took a leave and went to town with my fellow comrades. We went for walks or to dancing events. Once we went to dance in Valentina's school where I met her. We spent a whole evening together talking and dancing and decided to meet again on my next leave. Valentina was born in Leningrad 1928. Her mother died at childbirth. Valentina's father was a professional military and moved from one place to another, so he didn't have an opportunity to raise his daughter. He left Valentina with her grandmother in Novosibirsk. She raised Valentina. Her father perished at the front. Valentina was Russian, but nationality never mattered to me. It didn't matter to her that I was a Jew. That we loved each other was important to us. We were both orphans and cared about our future family and children. I married Valentina in 1953, when I served in the army. We didn't have money and we couldn't afford a wedding party. We registered our marriage in a registry office and in the evening I received a 3-day leave that we spent together at Valentina's home and then I returned to my military unit.

My life in Czechoslovakia and Hungary was over actually in my childhood, when I was 15. Then few years in concentration camp, so I would say, I grew up and my personality developed during the Soviet period. And, whether I wanted it or not, this Soviet power developed my character and my outlooks on life, though, of course, not to the extent that it influenced those who were born and grew up under its rule. I remember that I was traveling by train to visit my brother on 5 March 1953. The train stopped at the Baikal station. The radio announced that Stalin died and then Beriya 12 said a speech. All passengers were crying and I couldn't hold back my tears either. Of course, I wasn't in the state of panic like many Soviet people who didn't understand their life without Stalin. I understood that life was going on and this was not the end of the world, but his death was also a grief for me. Uncertainty was the most worrying thing: who was to replace Stalin and what was going to happen to us. I didn't believe in changes for better and as for the bad, there are no limits to it.

Later, after Khrushchev 13 spoke at the 20th Congress 14, I got rid of my illusions about Stalin. Of course, I believed Khrushchev instantly. I had heard before from my fellow comrades that people had been arrested without any grounds for a word spoken incautiously by someone else's report. When I served in the army there was a KGB 15 officer in every unit. Our chief of this special department was captain Baranov. Everybody was afraid of him. There was a car mechanic from Mukachevo in our unit. His surname was Dashko. On 5 March, when Stalin died, Dashko was fixing

a car lying under it. Captain Baranov came near and asked what he was doing. Dashko replied that he had to fix a car. 'Haven't you heard that Stalin died?' Dashko replied that he was sorry, of course, but what could one do, his time had come… For just this phrase he was sentenced to 25 years in camps. He was released in 1956 after the 20th Party Congress, but he had spent few years in camps, anyway. This was a man I knew in person. I did suspect that there was something wrong about Stalin's regime. Then another incident proved my doubts was about Beriya. At the time, when Stalin was in power, Beriya was the second man in the state, but after Stalin's death he all of a sudden became an enemy of the people, a spy and was executed on December 23, 1953. I gradually came to understanding that a party was associated with constant lies, but this understanding didn't evolve at once.

In 1954 I demobilized from the army. My wife finished her college and moved to her grandmother in Novosibirsk. I arrived there after demobilization. When I arrived, all I had included kersey boots, my military shirt and overcoat. My wife and I could only rely on ourselves. There was to be no help from somebody else. I went to work as a car mechanic at an equipment yard and later I became a driver there. I worked as a driver for the rest of my life. At first we rented a room and then I received a plot of land from my work to build a house. We made a temporary hut and continued construction of a house. 2 years later our house was ready. It was a good brick house with 4 rooms and a kitchen. I also installed water and gas piping. We moved in with Valentina and her grandmother. Our children also grew up in this house. Our daughter Natalia was born in 1955 and son Victor - in 1956. Valentina quit.her job after our children were born. She was a housewife and took care of the children. During our life in Novosibirsk I never faced anti-Semitism, or heard about anti-Semitic attitudes in Novosibirsk. My children went to school and nobody asked them about their nationality. My wife's grandma died in 1959.

I didn't join Komsomol in the army, though they offered me. When I went to work at the equipment yard they insisted that I joined the Party. This was the eastern part of the USSR that became Soviet in 1917. Generations of people who grew up during the Soviet period believed in communism and sincerely thought that the party was 'the leading and guiding force', as they said in newspaper articles. I also partially fell under their influence. We believed in the communism that Khrushchev promised. Communist ideas are good, only they disguised their wrong deeds in them.

I joined the party in Novosibirsk in 1959. There were three of us joining the party: I, a young driver and chief mechanic of the equipment yard; he was 45 years old. We were invited to the Party town committee for a discussion with old communists. Each of us was invited to an office where they asked us questions. An old general asked most questions. They asked me whether I learned the statute and few simple questions. Then they asked the young driver and chief mechanic was the last one to be interrogated. The general asked him: why have you ripened so late for joining the party? And he replied jokingly: they watered me poorly and that was why it came so late. We burst into laughter, but the old Bolsheviks didn't like this answer at all. However, all three of us were admitted. So I became a communist. I understood that this was a reliable way for me to get a promotion. Any doors opened to members of the party. Yes, it was necessary to work honestly and comply with plans. Communists were the first ones to be questioned when there was a delay. And I worked honestly and well, but not because this was what the party demanded, but because I had to support my family. I knew that I had to find a well-paid job by all means. So I was promoted being a communist: I was secretary of a party organization and chairman of a shop committee. In a

short period I lost my trust in the party and in communism. I wasn't a communist in my heart.

I didn't quite notice the invasion of Soviet troops to Hungary [in 1956] 16; we lived in Novosibirsk then and there was hardly anything heard about it there. As for Czechoslovakian events [which was called Prague Spring] 17, I was taking part in them. I was recruited to the army again working in a militarized equipment unit. In case of combat action we were recruited automatically. We were sent to Czechoslovakia. I was commander of the equipment unit of a platoon. We spent there 3 months. Seeing it all with our own eyes we couldn't believe the version of Soviet propaganda that Soviet troops invaded the country at the request of residents of Czechoslovakia since Germans were supposedly going to occupy Czechoslovakia and had their armies near the border. We were told that we were going to rescue Czechoslovakia from aggression, while actually Soviet armies invaded the country since the Czechs wanted to pull out of socialism and didn't want to obey to the USSR demands. Of course, the USSR couldn't allow a single country to 'leave the socialist camp', or other countries would be on the run, too. We talked with Slovaks and understood the situation promptly. They were yelling seeing us: 'Ivan, go home!' Everybody understood that we hadn't come there at their request: this was not the way to greet liberators. We were not rescuing them, but killing... I understood this clearly from the very beginning.

Of course, we didn't celebrate Jewish holidays at home. We celebrated Soviet holidays: 1 May, 7 November [October Revolution Day] 18, Victory Day [May 9] 19, 23rd February, the Soviet army Day 20 and New Year. For my wife and children those were the holidays they were used to. As for me, I understood that I had to get adjusted to living in this environment. Our friends were my colleagues and my wife's school friends. There were hardly any Jews among them, but I didn't care about it. I've had non-Jewish friends since childhood.

Unfortunately, I could spend very little time with my family. I had to work a lot to provide well for the family. I often went on trips and stayed away from my family for few days in a row. I worked from morning till night and only came home to eat and sleep. Valentina took care of the household. Fortunately she understood that it was not my caprice, but life's necessity. When I had days off we tried to spend this time together. We only spoke Russian at home. Valentina didn't know Hungarian. None of my acquaintances spoke Hungarian either. In the morning we walked with the children and took them to the cinema. Valentina made more plentiful dinners on such days and we ate and talked with our children. In the evening, when the children went to bed, Valentina and I went to the theater or to visit our friends. Unfortunately, those were rare occasions.

I corresponded with my brother. He and his wife had two children: daughter Ludmila, born in 1957, and son Yevgeniy, born in 1965. When Yevgeniy was born, we went to visit my brother. Miklos and his wife began to tell me that there were only two of us left of a big family and that we were living too far from one another and hardly had any opportunity to see each other. They suggested that we moved to Uzhhorod. One month later, in September 1965, my wife and I sold our house in Novosibirsk and the four of us moved to Uzhhorod. We bought a house near my brother's place in Uzhhorod. Our children went to school and I went to work as a driver in an equipment yard. My wife went to work as an assembly worker at a tool manufacturing plant. Valentina was having a hard time in Uzhhorod. She was used to living in a big city: there were 1.5 million resident in Novosibirsk at that time, and Uzhhorod seemed like a big village after Novosibirsk. Valentina cried at nights and wanted to go back there. Then she made friends and work and things became easier. Then she was assigned to the position of military electronic equipment testing specialist where she worked

until retirement.

After moving to Uzhhorod my family took up skiing.  Uzhhorod is surrounded with picturesque mountains and there are many slopes fro skiing. We liked going hiking in the mountains when I was free on weekends.  In winter we skied and in spring and summer we just walked on the picturesque outskirts. We also liked to spend vacation in a nice spot in Subcarpathia.

By the way, after we moved to Uzhhorod I faced anti-Semitism for the first time in my life. My daughter who was in the 5th grade at school was called zhydovka [kike]. She asked us what this word meant. This was the first time she heard this word and we had to explain about Jews. However, there were no more incidents. After we moved to Uzhhorod I began thinking and listening to what other people were saying about the soviet power or injustice taking place since Subcarpathia became Soviet. In Subcarpathia people were not so much under the influence of the Soviet power and they still thought independently. And I began to get smarter and think about thee USSR more critically.

Our life in Uzhhorod was not much different from how we lived in Novosibirsk. We made new friends at work and besides, I met my old friends who moved to Uzhhorod from Mukachevo.  I met with them often. Such meetings brought back my childhood memories. I spoke Hungarian, the language of my childhood and youth with them. My brother was near me and this was the most important thing. We visited each other every week.

In the 1970s Jews began to move to Israel. Almost all Jews living Subcarpathia before it was annexed to the USSR left the country. My few friends who had returned from concentration camps and forced labors left, too.  I was sympathetic about their decision. I didn't conifer departure.  My wife cannot bear the heat and she wouldn't be able to bear the climate in Israel. My brother's decision to move to Israel was like a blow to me.  I had moved to Uzhhorod to be near him and then he was leaving me. At that time people were leaving for good and contact with them terminated instantly or later. It was impossible to think that one day it would be possible to travel abroad or invite relatives or friends to the USSR that was at that time deadly separated from the rest of the world with an iron curtain 21. My brother and his family left in 1971. They lived in Tel-Aviv, Israel, few years. Then my niece Ludmila got married and moved to Toronto, Canada with her husband. Miklos and his wife followed them to Canada to be near their daughter. My brother and I corresponded. It was dangerous for me, but I decided that since I didn't hold any official posts they would hardly fire me. If they did, I would find another job: good driver were in demand. Many party members were having problems with district and town Party committees for corresponding with their relatives abroad. I knew that it was true, but they didn't touch me for some reason.

My children were raised as Soviet children. They were pioneers and Komsomol members. They finished 10 forms of a Russian secondary school. My daughter went to study at a hairdresser's school. After finishing it she went to work as a hairdresser. In 1974 she got married. My wife arranged a dinner for the newly weds' friends. We had no relatives left. Natalia's husband Dmitriy Galushko is Ukrainian. Dmitriy was a nice and reliable man and I knew that my daughter was going to be happy with him. He was a professional military and returned from Afghanistan war 22. After the wedding Dmitriy got a new assignment to Germany and Natalia followed him there. They lived in Germany for 5 years.  Shortly after Natalia and her husband returned to Uzhhorod our house was pulled down to build a new multi-storied building. My daughter received a 3-bedroom apartment

and my wife and I received a 2-bedroom apartment. Natalia and Dmitriy's son Oleg was born in 1980 and daughter Tatiana was born in 1985. Oleg studies in Kiev College of International Relationships and works in Ukrainian Security Service. He is married. His wife is a student and she is Ukrainian. Natalia's daughter Tatiana is finishing school this year.

Son Victor entered the Faculty of Automobile and Tractor Building after finishing school. He had all excellent marks at the university. Upon graduation he got an assignment [mandatory job assiggnment] 23 to my equipment yard. He got a position of dispatcher. He was smart and had higher education, but he wasn't getting promotions. He worked as a dispatcher through long years. The others were promoted, but he stayed where he was. I advised him to join the party referring to my experience. Victor said he didn't want to join the party. Victor was married a Jewish girl Ludmilla. Her parents had moved to Uzhhorod from the USSR. Ludmila studied with Victor at the university and they met there. They got married when they were last-year students and had an ordinary secular wedding. In 1980 their daughter Yelena was born. After their daughter was born Victor's wife Ludmila became a housewife. Victor had to support the family. He submitted his application to the party. Almost immediately after my son joined the party his career began. He was promoted to senior dispatcher, then chief of maintenance department and soon he was deputy director of the equipment yard. His earnings were growing, accordingly. Yelena decided to move to Israel after finishing school. She has served in the army and is going to enter a university. My granddaughter is happy with her life. She loves Israel and is going to live her life there. Victor's son Edward was born in 1997. He started going to school.

I had a good attitude toward perestroika 24 that General Secretary of the Party Mikhail Gorbachev 25 initiated. I liked it when he withdrew the article stating that the party was the leading and guiding force from the Constitution. We got more freedom in life. Gorbachev wanted to turn the USSR to a better and free life. I understand that this bothered the old leaders who were feeling the ground slipping away from under their feet. They interfered and tried to stir up people's resentment of perestroika, but I supported his policy.

The 'iron curtain' hiding the USSR from the rest of the world for over 70 years finally collapsed. Soviet people got an opportunity to travel abroad on tours or visits. In 1990 my son Victor and I went to visit my brother Miklos in Canada. He was very ill then. We realized many things in Canada. We saw that workers had a good life without thinking about politics. They just had to work well to have a good life. In the USSR party leaders, deputies and others were called 'servants of people'. It was a typical newspaper idiom. What kind of a country it is where 'servants' live much better than their masters and enjoy privileges that they establish for themselves... When we returned to Uzhhorod, my son and I gave our party membership cards to secretary of the party organization and said that we didn't want to continue our membership in the party and that we would not come to the party meeting to explain our position. So we terminated our membership in the party, and nothing happened. This took place before break up of the USSR [editor's note: Yeltsin in 1991 signed a deal with Russia's neighbors that formalized the break up of the Soviet Union. The USSR was replaced by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)].

I felt negative about the break up of the soviet Union at first, but then a hope emerged that if Ukraine had its independence and would make a smaller state than the USSR life might improve. Ukraine is rich in deposits and fruitful soil. One only needs to manage it in a smart way. However, it happened to be vice versa. We became poor, they've robbed us. Anyway, this has to do with

economy. Independent Ukraine gave a rebirth to Jewish life. People can openly go to the synagogue. During the Soviet period they could only go there in secret: God forbid if somebody saw it and reported. Members of the party could be expelled and fired from work and there might have been such an entry about the reason of resignation in the book of employment records that there was hardly any hope left to get another employment. In the independent Ukraine this has changed. There are Jewish newspapers and magazines, Jewish TV programs and Jewish performances in theaters.

I've come to religion unexpectedly. I grew up in a fairly religious family. I wasn't taught Jewish traditions or holidays. When I returned from concentration camps I became an atheist like the majority of population in the USSR. And, frankly speaking, I didn't feel any need in religion. My brother Miklos and his family were religious. They observed Jewish traditions, celebrated Sabbath and Jewish holidays and went to the synagogue. Miklos died few months after Victor and I visited him. His family buried him in the Jewish cemetery according to Jewish traditions. Miklos's wife Fiera notified me about the funeral and asked me to recite the Kaddish for my brother, but I didn't know anything about it. I told my friend about it. We were friends back in Mukachevo and he knew Miklos well. I knew that he attended a synagogue. He offered me to go to the synagogue with him. I went with him for the first time and since then I've attended the synagogue regularly. I am a pensioner and have time to socialize with people – why not? When I worked I didn't have free time. I was on trips days and nights. So I had no time for going out and I didn't fee like it. Now it has become a need for me. In the evening I think: tomorrow I will go to the synagogue. In 1990 I became a Jewish religious community in Uzhhorod. I was elected deputy chairman of the community few years. It's hard for me to go to the synagogue in the evening. I have poor sight. We get together 4 times a week. Every Friday we celebrate Sabbath at the synagogue. We get together in the evening, light candles and somebody recites Kiddush, blessing over wine then recite a blessing over the challah bread. I have a busy day on Friday. Everything needs to be ready: coffee on the tables after a prayer, sweets, challah bread, 50 grams of vodka each. And on Saturday there have to be treatments after a prayer. We always celebrate Jewish holidays according to the rules and traditions. I do not celebrate holidays at home, we have better arrangements in the community. My wife goes to such events.

In 1999 Hesed, Jewish charity fund, was established in Uzhhorod. I take part in its activities. It is a very good and much needed organization. It provides assistance to the needy. Now many people envy Jews, especially old people. It's hard to imagine how older people could survive, if it were not for Hesed. They provide food products and deliver meals to the elderly, provide medications and medical assistance. They also take care of the little ones. It's no secret to all how much money a family needs to spend to take care of a baby. Hesed helps people of all ages, children and old people, to learn about Jewish religion, traditions, history and study the languages. There are dancing, choir and theatrical clubs, there is a computer school and everybody can find what's interesting for him. There are also pastime clubs for older people. The most terrible thing about old age is loneliness and lack of communication. They can watch a movie, listen to a lecture or talk to their acquaintances having a cup of tea or coffee and find new friends in Hesed. I work in the social commission of Hesed. Hesed has made a strong presence in our family. My son-in-law Dmitriy Galushko also works in Hesed. He retired at 42. In 1999 he became an employee of the Hesed. He takes care of lonely old people. My life is full thanks to Hesed and community. I have no time for feeling old and I know that I am doing important and necessary work.

**Glossary**:

**1 Subcarpathia (also known as Ruthenia, Russian and Ukrainian name Zakarpatie)**
Region situated on the border of the Carpathian Mountains with the Middle Danube lowland. The regional capitals are Uzhhorod, Berehovo, Mukachevo, Khust. It belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy until World War I; and the Saint-Germain convention declared its annexation to Czechoslovakia in 1919. It is impossible to give exact historical statistics of the language and ethnic groups living in this geographical unit: the largest groups in the interwar period were Hungarians, Rusyns, Russians, Ukrainians, Czech and Slovaks. In addition there was also a considerable Jewish and Gypsy population. In accordance with the first Vienna Decision of 1938, the area of Subcarpathia mainly inhabited by Hungarians was ceded to Hungary. The rest of the region, was proclaimed a new state called Carpathian Ukraine in 1939, with Khust as its capital, but it only existed for four and a half months, and was occupied by Hungary in March 1939. Subcarpathia was taken over by Soviet troops and local guerrillas in 1944. In 1945, Czechoslovakia ceded the area to the USSR and it gained the name Carpatho-Ukraine. The region became part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1945. When Ukraine became independent in 1991, the region became an administrative region under the name of Transcarpathia.

**2 Neolog Jewry**
Following a Congress in 1868/69 in Budapest, where the Jewish community was supposed to discuss several issues on which the opinion of the traditionalists and the modernizers differed and which aimed at uniting Hungarian Jews, Hungarian Jewry was officially split into to (later three) communities, which all built up their own national community network. The Neologs were the modernizers, who opposed the Orthodox on various questions.

**3 Hasid**
The follower of the Hasidic movement, a Jewish mystic movement founded in the 18th century that reacted against Talmudic learning and maintained that God’s presence was in all of one’s surroundings and that one should serve God in one’s every deed and word. The movement provided spiritual hope and uplifted the common people. There were large branches of Hasidic movements and schools throughout Eastern Europe before World War II, each following the teachings of famous scholars and thinkers. Most had their own customs, rituals and life styles. Today there are substantial Hasidic communities in New York, London, Israel and Antwerp.

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## 5 First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938)

The First Czechoslovak Republic was created after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy following World War I. The union of the Czech lands and Slovakia was officially proclaimed in Prague in 1918, and formally recognized by the Treaty of St. Germain in 1919. Ruthenia was added by the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. Czechoslovakia inherited the greater part of the industries of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the new government carried out an extensive land reform, as a result of which the living conditions of the peasantry increasingly improved. However, the constitution of 1920 set up a highly centralized state and failed to take into account the issue of national minorities, and thus internal political life was dominated by the struggle of national minorities (especially the Hungarians and the Germans) against Czech rule. In foreign policy Czechoslovakia kept close contacts with France and initiated the foundation of the Little Entente in 1921.

## 6 KuK (Kaiserlich und Koeniglich) army

The name ‘Imperial and Royal’ was used for the army of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, as well as for other state institutions of the Monarchy originated from the dual political system. Following the Compromise of 1867, which established the Dual Monarchy, Austrian emperor and Hungarian King Franz Joseph was the head of the state and also commander-in-chief of the army. Hence the name ‘Imperial and Royal’.

## 7 Hungarian rule in Subcarpathia

## 8 Anti-Jewish laws in Hungary

Following similar legislation in Nazi Germany, Hungary enacted three Jewish laws in 1938, 1939 and 1941. The first law restricted the number of Jews in industrial and commercial enterprises, banks and in certain occupations, such as legal, medical and engineering professions, and journalism to 20% of the total number. This law defined Jews on the basis of their religion, so those who converted before the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919, as well as those who fought in World War I, and their widows and orphans were exempted from the law. The second Jewish law introduced further restrictions, limiting the number of Jews in the above fields to 6%, prohibiting the employment of Jews completely in certain professions such as high school and university teaching, civil and municipal services, etc. It also forbade Jews to buy or sell land and so forth. This law already defined Jews on more racial grounds in that it regarded baptized children that had at least one non-converted Jewish parent as Jewish. The third Jewish law prohibited intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews, and defined anyone who had at least one Jewish grandparent as Jewish..

## 9 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.

**10 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.

**11 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.

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

**13 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.

**14 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.

**15 The KGB or Committee for State Security was the main Soviet external security and intelligence agency, as well as the main secret police agency from 1954 to 1991**

**16 1956**
It designates the Revolution, which started on 23rd October 1956 against Soviet rule and the communists in Hungary. It was started by student and worker demonstrations in Budapest started in which Stalin’s gigantic statue was destroyed. Moderate communist leader Imre Nagy was appointed as prime minister and he promised reform and democratization. The Soviet Union withdrew its troops which had been stationing in Hungary since the end of World War II, but they returned after Nagy’s announcement that Hungary would pull out of the Warsaw Pact to pursue a

policy of neutrality. The Soviet army put an end to the rising on 4th November and mass repression and arrests started. About 200,000 Hungarians fled from the country. Nagy, and a number of his supporters were executed. Until 1989, the fall of the communist regime, the Revolution of 1956 was officially considered a counter-revolution.

**17 Prague Spring**

The term Prague Spring designates the liberalization period in communist-ruled Czechoslovakia between 1967-1969. In 1967 Alexander Dubcek became the head of the Czech Communist Party and promoted ideas of ‘socialism with a human face’, i.e. with more personal freedom and freedom of the press, and the rehabilitation of victims of Stalinism. In August 1968 Soviet troops, along with contingents from Poland, East Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria, occupied Prague and put an end to the reforms.

**18 October Revolution Day**

October 25 (according to the old calendar), 1917 went down in history as victory day for the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia. This day is the most significant date in the history of the USSR. Today the anniversary is celebrated as ‘Day of Accord and Reconciliation’ on November 7.

**19 May 9**

The Great Patriotic War ended for the Soviet Union on 9th May 1945. This day of a victory was a grandiose and most liked holiday in the USSR.

**20 Soviet army Day**

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

**21 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.

**22 Afghanistan war**

Conflict between anti-communist Muslim Afghan guerrillas and the Afghan government, supported by Soviet troops. The conflict started by the coup d’état of the the marxist-leninist People’s Democratic Party and the establishment of a pro-Soviet communist government. In 1979 another coup provoked an invasion by the Soviet forces and the installation of Babrak Karmal as president. The Soviet invasion sparked Afghan resistance; the guerillas received aid from the USA, China, and

Saudi Arabia. Although the USSR had superior weapons, the rebels successfully eluded them. The conflict largely settled into a stalemate, with Soviet and government forces controlling the urban areas, and the guerrillas operating fairly freely in mountainous rural regions. Soviet citizens became increasingly discontented with the war, which dragged on without success but with continuing casualties. By the end of the war 15,000 Soviet soldiers were killed and 37,000 wounded. The Soviet troops pulled out in 1989 leaving the country with severe political, economic, and ecological problems.

**23 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.

**24 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.

**25 Gorbachev, Mikhail (1931- )**

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