

Iyah Dziekovskaya's Biography

Iyah Dziekovskaya

Interviewer: Natalia Fomina

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Iyah Dziekovskaya is a short sweet-looking woman with her hair cut short. Iyah Vladimirovna looks and conduct tell about her extraordinary tactfulness. She speaks quietly and has melodious voice. Her story about her dear ones is full of her love of them. Iyah Vladimirovna lives with her second husband Emil Abramovich in a cozy three-bedroom apartment furnished with old-fashioned well-preserved furniture. The feeling of coziness emerges mostly from friendly and hospitable demeanor of the host and hostess. At the end of our discussion a neighbor rings at the door: Iyah Vladimirovna has to go and give medications to her 80-year-old mother who only accepts medications from her hands.

I will start the story of my family from my great grandfather Isaac Varshavskiy, born to the family of rabbi Zelman Varshavskiy in Odessa in 1832. My great grandfather was a Jewish writer, linguist and public activist. [Editor's note: Isaac Varshavskiy is the author of many books, scientific works and manuals in the Jewish, German and Russian languages. He promoted secular education of Jews in Odessa]. My mother lived in the family of her grandfather and grandmother until she turned 6 years of age. She loved them dearly and remembered well. My grandfather studied languages, particularly ancient languages. According to my mother my grandfather knew over twenty languages that he learned on his own. Only after he turned fifty he invited a teacher to study another ancient language. Besides his literary and scientific activities my grandfather was doing charity. He was either chairman or a member of the Odessa Jewish Charity Fund. His family lived in the house in 3, Malaya Arnautskaya Street, where poor Jewish families resided on charity. My mother said that my great grandfather was infinitely humble. He even died somehow quietly. He usually lied down after having the first course waiting for the second. So he died between the first and the second courses. Quietly and calmly, nobody even knew. They came into the room - and he was there, lying. My great grandfather was buried in the second Jewish cemetery that was ruined in the 1960s.

Besides my great grandfather's daughter Ethel Varshavskaya, my mother's mother, Robert, the son of my great grandfather's friends from England who died in a shipwreck, lived in his family for quite a long time. When Robert grew up he went to his homeland and became a literary worker, but I don't know his surname. He wrote much about Odessa, Jews in Odessa and about my great grandfather's family, of course. He wrote about my great grandmother that she was grouchy, but was a kind and sympathetic person. The family teased my great grandmother about it, but she took it easy knowing that Robert's memoirs were warm and full of love. My grandmother Ethel Varshavskaya was born in 1866. She finished a grammar school in Odessa. Shortly afterward somebody told my great grandfather that there were going to be political arrests in Odessa and this may affect my grandmother. My great grandfather rushed into his daughter's room. She was sleeping quietly and there were some forbidden books by her bed. And here my great grandfather, a humble and unpractical man, showed steel will. He grabbed my grandmother by her hand; they

took a cab and went to the seaport. My great grandfather was making arrangements with some officials there for few hours holding his daughter's hand. On that same day she was sailing to Marseilles. In France my grandmother Ethel entered the Medical Faculty of Paris University and finished it brilliantly. Rector of the university wrote a greeting letter to grandfather in Odessa. Odessa newspapers wrote that she graduated from Paris University. However, my grandmother's doctor's career was not easy. Foreign diplomas had to be certified in Russia, and she had to take exams for that. My grandmother got refusals for several years since there were no women doctors at that time in Russia. My grandmother wrote a request addressed to His Royalty and Alexandr III [Russian Emperor in 1881-1894], (his letter was lost during the Great Patriotic War [1](#)) wrote in his own handwriting: 'We don't need women doctors'. Only few years later, during the reign of Nikolay II [Russian Emperor in 1894-1917], when my grandmother lost any hope, suddenly permission was received. My grandmother went to Kharkov University on the following day. She passed her exams successfully and was awarded the title of a woman doctor. She also received a doctor's license to practice medicine. By that time my grandmother Ethel was married to Doctor of Medicine Yefim El'bert.

My maternal grandfather Yefim El'bert was born in Yelisavetgrad (present Kirovograd) in 1863. I know little about his family. All I know is that my grandfather had a brother named Moisey. Moisey's grandson Leonid Solomonovich El'bert is director of the Jewish museum in Kirovograd now. Grandfather Yefim studied at the Medical Faculty of Moscow University, but was expelled for taking part in students' riots. He graduated from Derpt University and then defended a doctor's dissertation in Munich. On 18 May 1992 my grandfather was awarded the title of 'doctor of medicine, surgery and obstetrics'. I think my grandmother and grandfather met and got married in Odessa. My mother and her older sister Vera were born in Odessa.

Approximately in the early 1900s, probably for their ties with revolutionaries, my grandmother and grandfather were directed to move to Belaya Tserkov near Kiev, where they were watched by police. My grandmother had to invite a gendarme to her home to obtain his permission to visit her dressmaker in Kiev. They were good doctors and friendly people. They believed that a doctor did not only have to cure his patients, but also, provide assistance to them. They issued recipes for poor patients to get free medications from their pharmacist. My grandmother and grandfather paid for these medications. They also supported their patients materially. My grandfather was chief doctor of the town hospital and had private practice. He often visited countess Branitskaya living in a nearby mansion and often patients from Kiev came to see him. My grandmother was an obstetrician. She told me that when poor villagers called for her help she even took warm women's underwear to them. To teach them to wear warm underwear. My grandmother and grandfather were very decent with their colleagues. In the past doctors provided free medical services to their colleagues. My mother said that once a young man from Kiev visited my grandfather. He consulted my grandfather and left him the fee. Later somebody told my grandfather that he was a medical student. My grandfather went to Kiev, found this student, gave him his money back and even rebuked him.

My grandmother and grandfather had two daughters. My mother's older sister Vera was born in Odessa in 1891. Vera was growing up surrounded by governesses and housemaids and hated physical work. A room maid used to do her hair, when she was quite a mature young girl. After finishing a grammar school Vera studied in the Historical/Philological faculty of Kharkov University.

Instead of standard four years she studied there for seven years. She was a so-called 'eternal student'. Grandmother Ethel got so tired of this that she borrowed books from the library and wrote a diploma in two weeks. Vera defended it brilliantly. After the October revolution [2](#) aunt Vera lived in Moscow and worked in the library named after Lenin. She got married shortly before the Great Patriotic War and even didn't have time to introduce her husband to her mother. Vera got lost during evacuation. She probably perished. My mother tried to find my sister after the war. She got a letter from the library where they informed that Vera El'bert evacuated from Moscow and this was all information they had about her.

My mother Nadezhda El'bert was born in 1896 and lived in Odessa till the age of 6. After my great grandfather Isaac died my great grandmother brought her to her parents in Belaya Tserkov. My mother told me a lot about her childhood. My grandmother and grandfather had a two-storied house with a big garden. They let the first floor and resided on the second floor. The family had eight rooms: my grandfather's study, a living room, bedrooms, my mother and her sister had their own rooms, and their Swiss governess, whom my grandmother brought from France, had a room. This governess stayed to live in the family when the sisters grew up. She became a member of the family. My grandmother worked a lot as a doctor. There was a cook, two room maids and a laundress to do the housework. When room maids were cleaning my grandmother's room when she was at home, she rushed them: 'That's enough, everything is clean, go'. So they tried to do her room, when grandmother was not at home.

As for my mother, and she told me about it proudly, she did her room herself. She also cleaned the window in her room and liked gardening. When she was a child she couldn't wait till flower beds opened: she used to 'upflower' them opening their buds. My mother said there was a spirit of freedom in the family: nobody lectured to her or made comments. They even didn't scold her for some things that required some comments. My mother, for example, was often late to her grammar school. There was a grammar school for girls and another one for boys in Belaya Tserkov. They were located in a big square. There was also a student who was often late in the grammar school for boys. If they met in the square they looked at each other silently and then turned away to go home. They knew that if they had met that meant that they were hopelessly late. At home everybody exclaimed happily: 'Naden'ka is back!' There were no comments or notices. However, my mother studied well and received an award of praise every year. : She was a very graceful miniature brunette and spoke impeccable French and was called 'French' in her grammar school.

The El'berts had many acquaintances and there were often guests in the house. There was a custom to play cards at such receptions. My grandmother didn't like it. My mother told me that my grandmother always dropped cards when sitting at the card table. Grandfather Yefim was chairman of a local club. Once the wife of one of his doctors asked my grandfather to talk to her husband who was not good in his family. My grandfather tried to talk to him when they were playing billiards. That man got angry: 'Do you think you can issue orders in this club as if it were a hospital? This is not your business!' My grandfather was very kind, but quick-tempered. He threw a billiard ball onto the floor with such strength that it cracked. Later some students who were on training in my grandfather's hospital, brought this ball to my mother and told her the story. Everybody laughed. That man came to apologize to my grandfather later. Grandfather Yefim loved my mother. Every now and then he called her home saying: 'My joy, the treasure of my life'. When my mother grew into a young girl, other students began to do the same. They called and said

parroting my grandfather: 'My joy, the treasure of my life'. By that time there were frequent gatherings of young people at home: my grandfather liked the company of the young. He liked to treat them to something to eat. He used to say jokingly: 'Cavalry, welcome to sweet treatments!' My grandfather had health problems and traveled to Baden-Baden to get water treatment every year. My mother went with him several times. My grandfather died at the age of 56 shortly after the October revolution.

For my mother the choice of profession was a decided matter since her childhood. She used to go on calls with my grandfather. She recalled that he had an extremely large fur coat and assured that she could fit in a sleeve of this fur coat. Before the revolution of 1917 my mother entered the medical faculty of Kharkiv University. During the Civil War [3](#), after my grandfather died, she came home and saw the cold and empty apartment, two beds in one of the rooms, grandmother Ethel lying on one bed and the governess – on another. There was a bucket with freezing water in the middle of the room and the two ladies were at the point of freezing. Of course, my mother stayed with them, or my grandmother would have died.

Shortly afterward Denikin troops [4](#) and Western Ukrainian units [editor's note: at the beginning of WWI, in summer 1914 in Lvov (Austro-Hungary then) the Ukrainian Legion later called 'Ukrainian Sich Riflemen' was formed from Ukrainian volunteers. Members of Ukrainian organizations for young people and students constituted a big part of this unit.] occupied Belaya Tserkov. These two armies united to struggle against Bolsheviks. Somebody reported to them that my mother was a revolutionary and a Bolshevik. Two officers came to our house: one was a young officer of the Western Ukrainian army, student of the Vienna University, and a Denikin officer. My mother remembered this Denikin officer very well: he lounged with his leg crossed and look very hostile. My mother would have been arrested. The Ukrainian officer called my mother's sister Vera and said: 'Bring a Ukrainian man to guarantee that your sister would stay at home and I will take him away for an hour. You will disappear during this time, or he would never let your sister go'. Vera rushed to Vladimir Dziekovskiy, my future father, who worked with her. He ran to the house and signed his guarantee that my mother would stay. The Ukrainian officer took the Denikin officer away and my father took my mother, grandmother and my mother's sister to an acquaintance of his who had returned from the czar's exile for being a Ukrainian nationalist. And this stranger of a man gave shelter to my mother, grandmother and my mother's sister. They stayed there for over a week while Denikin troops were in Belaya Tserkov. He saved their lives.

I know little about my father's parents. My paternal grandfather Matvey Dziekovskiy was Ukrainian and worked as inspector of public vocational schools in Mogilyov-Podolskiy and then in Belaya Tserkov. My grandfather died shortly before the revolution. My grandmother Ksenia Dziekovskaya, nee Belskaya, was a teacher. She died at 36, when my father was still a child. There were three children in the family.

My father's younger sister, I think her name was Natalia, died, when she was small. She contracted diphtheria from my father. When he recovered and his parents told him that his little sister had passed away, he fainted. He loved her dearly. My father's younger brother Georgiy Dziekovskiy, whom we called Zhorzh, was born in 1900. He finished grammar school with a gold medal and entered the Medical Faculty of the university, but he never finished his studies: the revolution and Civil War broke his plans. Uncle Zhorzh worked as chief accountant in medical institutions. He lived in Toksovo near Leningrad before the war. His wife Ludmila was a lawyer. She worked as a

judge. In 1937 uncle Zhorzh was arrested [5](#) [Great Terror]. When his wife wrote us that uncle Zhorzh had been arrested, my mother prepared a pile of underwear for my father who also might be arrested for being a close relative. I remember this pile very well. However, uncle Zhorzh was released a short time later. He said that he got lucky: during interrogation one prisoner hit the investigation officer on his head with the stool and this officer died. All prisoners whose cases this officer pleaded were released. Uncle Zhorzh visited us and said to my father: 'I apologize, but I signed everything they demanded, even what there was against you'. My father replied: 'Try to forget this nightmare as soon as you can. I understand very well'. Uncle Zhorzh was at the front during the great patriotic War. After the war he returned to Toksovo. He visited us for the last time in Odessa in 1974. shortly before my mother died. Uncle Zhorzh died in the 1980s.

My father Vladimir Dziekovskiy was born in Sevastianovka village of Kamenets-Podolskiy district Podolsk province (present Khmelnytskyi region) in 1891. My father finished a grammar school and entered the Law Faculty of Kiev University. Upon graduation from the university my father lived in Belaya Tserkov where he worked as a lawyer in an office. At the time when my mother, grandmother and my mother's sister were hiding from Denikin troops there was a Jewish pogrom in Belaya Tserkov. My father was a strong and brave man, but he turned pale when telling me about this pogrom. He said there was nothing more terrifying in his life. My father gave shelter to Jews in an outhouse in his yard. I don't know how they heard about it, but Jews from all over the town were running to hide there. There were so many people in this house that they could only stand close to one another. Little children were pressing their hands to their mouths to keep silent. This was so horrifying that my father couldn't speak. He came into the yard showing them where to go. My father recalled that all of a sudden it became very quiet and my father saw children running to him dragging a paralyzed old man with a white beard and his hand was hitting against the pavement. The sound of this hitting imprinted on his memory for the rest of his life. However, it worked all right: it never occurred to anybody to look for Jews at my father's home. He rescued many of them. After these memorable events my parents never parted. My grandmother had nothing against their marriage. She as a broad-minded person and respected and loved my father ultimately.

When the Civil War was over, my mother went to continue her studies in Kiev. My father followed her and also entered the Medical Faculty having legal education. However, my mother was soon expelled from university for her, so to say, bourgeois origin. It was this way then: workers, peasants and bourgeoisie, there were no other categories. My mother's acquaintance from Belaya Tserkov expelled my mother. He was as store owner and before the revolution he took every effort to belong to the circle of my mother's family acquaintances. When Bolsheviks came to power he became a Bolshevik immediately. Grandmother Ethel went to Kharkov that was the capital of Ukraine at that period [1918-1934], to see Petrovskiy [Petrovskiy, Grigoriy Ivanovich (1878-1958) – Soviet state and Party official], who was head of the Ukrainian government. They were not acquainted, but probably Petrovskiy heard about my grandmother. His office was on the 4th floor. Seeing my grandmother off, Petrovskiy escorted her downstairs and said: 'Don't worry, your daughter will be resumed before you reach Kiev'. It was true, my mother resumed her studies in the university.

Upon graduation in 1929 my parents and a group of their friends got assignments to Azarichi village Mogilyov district in Byelorussia. There was miserable poverty and wild ignorance in the

village. The only 'medication' these villagers used was 'cognac', as they called horse urine. Many villagers had syphilis. My mother recalled a lovely 3-year-old boy who had congenital syphilis. Five young doctors started to organize a hospital there. They lived like a commune: Borschik (Boris), Solomonchik (Solomon), Doda (Adolf), and my mother and father. Borschik and Solomonchik were Jews and Doda was half-Polish, half German. There was a lot of work to do in the hospital, of course. My mother was pregnant, but she was so busy that she failed even to go to the district polyclinic on time and there was no obstetrics department in Azarichi. On the way to the clinic she started labor and returned home. My father and his friends assisted her at the delivery. So my older sister Inna was born in 1930.

After Inna was born my parents moved to Dnepropetrovsk and grandmother Ethel followed them. She worked a little during the Soviet regime, and Soviet authorities gave her a miserable pension of 6 or 9 rubles. My mother and father insisted that she wrote a letter of refusal from this pension. I, Iyah Dziekovskaya, was born in December 1931. My mother told me that when she was bearing me her pregnancy wasn't seen till the last day. Again my mother failed to get to a maternity hospital. When she started labor at night, my father ran to their neighbor who was an obstetrician: 'Nadezha is in labor!' She didn't believe him: 'Vladimir, what kind of joking is this in the middle of the night?' My mother gave birth instantly.

We had two rooms in a communal apartment [6](#). My grandmother and father slept in one room. There was a large carpet from my grandmother's home, miraculously preserved, on the wall over my father's sofa. It was so big that it covered the sofa and fell on the floor. There was a gray wolf's skin over my grandmother's sofa. There were canvas covers on the sofas. My mother and the children slept in another room. I remember that we had a wood stoked boiler for water heating. My father bathed Inna and me. After the bath he wrapped us in a sheet and carried to the room. I still have pleasant memories about it. My grandmother and father got along very well. Once my mother told me that once she was in another room and heard my father telling my grandmother Ethel how he loved and respected her. One couldn't help loving her. She was a wonderful person, kind, tactful and very intelligent. My grandmother inherited love of literature from her father who was a linguist. I remember grandmother telling fairy tales to me and my sister. She could recite poems in Russian and sometimes in Hebrew for hours. My grandmother was very fond of Zhukovskiy's ballads.

My grandmother wasn't religious and didn't observe Jewish traditions, but I remember an incident. Once my mother fell ill. Grandmother Ethel, who didn't even know to boil semolina, decided to go to the market for the first time in her life. She bought us a doll, a postman or a monkey - we never found out. Somebody convinced her to buy it, you know. She also brought a living hen. My grandmother probably knew that it was not allowed to buy chickens slaughtered by God knows whom. A shochet had to slaughter chickens. However, nobody in our family could slaughter it. My mother told me once that she heard terrible noise in the kitchen. She went to the kitchen however ill she was feeling. She saw my father and grandmother sticking to a corner, and a neighbor was throwing logs into the chicken trying to kill it. In the end they gave this chicken away. My family got along well with neighbors. An obstetrician and her husband lived in one room. There was also an old woman with her daughter and son-in-law. This old woman was a widow of the general governor of Tbilisi. She lived through a terrible tragedy. Her daughter's husband was arrested in 1937. Her daughter took poison and her son-in-law was released few days later.

Grandmother Ethel looked after my sister and me. We often played in the yard where there were many other children. I remember the Bazilevich family having seven children. They were rather poor and my parents were helping them with food. They had big stomachs and their pants were always hanging down. The oldest Kostia was chief in our group. We played hide-and-seek, kazaki-razboiniki (similar to hide-and-seek, only the sides had name of kazaki and razboiniki) and girls played with skipping-ropes. In summer my mother took my sister and me and other children to swim in the Dnieper. She looked young and when we took a tram people were surprised that there was 'such a young mother having so many children'. Another childhood memory: I was invited to a birthday party. It was winter and it snowed. My sister and her friend 'got harnessed' in the sledges and rode me to the party. My mother liked to recall when one of our neighbors was taking few children from our yard for a walk. They also called my sister: 'Iyah, come with us, but take Iyah home. She is too small and it will be too hard for her'. Inna was eager to join them, but she didn't want to leave me behind. My mother was watching this scene through the window thinking: 'So what's going to happen?' Inna was firmly holding my hand sobbing loudly, but stayed with me. This describes very clearly the nature of our relationships. We were devoted to one another, which didn't stop us from having arguments once in a while.

My parents were not communists and never attended parades on Soviet holidays. My favorite We always had high New Year trees reaching the ceiling. There were high ceilings. My mother, grandmother and we used to make chains and decorations from color paper. We emptied eggs and painted faces on egg shells, put a cap from silver paper on top and it made a clown. Once on a New Year eve my mother was working in the medical office at a plant and this plant gave tangerines to their employees. We were going home by tram carrying a big bag of tangerines. They smelled unbelievably. My mother gave one to a boy and then all other children in the tram came to us to get a tangerine. When we came home, there was not one left. I can still remember the smell of tangerines.

Inna and I studied music with a tutor at home before we went to school. I cannot remember her name, but I remember her hands very well. They were not delicate like most of musician's hands, but fattish with bright red nails. She was an excellent pianist. We got along so well that she stayed to play for us after classes. Our family got together to listen to her. This teacher was a Jew and Germans shot her in 1941. She got into the first party of Jews, whom Germans exterminated in Dnepropetrovsk. We also had a German teacher. Her name was Gertruda Eduardovna. She must have been a good teacher since even now those German words that we studied with her emerge from my memory. But when the Great Patriotic War began, the first thing Inna and I did was that we refused to study German.

I went to school before I turned 8 in 1939. My first teacher Grigoriy Abramovich Kalashnikov was a very good person, tough as all of them of old generation were. He was a real pedagogue and knew how to win the children's favor. Considering his patronymic he was a Jew. Poor thing, he didn't evacuate. Seeing what was happening around him in occupation he hanged himself. I boasted a little of knowing German at school. At times I wrote words in Latin letters: 'Oh, I've got it all mixed and wrote this word in German', but in general, I wasn't a braggart. Was very shy when a child and even had tears in my eyes when talking to strangers. I got along well with my classmates, but I only remember Lenchka Belokopytova, my friend, she had black curly hair. Nobody else, I guess.

My mother and father worked a lot. My father worked as a forensic medical expert combining his two diplomas. My mother worked as a therapist in hospital. During the Finnish War [7](#) my mother worked as a surgeon in hospital and stayed there for weeks. My mother always wore shoes and never slippers at work. Her feet got so swollen that when she came home she even couldn't take off her shoes. Inna and I missed mother a lot and often went to see her in her hospital. Every time we bought her bug brooches: they seemed so nice to us. My mother had many of these and I remember that her friend Lora Rutskaya got terrified seeing them on her dressing table: 'Lord, how awful!'

In March 1940 grandmother Ethel died from pneumonia, a common cause of death with old people. She was 74. Here I would like to mention something that caused our emotional shock. Before the revolution a girl who wanted to become a doctor asked my grandmother to help her. She came from a rich and conservative family. Her parents thought that women of her circles could not do any work. My grandmother supported her during the course of her studies. They kept in touch, but after the revolution they lost track of one another. When my grandmother was dying, my mother called an ambulance and the doctor who arrived on call was that woman. She recognized my grandmother the moment she stepped into the room. My mother said later that it wasn't just an ordinary coincidence. This woman lived in Dnepropetrovsk in the same street 11 years, but they didn't meet once. She couldn't even come to my grandmother's funeral feeling ill. My grandmother was buried in the Jewish cemetery, but I don't remember the ritual.

The war began when I was under 10 years of age. On 22 June 1941 we woke up in the morning and co-tenants said: 'You know, it's a war'. On the first days of the war we, children, captured a 'spy'. The man carrying a cabbage in an avoska bag [avoska: a Russian string bag, avoska literally means 'just in case'] seemed suspicious to us. We captured him and led by our chief Kostia Bazilevich took him to a militia office. He kept telling us: 'I went out to buy cabbage. What are you doing?' Of course, the militia sent us out of there. Bombings began. My father snored in his sleep and during intervals between bombings we could clearly hear his snoring. Later I realized that he was doing this on purpose to calm us down. There were pits made in our yard, but my father never went out during air raids. He thought it was humiliating. My father's generation had their own idea of dignity.

In August our family decided to evacuate and we went to the railway station. It was unbelievable what it was all like there! My parents were not go-getting people. They stood there looking - and returned home. We were unpacking when our neighbor rushed in: 'There is an empty train. Nobody knows about it yet'. My mother only grabbed some documents, they were probably prepared in advance. Our neighbor grabbed some luggage that turned out to be absolutely unnecessary later. Another bombing began and we had to go. Our train was the last one to cross the railroad bridge across the Dnieper. It was destroyed by bombs and nobody could leave the town after us.

I have fragmentary memories about the evacuation. I remember that we were in a freight carriage and I felt very sleepy. There was a man sitting beside me and my head was falling on his shoulder. It made him uncomfortable and he was trying to move away and I was murmuring in my sleep: 'Why fidgeting? Sit quiet!' We reached Cherkessk in the Caucasus. I studied in the 2nd form there and I remember that I became a pioneer in Cherkessk. My father got an invitation to go to work as a forensic doctor, a morbid anatomist, in Turkmenia. We went to Makhachkala and from there took a boat to Krasnovodsk across the Caspian Sea. Terrible boat. I remember a very handsome Jewish

man standing on deck with us. He was thoroughly removing some specks of dust from his jacket and my mother said: 'David Solomonovich, is it worth paying attention to this now?' He replied: 'These are lice'. He was throwing them down into the sea. When our boat arrived at Krasnovodsk I remember that we all felt awfully cold. There was a girl walking in the street wearing some light clothes. So it wasn't probably that cold. We were probably starved. I also remember finding three onions in the ground near the harbor. We enjoyed eating them even without bread - they were not bitter at all. From Krasnovodsk we went to Ashgabat where we stayed few days with chief forensic expert of Turkmenia. This was a nice Russian family. From Ashgabat we went to Charjou [2 750 km from Dnepropetrovsk] where my father was to take up his job. It was a small town. Most of its residents lived in small cottages. We rented a room in one house. There was a long corridor leading to the room. The militia office gave my father a vehicle to get there. The landlady was horrified to see that we came with militia escort. She decided they were going to force her to accept us as permanent residents. Ewe lived in this room until 1944.

I studied in the 3rd, 4th and 5th forms in Charjou. It was a good school. There were many children in evacuation and many Jews among them. I remember a boy with extraordinary red hair and a long nose. I don't remember any demonstrations of anti-Semitism. I don't think there was any in Charjou. I had a Jewish friend. She sang very beautifully, but she strongly burred the 'r' sound. I wanted her to sing at a pioneer meeting, but my mother said they would laugh at her hearing her burring. However, this was only my mother's assumption. Once an aged woman stopped my mother and me in the street addressing my mother friendly: 'Are you a Jewish child?' My mother replied: 'Yes, I am Jewish'. They talked about something. I remembered this 'Jewish child'. It was something new to me: my mother was called 'a child' when for me she was always an adult, a big person.

When my sister Inna was in the 7th form, senior children were taken to pick cotton. One of the girls fell ill with enteric fever and Inna contracted it from her. That girl died in hospital. As for Inna, my mother didn't let her go to hospital. We were always at home when we were ill. My mother managed to bring Inna to recovery and nobody contracted the disease in the family. My mother disinfected everything thoroughly and always washed her hands in chlorine. I remember her hands, red and swollen. My mother worked in a hospital in Charjou. My classmates and I ran there to see her. We tried to help patients as much as we could. We gave them medications and wrote their letters that they dictated to us. I even started cigarettes for them. Before going to the front patients came to my mother's office to say 'good bye'. Once a tall young man and his friend came to say 'good bye' to my mother. They sat there recalling Jewish words. In the evening my mother lectured at the courses of medical nurses. There were eighteen-twenty-year old girls at the courses. The first graduates of the courses perished. Their train got under bombing when moving to the front. Only one survived: she lost her legs. My mother couldn't help tears when thinking about them.

My father requested to be sent to the front, but they didn't let him go. There were few cases of dangerous infection in Charjou: either cholera or plague. My father worked with autopsies. He felt reluctant to come home after autopsies fearing that he could bring infection home. My father stayed in hospital at such times. My mother, Inna and I came to his hospital. My mother said that if we were destined to die then we would die together. Mother said we would not leave the hospital without him and my father returned home with us. Shortly afterward my father fell seriously ill. He

had cirrhosis of liver. My mother often had to replace him at work. When my father couldn't come to an autopsy she even brought home the insides for him to identify the cause of death. Gradually my mother gathered sufficient experience to work as forensic doctor.

In 1944 we returned to Dnepropetrovsk, but it didn't look like home: our house was ruined, and Germans razed the Jewish cemetery where my grandmother was buried to the ground. We walked across this abandoned ground and couldn't find the spot where my grandmother's grave used to be. My father was appointed regional forensic expert in Izmail. [Bessarabia] ⁸. Our family moved there by a military train. In Izmail my father left us at the railway station and went to the town health department. He came back with a cab and a bag with a boiled chicken and dried figs. We loaded our small luggage onto the cab and followed it walking. Inna and I were eating chicken and dried figs on the way: our parents allowed us to eat since we were starved. My mother was walking in my father old coat that was hanging on her like a tent since my father was bigger and taller than her. So the procession of us entered Izmail. We were temporarily accommodated in a small room in the polyclinic.

Izmail of this period was ideally clean. There were few snow-white churches with their bells tolling. I don't think there was a synagogue in Izmail, or it didn't operate anyway. There were magnificent roses growing near a cathedral in the center of the town. . There were cabs riding the streets. This all disappeared within a couple of years. Some churches were turned into storage facilities. Roses also disappeared somehow. People in evacuation were called Soviet in Izmail. Vendors at the market called my mother 'madam' and kissed her hands. This made my mother feel uncomfortable and she kissed them on the forehead to somehow sooth down the situation. .

My father received a cottage. He accommodated a part of it for his forensic medicine office and our family could live in another part of the house. My father went to take a look at this house. There were few families whose men perished at the front living in the house. They began to scream: 'Where are we to go? We won't get a place to live!' One of them gave my father a package of American soup to bribe him: this was probably the most valuable thing she had. My father found this pack later. I don't even remember what we did with it. My father was so shocked that he refused from this house. For acting in this manner my father couldn't receive an apartment for a long time. We lived in the polyclinic and used a common toilet in the yard where all patients also went.

My sister and I studied in school #2 for girls. There were different teachers: some were very intelligent and others were not. This was in 1944, when the war was still on. I remember very well, when the war was over. We were living in the polyclinic. My father having cirrhosis of his liver was sleeping on the only bed and we slept on the floor. On the night of 9 May there was shooting in the town and my sister joked: 'These must be German landing troops'. In the morning we got to know that the war was over. There was rejoicing. There was only one man in our school, teacher of mathematic Pavel Romanovich, a Jew. He was at the front and was wounded. A small shy man. On Victory Day all schoolgirls began to chair him. We directed all our admiration to him. He felt very shy, poor thing. There was a sad accident after the war: some bandits killed a young officer, almost a boy. His mother visited us later. He was a Jew, I remember this well.

Shortly afterward we received an apartment in a long one-storied building in Dunayskaya Street. There were two big rooms and one very small room, a storeroom and a big kitchen. There was

plain furniture. My father was always against carpets saying that they accumulate a lot of dust. He also said that wiping dishes with towels didn't comply with hygienic requirements. There were no dish drying stands and we stored our dishes in a big dish to dry up. There was an old beautiful tiled stove in the dining room and there was a silk orange lampshade. It was so cozy to sit there with the whole family for dinner. We had late dinners when my father returned from work. Then he lied down to rest and then worked at night. Whenever I woke up there was light in the next-door room where my father was working sitting at his desk. He usually had few jobs at a time. My father worked in Izmail 17 years without vacations: there was no replacement for him. My father gave his one salary for housekeeping and my mother's salary was also spent for living. My father saved his salary from another job to buy books. My father always came from work with a couple of books. First he took out one book looking at my mother. My mother laughed: 'Come on, show what else you've bought'. I inherited my parents' collection of books: 'books on history, history of art, medical books and many fiction books.

There were many intelligent people in Izmail. We met one of them, Lawyer Burdin in Charjou where he evacuated. He was a nice and friendly man, always looking well with some European luster. His wife, a young teacher, was also our friend. Burdin invited his barber to shave him at home. Once he said to this barber: 'In the old times I could pay you more than I can now'. This barber reported on him. Burdin was arrested and exiled to the north. When he returned 7 years later and visited us, my mother, who was alone at home, didn't recognize him: he was an elderly man. He walked shuffling. However, he said: 'It's all right, it's all right. I was all right there releasing parcels'. He probably signed a non-disclosure obligation. After his exile he got into hospital. The Jewish community of Izmail supported him. Jews brought him food to the hospital. Perhaps, the community didn't exist officially at that time, but when something happened, they showed up. Burdin died a short time later. As for the community, I remember another proof: when my friend Emma Haham's father had a stroke, a strange Jewish man, whom they didn't know, came to their house every week and put an envelope with money under her father's pillow and left. Somebody was responsible for collecting this money, I guess.

There were many doctors among our acquaintances, decent and nice people, Jewish by origin. Doctor Motniak, wonderful doctor, graduated from the University in Paris. Pinskiy, chief doctor of the town polyclinic, received medical education in Rome. Pinskiy was also arrested. It seems, it happened before the campaign of struggle against cosmopolitanism [9](#). My father was called to the NKVD office [10](#) to witness against him. Of course, my father didn't say anything, and they kept him there three days. They sent a nice smiling young man to tell us that my father had left on business. He often traveled on business and we didn't worry. My father returned few days later. During the sadly known period of the 'doctors' plot' [11](#) in 1952 none of our acquaintances suffered.

All of my classmates were my friends, but my closest friend was Emma Haham. She was two forms my junior and lived nearby. Now I understand that Emma's family was more traditional than ours, but I didn't take any interest in it then and I don't know any details. All I remember is that in 1948 Emma's aunt and we discussed the establishment of Israel. We were happy about it. I cannot say there was anti-Semitism in Izmail, but here is what happened to Emma once: she was walking along a street and there was a unit of soldiers marching by. They pronounced all together: 'Sarrochka!' [the main characters in Russian anti-Semitic anecdotes were Abram and Sarrah]. His was so abusive that Emma remembered it all her life. She recalled this when leaving for America in

1977. She lives with her family in Los Angeles and we call each other.

I joined Komsomol [12](#) in Izmail. My classmates elected me a Komsomol organizer of my the class. There was an incident when I was in the 10th form. Our teacher of mathematic was Akulina Trofimovna. Everybody called her Akula ('shark' in Russian). Once my classmate Lida Levitskaya (she lives in Israel now) was late. When the teacher asked her what happened, Lida began her story with 'Akula sent me to...' She never finished her story. The teacher began to yell: "How can you call a teacher with this name!" There was a scandal: they were going to expel Lida from Komsomol and there was an issue posed whether she deserved to be allowed to finish school. I spoke in her defense at a meeting. I said there were always nicknames given to teachers and to pupils and there was nothing bad about it. Then the district Komsomol committee called Lida to come see them. They asked whether she and I were related. So, I got a reprimand. We both finished school without problems.

My sister Inna entered the History faculty of Odessa University, but soon she married Vladimir Sorokin, Russian, captain of a long voyage boat , and quit the university. However, my parents insisted that she got at least some education and she finished the school of cultural education in Odessa and then the Librarian College in Leningrad. In 1953 Inna gave birth to her son Alexandr. Inna was a bright and generous person. She looked like father: tall and fair haired. Inna adored dogs. Once, when she and I were in Leningrad she saw a beautiful Newfoundland dog in Nevskiy Prospect. She couldn't sleep at night and the following day we ran to this yard where the dog went. This turned out to be a female dog and there were puppies to be few months later. Inna made arrangements with our friend in Leningrad and few months later he brought her a puppy to Odessa. This was the first Newfoundland in Odessa after the war. They named her Lotta. Inna became chairman of the Newfoundland breed in the dog breeding club in Odessa. Later Lotta's grand puppy Darling lived in the house.

My family had no doubts about me: I was to be a doctor. I even went to the autopsy office of my father. My father wanted to know whether I could stand it. I managed. Well, during exams in the 10th form I bumped into a popular scientific book 'Human Being and Elements' by Iliin about meteorologists and I decided to enter Odessa Meteorological College. At first my mother and father were unhappy about it, but they never forced me to do things and I went to study in this college. There were three boys in my group and the rest of us were girls. I was elected the Komsomol leader again, but this time my Komsomol career flopped. We had a choir rehearsal, but my friend Dina Mikheyeva had a date, besides, she had a poor voice. I allowed her to miss the rehearsal: 'This is more important than singing in the choir with your voice'. He others blamed me that I was shielding my friends. They even drew a caricature of me in our wallpaper where I was depicted as a sitting hen and my friend was looking out of a wing. Without giving it much of a thought, I pulled down this newspaper. I thought this was unfair. They said I didn't acknowledge criticism and didn't elect me Komsomol leader for the fifth year.

When Stalin died, I was agitator at the election to the Supreme Soviet and visited voters at a small plant in Kanatnaya Street. I worked with their Komsomol leader, a young and merry guy. When Stalin died, I went there to check the lists of voters. I couldn't recognize him: his face was swollen from tears and his hands were trembling. And then it occurred to me that this was unnatural. This wasn't his father who died. Then I developed somewhat skeptical attitude to this 'nation-wide' grief. I also remember that we were very sorry for our co-student who had birthday on 5 March

[Stalin died on this date]. We thought this would become a day of mourning for many years to come and she would not be able to celebrate her birthday.

In my 4th year in college I had training in Baku where I met my husband to be Boris Sizov. He was Russian. Boris was born in Kuibyshev. He finished the Baku Industrial College named after Beriya [13](#). Boris worked at the plant of the Paris Commune. I married him when I was the 5th-year student and after finishing my college I joined him in Baku. My husband and I lived in the room that he received from his plant. I worked in the Weather Bureau of the department of hydrometeorological service of the Azerbaijan SSR. Baku is a multinational and multi-language town with oriental features. There was no anti-Semitism there. It's a very beautiful town, with magnificent Primorskiy Boulevard along the Caspian seashore. It was wonderfully pleasant to walk there under the blooming fragrant oleander trees.

When in 1956 after the 20th Party Congress [14](#) denunciation of the cult of Stalin began, I didn't bother about it, but what Khrushchev [15](#) was saying about Stalin was horrifying. I remember a big meeting at the plant where my husband worked where they denounced Beriya. As a rule, common workers also spoke at such meetings to represent the masses. One uneducated Azerbaijani was directed to read a speech in Russian. His reading was very poor. He could hardly read syllables. After the denouncing part he was used that all speeches ended with the words: 'Long live... whoever', and he habitually finished his speech with 'Long live comrade Beriya!' There was dead silence and then attendants burst into wild laughter. Nobody could hold back his laughter. Later, in the 1960s I read 'One day of Ivan Denisovich' by Solzhenitsyn [16](#) that astounded me. I don't quite like the rest of his works. And I don't quite like him. Perhaps, his mentor's tone does not quite impress me.

I lived in Baku for five years. My husband and I didn't get along. I moved to my parents in Izmail. Boris died shortly afterward. In a park. He was walking and then he sat on a bench and died. He was never ill in his life. He was under 30 years of age.

My mother and father lived their routinely life in Izmail. Twice a week there were new movies in movie theaters and my mother and father went to the cinema. My father booked tickets on the phone: 'We are coming today. Please reserve our seats'. My father had poor sight and they usually sat in the 7th row. We didn't often have guests. We had young acquaintances for the most part: Vitaliy Sinelnikov, doctor, graduate of the Leningrad Medical Academy. He was appointed a forensic doctor of the Danube Fleet and my father was training him in this specific medical profession. He became my parents' friend, though he was my age. There was also Vladimir Ivanov from Moscow, a journalist. I hardly knew him since I was in Baku when he was in Izmail. My parents said he was a talented young man, but he died young. He liked drinking.

I worked as a weather forecaster in the weather bureau. In November 1960 my father died. After my father's death I worked there some time longer, but then the weather bureau closed. There was no job for me in Izmail and I moved to Odessa. My former college lecturer offered me a job at the department of physics in the Refrigeration Institute. I became a lab assistant and then a scientific employee. I worked at the Refrigeration Institute till retirement. At first I lived with Inna. My mother often came to visit us. Inna worked at the conservatory library. At the age of 30 she fell ill with severe diabetes and quit work, though she led a very active life. She often went on tours abroad and in our country. I went with her to Bulgaria and the Caucasus. Inna liked giving me

expensive gifts. Inna was very active. When they bought a dacha and were reconstructing it, she made drawings herself. She supervised their workers, though she had never dealt in construction. She also arranged repairs in their apartment when her husband was sailing.

In 1963 my mother helped me to buy a cooperative three-bedroom apartment in Odessa and my mother moved in with me. My mother insisted that we moved my father's ashes to Odessa. We were one of the first in our house to buy a TV. We watched all programs, even our state leaders' speeches, I believe, at first. My mother and I were sitting side by side on the sofa. Our neighbors visited us to watch TV, of course. One of them, lecturer at the conservatory, came with his acquaintances. There were about twenty people coming in. They sat on the floor when there were not enough chairs. There was also a neighbor who liked figure skating. He used to sit with us till 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. We had nice neighbors and got along with colleagues. We often celebrated birthdays together. Men gave us souvenirs and cosmetics on 8 March. My former colleagues still visit me on jubilee dates.

I often traveled on business. I mainly went to Moscow. On my way from Moscow airport to the city I always enjoyed the view of a forest in winter: tree branches covered with hoar frost were like resembled Japanese landscape. However, I didn't like Moscow: too much fuss and noise. But when I came to a museum – this was different. I particularly liked beautiful museums of the Kremlin. In the evening I went to theaters. In Kiev I went to the Lesia Ukrainka Theater. In the 1970s my mother was severely ill and I was reluctant to leave her. When I went on business I called home from the airport in Moscow to ask whether everything was all right. My friends came by to look after my mother and walk Plutik, our poodle. My mother loved him dearly. He always held him in her hands and he slept at her feet. After her death he scowled so. When I left for work my neighbors came to the door to call him 'Plutik, Plutik!' My mother died in 1975. We buried her near my father in the international cemetery.

I met my second husband Emil Levinson in the Odessa Pedagogical College in 1963. There was admission of engineers to the third year of the Faculty of physics. There was a demand for teachers of physics. We were good friends. He had a wife and two daughters: Lilia and Irina. Emil was born to a Jewish family in Pervomaysk in 1935. His father Abram Naumovich Levinson finished Odessa Flour Grounding College and worked as production engineer. His mother Clara Iosifovna was a housewife. His older sister Yevgenia was single. Emil lectured on physics in the Transport Technical School. We hadn't seen each other after finishing college in 1965. Almost 20 years later in 1982, I bumped into him on my way home from work. It was raining and we had umbrellas. We stopped to talk. Emil's wife had died by then. Then he began to visit and call me. And we decided to live together. At this age I was doubtful about marrying for the second time, though Emil was insisting. I replied: 'We are so old. People get married at twenty'. Once I fell severely ill, when he was on a business trip. I thought: What am I doing? If I die, Emil won't have the right for my apartment'. When he returned, we got married. His daughters are very good to me. They thank me for living with their father. I reply: 'I feel good living with your father. He is so good. You don't have to thank me'. Lilia and her family live in Karmi'el in Israel and Irina lives in Dresden.

In January 1986 Inna had a heart attack and I took quite an effort to make her go to the hospital of sailors. I stayed with her in her ward for a month. We informed her husband on his boat. He arrived from Italy few weeks later: at that time visa services were slow. He stood on his knees before her and stayed with her till the end. She died in my hands and Volodia's two days later.

We were positive about perestroika [17](#). I liked Gorbachev [18](#). He made an impression of a trustworthy person. As for our former leaders, I didn't even distinguish them. They were amazingly alike. Only Brezhnev was different with his wide brows. I remember new magazines and interesting articles published. We learned many new things that we had never heard about before. As for the break up of the USSR, it probably had to happen. Who needed this huge empire where they suppressed everybody. It's all right with me that Ukraine separated from Russia. I've always identified myself as a Jew. I have many Jewish friends. And they would be my friends even if they were not Jews.

In 1998 Emil and I visited his daughter Lilia in Israel. It was a wonderful trip. Even that I was called 'zhydovka' for the first time in my life didn't spoil the trip. We went there by boat, and there was another couple in our cabin: an old Jewish man with his wife. I have diabetes and have to make regular injections of insulin. Once I prepared my syringe when they came in. I asked them to go out for a minute. Lord, she began to yell back: 'Zhydovka! [abusive word for a Jew]' You only think about yourselves, that's why everybody hates you!' Emil got very angry and informed the passenger assistant who suggested informing Israel authorities that there was an anti-Semite on the boat and they would not allow her to even step onto the ground of Israel. I felt sorry for these people: 'You know, let them go'. The assistant talked with our co-passengers. After his visit they changed beyond recognition: 'Are you comfortable? Do you want this?' It was very unpleasant.

Israel is an amazing country! The main impression is feeling at home. Lilia bought us a number of trips. We traveled almost across the whole country within a month. The only place we didn't visit was the Dead Sea. I remember when we were in the north of Israel, a big bus stopped and a bunch of kids came out of it. They wore black jackets and payes. They were like penguin babies. It was probably their prayer time: they turned in the direction of Jerusalem and prayed swaying. It was a very moving scene. Of course, we went to the Wailing Wall and dropped our notes. We are very concerned about Israel now. I am not going to leave and I think one must live in the land he was born in, where ones ancestors are buried.

I've always liked history, and the history of our people is very interesting. Now I receive Jewish newspapers and magazines 'Or Sameach', 'Shomrey Shaboth' and 'Migdal'. I receive many other publications in the library of the Jewish center 'Migdal'. Jewish charity center Gemilut Hesed helps us a lot. Now, when my husband and I are pensioners their food parcels are very supportive. We actually spend all our money on the apartment fees and medications. I am an invalid of grade 2 due to diabetes and we receive medications per 30 hrivna per month. On Pesach we receive two packs of matzah, and we even sent one to Germany. We have a very nice and caring curator Irina. When Emil and I were in hospital she visited us there. For almost a year a girl from Hesed cleans our apartment and takes our laundry to the Laundromat. In autumn we were invited to celebrate Rosh Hashanah. It was very interesting. We went to listen to interpretation of the Torah several times.

Glossary:

[1](#) 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.

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 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.

4 Denikin, Anton Ivanovich (1872-1947)

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

5 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.

6 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.

7 Soviet-Finnish War (1939-40)

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

8 Bessarabia

Historical area between the Prut and Dneestr rivers, in the southern part of Odessa region. Bessarabia was part of Russia until the Revolution of 1917. In 1918 it declared itself an independent republic, and later it united with Romania. The Treaty of Paris (1920) recognized the union but the Soviet Union never accepted this. In 1940 Romania was forced to cede Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the USSR. The two provinces had almost 4 million inhabitants, mostly Romanians. Although Romania reoccupied part of the territory during World War II the Romanian peace treaty of 1947 confirmed their belonging to the Soviet Union. Today it is part of Moldavia.

9 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'.

10 NKVD

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

11 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.

12 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.

13 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.

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 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.

16 Solzhenitsyn, Alexander (1918-)

Russian novelist and publicist. He spent eight years in prisons and labor camps, and three more years in enforced exile. After the publication of a collection of his short stories in 1963, he was denied further official publication of his work, and so he circulated them clandestinely, in samizdat publications, and published them abroad. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1970

and was exiled from the Soviet Union in 1974 after publishing his famous book, *The Gulag Archipelago*, in which he describes Soviet labor camps.

17 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.

18 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.