

Leonid Dusman

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Odessa

Ukraine

Interviewer: Alexandr Beiderman

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Leonid Dusman is rather plump, but he is still a very energetic old gentleman. His look is piercing and clever. While telling his story he enjoys to recall details. Our interview took place in his little office in the flat of the house once built and owned by his grandparents. Now he lives in this flat with his wife. Their children have places of their own. There are a lot of books in every room. Leonid is a freelancer; he works for Jewish and non-Jewish papers in Odessa. His main theme is the Holocaust.



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My family background

My paternal great grandmother's father, Shmuel Ginsburg, was a merchant of Guild I [1](#). The Ginsburgs were a well-known family in Odessa. My great-grandfather owned bakery storage facilities. My grandmother's brother, Lazar Ginsburg, was one of the first radiologists in Odessa. He graduated from the Medical Institute in Vienna and worked in Odessa. I don't remember him well because he died before World War II.

My grandmother on my father's side, Fania Dusman [nee Ginsburg], was born in Odessa in 1865. She spoke fluent Russian with no accent. She received a good education; she finished a grammar school. She didn't wear a wig or a kerchief,. She didn't follow observe the the kashrut and . She didn't go to the synagogue. The family was wealthy, but my grandmother was used to working hard. She was a wonderful cook and shecould sew well. Fania took care of the house and housemaids and supervised my grandfather's sewing business. After my grandfather died she lived with us. I remember how accurate she was. She got up early in the morning, made her bed and combed he hair. I never saw my grandmother or mother with undone hair or wearing their nightgowns. My grandmother and I were close friends and I often came to her room. My grandmother told me about life "in good old times". She had a tin with candy in her room and she always treated me to a candy. When my mother was angry with me I ran to my grandmother. My grandmother had a tough character, but she loved me dearly.

My paternal grandfather, on my father's side Isaac Dusman,, was born in Odessa in the 1860s., He finished a commercial school and was a merchant of Guild II. The apartment in which I live now is in the house that was built by my grandfather and his partner Nisgoltz. This house was built in 1892. There were stores on the first floor, and two of them belonged to my grandfather: a clothing store and a women's underwear store. There were also sewing shops that manufactured clothes and underwear in this building, which were also owned by my grandfather. My grandmother managed the house and housemaids and supervised my grandfather's sewing business. They manufactured clothes for many people in Odessa. Apartments were on the second and third floors. My grandfather's family lived in an apartment on the third floor. My grandfather had a summerhouse at the seashore in Chubaevka. This building was very long and called "'Smaller Passage'." There were also sewing shops that manufactured clothing and underwear in this building. They were also owned by my grandfather. They manufactured clothing for the whole population of Odessa. My grandfather also had a villa by the sea in Chubaevka near Odessa. The stores and villa were taken away from the family by the Soviet power after the October Revolution of 1917 [2](#). It seems to me that my grandfather had a formal attitude towards religion, but I'm sure that he donated to the synagogue like all other Jews.

My grandfather's family parents survived in the Odessa pogrom of 1905 [3](#). My grandmother told me that during the pogrom, when the thugs were in their street, Fedosey and all other Christian janitors from our neighborhood stood in front of our house with icons. It meant that there were no Jews in the house but only orthodox Christians. The Black Hundred [4](#) went past this neighborhood and nobody suffered. When I was a boy, I knew Fedosey, who was the janitor of our house before the Revolution. My grandfather still owned one store until the end of the NEP [5](#) period in the late 1920s, when the Soviet power confiscated all people's property and eliminated private entrepreneurship. Within two or three days my grandfather became a poor man. He got a stroke and died in 1930 at the age of 60-65.

My grandparents had three children. Their younger son died in infancy, in an accident on a construction site: he fell from a scaffold and died. I don't know his name. My father, Moisey Dusman, and his brother, Mark Dusman, were their two other sons. My father's younger brother Mark was born in 1898. Like my father he finished the private grammar school of Panchenko. He was a roentgenologist. He lived and worked in Moscow. Mark was married and his wife's name was Vera. They had a daughter named Irina. During the Great Patriotic War (3) Mark went to the front and perished in 1942. My father was born in Odessa in 1894, and his brother Mark in 1898. They both studied at the private grammar school. At 13 my father had his bar mitzvah and got a tallit and tefillin. Later he showed me the velvet bag for his tefillin. However, I never heard that my father went to the synagogue. He was hot-tempered like all other young men in Odessa, and he liked to go fishing in the sea for a day in my grandfather's boat. He liked hunting, which is a rather unusual hobby for a Jewish man! He had many hobbies at that time. My father and his brother Mark went in for sports at the Jewish sport society Maccabi.

At 17 my father became a volunteer with the Jewish self-defense movement [6](#). There were many such units in Odessa in those years to fight against pogrom-makers. During the February Revolution in 1917 the units of Jewish self-defense joined the Red Guard Troops [armed detachments of workers during the Revolution of 1917]. My father was in the Red Guard Troops. After the February Revolution, when Jews got all their civil rights, my father and his brother finished

a military school.

My father was never interested in politics and didn't join any party. He wanted to be an engineer because he was very interested in technical things. However, my grandmother Fania said, 'Who has ever heard of a Jewish man to be an engineer? I would understand if you wanted to be a doctor, but an engineer ... that's beyond my understanding'. My father and his brother became doctors. My father studied at the Dentistry School at the Medical Faculty of Odessa University and became a dentist. Mark became a radiologist. He lived and worked in Moscow. He was married, and his wife's name was Vera. They had a daughter named Irina. During the Great Patriotic War [7](#) Mark went to the front and perished in 1942.

My mother's father, Duvid-Moshe Opendak, was a binder. He owned a binding shop and had apprentices. I don't remember my grandfather and I don't know how religious he was. He left his family before the revolution of 1917. His children were very unhappy about this fact and stayed out of touch with him. My mother's family wasn't wealthy. They had to save and economize on things a lot in order to provide education for the children. My mother recalled a store where they bought leftovers of sausages. My grandfather left his family before the Revolution of 1917. My mother never told me the reason why, but I know that he lived in Odessa. His children were very angry with him and stayed away from him. He died in 1938.

I remember my grandmother, Reizl Opendak. She was a very nice and kind woman - a real a Yidishe bobe ([Yiddish for 'granny']). She was a very good housewife and made delicious food. I don't know if she observed the kashrut or if she went to the synagogue. She didn't wear a kerchief, and I didn't see her wear a wig either. Her mother tongue was Yiddish, but she also spoke Russian like everybody who was born and lived in Odessa. She died in 1938. My grandmother died in 1938.

There were five children in the family: Leonid, my mother Sarah, Raya, Fema and Genia. All of them were born in Odessa and finished a grammar school, apart from the youngest. The oldest, Leonid Opendak, was born in 1894. He lived in Odessa and worked as an accountant. He died in 1934.

My mother's younger sister, Raya Opendak, was born in 1898. She finished a school for medical nurses established by Jacob Bardach, who founded the first aid facility with ambulances in Odessa in 1913. My aunt worked in a hospital during World War I. After the Revolution of 1917 she was a medical nurse in a surgery department. She was single. During the Great Patriotic War she was in the ghetto with us. We were in the Domanevka [8](#) camp. In She returned to Odessa and continued working as a medical nurse. She died in 1957 and; my mother was holding her in her arms.

My mother's younger brother, Fima Opendak, was born in 1900. Fima He was a member of the Communist Party and involved in revolutionary activities. Fima lived in Moscow and worked for the 'Young Guard' Komsomol [9](#) magazine. He married a Jewish woman and had three sons. Fima He was arrested in 1937 [during the Great Terror] [10](#) and executed after a month and a half. His sons live in Moscow. They married Russian girls.

My mother's second brother, Genia Opendak, was born in 1912. My mother looked after him because my grandmother didn't have time to take care of him and do the whole housework as well. I don't know where he studied, but. He he was a party activist. He was arrested in 1937, Aafter he received an appointment from Khrushchev [11](#), thawhot was the first secretary of the Central

Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine at that time. HeGenia was to be the secretary of the regional Komsomol committee in Odessa. He was waiting for the train to Odessa at the railway station in Kiev when they arrested him. Genia had a girl-friend called Zhenia. She was Russian. After his arrest she She was expelled from the Komsomol because she didn't reject him. Zhenia waited for him for eight years. During the Great pPatriotic War she sent him parcels from were she was in evacuation. They got married after he was released. He was rehabilitated after Stalin's death [Rehabilitation in the Soviet Union] [12](#). They settled down in the town of Monchegorsk, Murmansk region [2,400 km north of Odessa]. Genia wasbecame a Soviet official. He died in 1987.

My mother, Sarah Opendak, the oldest daughter in the family, was born in 1896. The other children listened to her every word. She was a second mother for them, really. She studied at the private grammar school of Shyleiko and Richter. Richter was a German woman and Shyleiko a Polish woman. My mother studied at the grammar school and also gave lessons to support the family. She taught Russian language, literature and arithmetic. She finished grammar school in 1913. My grandfather Duvid-Moshe couldn't pay for her furtherhigher education, so Mmy mother and her sister Raya attended and finished a course for medical nurses. In 1914, during World War I, they worked as nurses in a sanitary train. Later my mother entered the Dentistry School fof Odessa University.

My father Moisey Dusman was born in Odessa in 1894. He studied at the private grammar school named after Panchenko. At 13 my father had a Barmitzva ritual and got a thales and twiln. My father showed me a velvet bag for his twiln.As far as I can remember no member of our family ever rejected faith in God. However, I never heard that my father went to the synagogue. My father was like all other young men in Odessa - he was hot- tempered, he also liked to go fishing in the sea for a day - my grandfather had a boat. My father also liked hunting - what a surprising hobby for a Jewish man! He had many hobbies at that time. My father and his brother Mark went in for sports at the Jewish sport society Makkabi. At 17 my father became a volunteer at the Jewish self-defense unit. There were many such units in Odessa in those years to fight against pogrom makers. After the February revolution, (7), when Jews got all their civil rights my father and his brother finished a school of ensigns. This almost cost him his life in 1937. My mother's sister Raya living at my grandmother Reizl's house had a photograph of my father wearing his uniform of ensign of the tsarist army. When uncle Genia was arrested in Kiev the Soviet authorities came to them with a search. The NKVD (8) officers saw a picture of an officer of the tsarist arms and asked my wife who he was. Thank God my aunt got an idea to say that it was the photo of her former lover that had perished during the war. During the revolution of 1917 the units of Jewish self-defense joined the Red army troops. My father was in the Red Guard troops during the civil war. My father was never interested in politics and didn't join any party. He wanted to be an engineer - he was much interested in technical things. However, my grandmother Fania said "Who ever heard of a Jewish man to be an engineer? I understand a Jewish doctor, but an engineer - that's beyond my understanding". My father and his brother became doctors. Mark became a rontgenologist and my father became a dentist. My father studied at the school of dentists of Margolin. My parents met each other at the Dentistry School in 1917. My mother and my father were involved in revolutionary events. The two of them saved their friend, Arkadiy Barsht, from the firing-line near the railway station. He came to Odessa from Kherson. He also studied at the Margolin school. Later Arkadiy worked as correspondent for "Pravda" [main communist newspaper] in Moscow. He and my father became friends. My father and mother were very much in love with one another. My father

went from Malaya Arnautskaya to the New Market, through the whole town, just to see her. There were skirmishes and raids in Odessa, but my father went to see her nonetheless.

My parents dated for three years before they got married. They got married on 20 January in 1920 after finishing the dentistry school. They had a civil marriage. The authorities sent them to work in Beliaevka ([45 km from Odessa]). They got to Beliaevka on a horse-driven cart. There were very few doctors left in the hospital in Beliaevka after all the bandit attacks during the troubled times of the Civil War [13](#). My father and mother were very valued employees in the hospital. When my mother got pregnant in 1923 they returned to Odessa.

They stayed in my grandfather Isaac's apartment. From then on, they lived with my paternal grandparents, who received the young couple very well. On 2 November My brother Boris was born in 1923. My father left for the Typhoid Epidemic Center straight after Boris' birth. I don't remember the location of the center. He didn't want to go there and leave his wife alone with the baby, but although my father came from a wealthy family, he couldn't refuse to go. His refusal might have given the authorities the chance to question his loyalty towards the Soviet regime. He returned shortly afterwards and began to work as a dentist in the Lermontov Recreation Center. [The recreation center was located within the city boundaries, 20 minutes on foot from Leonid's house.] Besides dentistry my father was very good at maxillofacial and cosmetic surgery. He was also a very good dental mechanic. He was a very sociable and helping man and never allowed anyone to push him around. My mother was a dentist and her last place of work was plant "Red Profinter". This is a factory of piston rings at present.

Growing up

I was born on 19th November 1930. My grandfather Isaac died two weeks before I was born. He had a stroke sometime between the age of 60-65. However, in his last words he mentioned that my parents should conduct the ritual of circumcision after my birth. And they did it. My grandpa was buried in a Jewish cemetery, but I don't know if they observed the Jewish ritual back then.

After my grandfather's death my grandmother still lived with us. I remember how accurate she was. She got up early in the morning, made her bed and combed her hair. I never saw her or my mother with undone hair or wearing their nightgowns. My grandmother and I were close friends, and I often went to her room. She told me about life 'in the good old times', that is about how wealthy they lived before the October Revolution. She had a tin with candy in her room and always treated me to a candy. When my mother was angry with me I ran to my grandmother. My grandmother had a tough character, but she loved me dearly.

I have bright memories of my father taking me home from kindergarten. We rode on a horse-driven cart from the Lermontov Recreation Center. This cart used to take the staff of the center home. My father loved Odessa and told me a lot about the neighborhoods we passed. To make me enjoy the ride to the most he wore a white suit and sat beside the cabman. I was allowed to sit on the coach-box and hold the reins. I was very proud of it. My father loved Odessa and told me a lot about the neighborhoods we passed.

I also remember our janitor, Fedosey, coming to our home on Soviet and religious Christian holidays. He stood on the doorway and greeted my parents, "'Moisey Isaacovich and Madam Dusman'. He had a big white beard, wore an apron and a badge. He got a shot of vodka, a small

snack and some money. This ritual was very colorful.

Another memory of my childhood is how our parents educated my brother Boris and me. Every Sunday the whole family sat down for dinner. My father liked borsch [Ukrainian traditional cabbage and beet soup] so. There was borsch, brown bread, garlic and a decanter of vodka on the table. My fatherHe liked to have a shot of vodka before dinner, took some garlic afterwards and ate hot borsch. He never forgot that we were watching him. My brother was seven years older than I, and my father gave him a few drops of vodka because he thought 'a son should get to know about things from his father'. Boris and my father clinked their glasses and drank vodka. I kept staring at them, wondering why it was that they could have what I couldn't? My father decided to show me there was nothing to be jealous about. He dipped a piece of brown bread in vodka and gave it to me. I got so sick - I was just ten years old then.

Family life was the highest value for my parents. They had a summerhouse, which was a wooden house on the territory of the Lermontov Recreation Center. He and some other doctors were allowed to build small houses for their families to rest in summer. TheyMy parents took us to the summerhouse every year because they believed it was good for us. We stayed at the seashore during the whole summer vacations. My father liked to go fishing on the weekends. My mother cooked for the family. Our summerhouse was a wooden house on the territory of Lermontov recreation center where my father worked. He and some other doctors were allowed to build small houses for their families to take a rest in summer. She let me got to the beach with my brother. He taught me to swim and dive. We and I liked swimming and sunbathing. My mother let me got to the beach with Boris. He taught me to swim and dive. We returned to the town before the school year began.

My brother studied at a school, which was the formerly the grammar school of the Efrussi brothers. It was a Russian grammar school. I also went to this school, which was my parents' decision, although there was a Jewish school nearby. It was easier to continue education after finishing a Russian school because all higher educational institutions were Russian. As for Ukrainian, only servants spoke Ukrainian in Ukrainian towns.

We spoke Russian at home, although my father and mother knew Yiddish. When our parents wanted to talk about something between themselves they switched to Yiddish. I don't think they knew Hebrew. My parents weren't religious. They arranged a festive dinner on Pesach but it wasn't an actual seder. Writer Zhabotinskiy described such assimilated Jewish family in his novel "The five of them" (9). This family didn't forget about their Jewish origin. Our family got together on Soviet holidays in our apartment. My grandmother Reizl, my mother's sister Raya and my mother's brother Genia came to visit. The siblings lived in other places. We set up a big folding table and my mother made dinner. She learned how to cook from my grandmother Reizl. We had various dishes. My mother learned to cook from her mother Reizl. She made delicious gefilte fish. We were a wealthy family. My father had a private practice at home. He had an office with a dentist's chair in our three-bedroom apartment. We also had a pet, a spitz- dog called Silva.

When Uncle Genia was arrested in 1937, the Soviet authorities came to his mother's house with a search warrant. There was a photograph of my father wearing the ensign uniform of the tsarist army. The NKVD [14](#) officers saw the picture of an officer of the tsarist army and asked who he was. Thank God Aunt Raya, who lived with my grandmother Reizl, had a brilliant idea and said that it

was the photo of her former fiancé, who had perished during the war.

During the war

On Sunday, 22nd June 1941, all our family was at the summerhouse. At 7am we were ready to go fishing to the sea when all of a sudden the commandant of the recreation center came to see us. He said, "'Moisey Isaacovich, it's an emergency situation - we are at war! You have to go to the administrative office'". My mother couldn't believe what she had heard. She even thought this commandant was just being a nuisance. After two week my father put on the uniform of a major of medical services. He went to the sanitary battalion of Chapaev division #25, deployed in Odessa. The division was getting ready for the defense of Odessa. My mother also began to work at the military hospital established in the former Jewish hospital. We still lived in the recreation center. The Soviet propaganda - newspapers and radio - assured people that the enemy would be defeated and that Odessa would always belong to the Soviets. The housing agencies were ordered to have bags filled with sand to put out fires. Military instructors made the rounds of houses to instruct people on how to handle firebombs.

The bombing of Odessa began in the middle of July. It was horrifying. After the first raids we left the recreation center for our home. The situation in town was tense. Rationed bread was given to people, and there were problems with potable water. Beliaevka, where the water supply station was located, was occupied by the Germans. People fetched water from old wells, but there wasn't enough. Our housing authorities arranged a bomb shelter in our old basement, which was formerly a food storage facility. Many men joined the army, and people began to evacuate. In August the siege of Odessa began. We had to stand guard on the roofs to watch out for firebombs. Senior schoolchildren were sent to the vicinity of the town to build defense facilities. My brother, who had just finished school, was involved in the excavation of trenches. Barricades of bags with sand were built in Odessa. Reinforced steel units, welded at the plants, were installed in front of the barricades. We, boys, gathered splinters from shells.

Sometimes my father came back from the frontline. He had a pistol and an 1897 three-linear rifle. Although my father was a major those were the only weapons he had. Many soldiers at the front had no weapons at all. My father tried to calm us down saying, "'There is an order to keep Odessa as long as possible'". My father came home on leave once. During that period many watermelons were sold in Odessa. We ate some watermelon, and then it was time for my father to leave again. He kissed us "goodbye" and said, "'Guys, take care of your mother'". These were his last words. On 8th October his military unit relocated to Vodoprovodnaya Street. My mother visited him there. When my mother left she saw a truck. She called his name, and he waved to her. This was the last time she saw him alive. He perished in the vicinity of Sevastopol in 1941.

Since we were the family of a military officer, the military authorities provided a truck for our family to evacuate during the last days before the occupation. My grandmother packed all her belongings, but we were told that about 20 other people had to fit into the truck and that we couldn't take that much with us. My grandmother refused to go if she couldn't take her luggage with her. My mother couldn't leave her alone, so we all stayed.

On 16th October the Romanians entered Odessa [during the Romanian occupation of Odessa [15](#)]. At about 6am military trucks were driving along Staroportofrankovskaya Street from the side of Dalnik [16](#). Some people were scared to see them, others welcomed them, r like Fedosey's wife,

that who came out of her apartment to greet them with an icon. I guess, even people like her were sick and tired of the Soviet regime. Fedosey was constantly called to the NKVD office, where he was interrogated about people he knew during the purges [the Great Terror]. Innocent people were arrested at night, and he had to be present during that ordeal. This old woman, who that came out to bless the Romanian soldiers with an icon, suffered about a week later under them. Romanian soldiers took away her silver dressing icon in a silver dressing and a her silver cross. They took away people's belongings, and if they faced any resistance they shot people. One of those days a girl my age said to me, "'You, damn zhyd [kike]'", I don't know whether she understood what she was saying. I said in response, "'You're a zhydovka yourself'". [Editor's note: The girl was Russian, but Leonid did not realize the very meaning of the word and thought it to be a pure insult.]

On 19th October an order was attached onto the wall of our housebuilding for all Jews to take their things and food for three days, give the keys to their apartments to a janitor and walk in the direction of Dalnik, where labor camps were to be formed. Regretfully, many people followed this order. My grandfather's former partner, Nisgoltz, came to see my mother and to ask my mother, her "'Madam Dusman, will you go to Dalnik?'" My mother was a smart woman. She replied, "'I'm Madam Dusman while I'm at home. The moment I leave my home I will become a nobody'". She didn't follow a single order as long as her disobedience wouldn't result in a possible execution. Her attitude saved us. All Jews who went to Dalnik that day perished.

On 22nd October 1941 there was an explosion in the building of the commandant's office. When the Soviet troops were retreating they mined it. When the Romanian headquarters settled down there the building was blasted. The Romanians issued an order to execute two civilians for each perished Romanian soldier. The next day the town was patrolled by Romanian soldiers and local policemen. They captured all anyone they saw, regardless of nationality, and they hung some of them people. There were hung men on all acacia trees in Odessa. There were corpses of dead people in Alexandrovskiy Garden. This was the first time I saw people being hung. It was really terrible, I was horrified. We, boys, watched all this from the surrounding ruins.

On 24th October people were taken out of their houses to jail. In the evening we :- my mother, my grandmother, my brother and I - were also taken to jail. My mother had made bags with dried bread and tinned meat that I had brought from a food storage facility hit by a bomb. She also sewed our valuables into our clothes: rings, chains and golden coins". She also had her wedding ring, signed "'Misha.20.01.20'". She sewed it into a button on a silk lace. She kept this ring throughout all searches and didn't part with it, not even during the hardest times. It was our talisman. She believed that we would perish if she lost that ring. I had my father's military certificate sewed into the liner of my jacket. It was a small piece of paper and nobody discovered it during the searches. The place was dark and stuffed with people. It smelled of sewerage. . We found a spot near the wall and settled there. I put my head on my mother's lap, and we spent the nights like this.

On the morning of 25th October men were taken to work. They went to dismantle barricades, but the most horrific work was the removal of mines from the airfield. People had to march along the field. They did it many times during the day. At the end of the day the Romanians shot the survivors to keep this activity a secret. When a water pipe was installed in the late 1970s they discovered a big burial pit.

My brother was in one of those groups. We believe that my brother perished at the gunpowder storage facilities. 25,000 people were burnt there, including prisoners of war. When my brother didn't return in the evening of 25th October my mother's hair turned gray overnight.

Life went on. We didn't have anything to eat. My mother gave a golden item to a Romanian guard as a bribe for letting her out of prison to get some food. My grandmother and I stayed behind as hostages. My mother went to our house. Our neighbors gave her some food and made some mamaliga). We stayed in jail for about a month. We were released in December. When we returned to our apartment there was nothing left in it; it had been totally plundered by the Romanians. Silva, our dog, was waiting for us at the door. We had no food. My mother went to the market to exchange things for food. Her former patients dropped some food into her basket and told her to go away to escape from raids.

After we had returned from jail, my grandmother fell into depression. She asked my mother's forgiveness. My mother just answered, "Don't mention it". By that time we knew that my brother had perished, and we had no information about my father. One morning my grandmother didn't come out of her room. She hung herself on the chandelier. Our neighbor helped us to take her down. In this terrible time, when people were shot in the streets, my mother and Aunt Raya managed to find a person who made a coffin. They brought my grandmother to the Jewish cemetery in Slobodka [17](#). There was only a guard at the cemetery, an old Jewish man. He said, "Madam, you're a holy woman. People don't bury the dead nowadays and dog's are gnawing at the bodies in the streets. Is this your mother?" My mother replied, "No, this is my mother-in-law". He was stunned.

On 10th January 1942 Jews were ordered to move to Slobodka. My mother, Aunt Raya and I went there, too Slobodka. It was 25 degrees below zero. Sophia Mikhailovna, our neighbor, a teacher, took us to a house in Slobodka, where Russian teachers, her acquaintances, lived. It was a small house with the toilet outside. We were happy to get even that small room because many people had to stay outside and froze to death. During that time, Some Jews in Odessa came up with a great idea: they paid Pyntia, the mayor of Odessa, with gold and set up a hospital for Jews in a tuberculosis dispensary in Slobodka. Doctor Petrushkin was one of directors of this hospital,. Professors Adesman, Sribner and others worked there, too. - it's difficult to name all of them. Aunt Raya was one of the best surgery nurses in Odessa. These people knew her well, so she got a job in this hospital. She helped my mother and me get into this hospital as patients. We stayed there until 13th February 1942.

On 13th February a large group of Jews was taken to Sortirovochnaya railway station. We were in this group: my mother, Aunt Raya, and me. We were put into freight railcars and the train started moving. My mother made me stamp my feet to keep warm. We reached Berezovka station from where we walked on foot. We walked for a whole day. I got exhausted, but my mother kept pulling me. 'Go, go'," she kept saying. When we reached the village we were taken to a pigsty. My mother found a spot near the wall. I put my head in her lap and hid my hands in her armpits. My mother held Raya, thatwho was also exhausted. wWe were wrapping ourselves into a flannel blanket breathing into it the whole night. In the morning we continued walking. There were women from villages on the sides of the road exchanging food for clothes. Many of these women just gave what they had when they looked into the eyes of hungry children. I was cold and couldn't walk. My mother kept saying, "Lyonia, we need to go. We have to do it for the sake of your father and Boris.

Daddy told you to take care of me". I understood that she had little hope, but she knew how to touch my heart. A village woman gave us a hot pot with potatoes when she saw our suffering. She just told us to take it. I warmed my hands on this pot.

We came arrived in Mostovoye village [130 km from Odessa]. A group of people stayed in Mostovoye, and the rest of us carried on. Later we found out that those who stayed in Mostovoye were executed the following night. We reached Domanevka [160 km from Odessa] where we were taken to a building that looked like a shop. It was full of snow and garbage. On the next day we were taken to work. All inmates were taken to a spot where village headmen from surrounding villages selected people for work. We Ten of us, including my mother, Aunt Raya and me, were taken to Maloye village ([today Alexandrodar nowadays]). There were ten of us We rode eight kilometers to this village on a horse-driven toboggan. When we arrived we were taken to a well-heated room. A handsome woman came in with a bowl of dumplings stuffed with potatoes and sprinkled with oil and onions. We had dinner and slept in the warmth for the first time in a long time.

In the morning a former local teacher, Bilionov, came in. He had worked in the Soviet school in the village during the Soviet regime and for the Romanians during the war. He ordered us to move to a cold house with ground floors. We received 200 grams of mamaliga per day. Villagers got to know that my aunt was a medical nurse and my mother a doctor, and they began to ask for their help. People were loyal to us. Those, who had something against Jews, just ignored us. Only Bilionov tried to do us harm whenever he could. In the spring my mother injured her leg. The injury began to suppurate. There was no medication. She was concerned of blood poisoning. She told me that her situation with the leg might result in her death and that it might happen in two weeks. Bilionov still made my mother go to work. She worked standing on one leg. A villager saw her leg and said that he had manganese solution. He also advised her to apply plantain leaves to the injury. This helped and she got well.

I was only eleven years old then,. I was very weak and couldn't work in the field. The headman of the village, Diomid Ivanovich Moskalchuk, saved my life. He took me to his house to shepherd his cows. At first I was afraid of cows and had no idea how to handle them. Once a village boy called me by my name, and when I came closer, he gave me a piece of bread and pork fat. He told me to share this food with the girl in our group. This boy, Petro Moldavanenko, became my friend. We are still friends. Usually I got up early in the morning, and the headman's wife gave me a mug of milk and a piece of bread. I took the cows to the pasture and came back with them in the afternoon. The headman's wife went to milk the cows, and gave me a bowl of borsch for lunch. I got stronger. I brought my mother whatever food I could. Diomid Ivanovich took care of us for eight months - God bless him.

At the end of September 1942 our quiet life in Maloye village came to an end. All Jews were gathered in Domanevka for registration to be distributed to camps. Our family was sent to the Frunze collective farm [18](#). We lived in barracks. There were about 250 Jews in this camp and 25 of us in a barrack. We slept on straw, which was replaced once a month. The straw was burnt. I picked wormwood that we slept on to avoid infections. My mother got very weak and fell ill with jaundice. Diomid Ivanovich heard about it and brought her honey and apples. She recovered. The Romanians summoned us to a call-over every morning and evening. There were also Soviet prisoners of war in the camp. Later the Romanians brought gypsies to the camp. Those who were in the Domanevka

camp will always remember the names of Moshe and Gedaliye. They were Jews from Bessarabia [19](#) and served as policemen for Romanians. They took away people's clothes and gold and picked pretty girls to entertain themselves and the Romanians. They patrolled the camp with heavy sticks. They joined the Romanians when they were retreating.

I remember Yom Kippur of 1942. The Romanians allowed the Jews to get together for a prayer. The men went into a room. There were rabbis and cantors among us. They had thalesestallit and twilnstefillin. They put on their ritual clothing and began to pray. Women began to cry. There were Romanian soldiers outside. When they heard what was going on they took off their hats and stood silent. This was unforgettable.

At the end of 1943 the Romanians left. The Germans arrived to replace them. Vlasov [20](#) troops and Kalmyks [21](#) came along with them. The Kalmyks rode horses wearing khaki German uniforms and hats with fox tails attached to them. They had lots of weapons. They were merciless to both Jews and Russians. The Germans behaved differently from what they were like in 1941. Some of them had been in Stalingrad where Germany suffered a great defeat in 1943.

In the spring of 1944 we lived with the Yampolskiy family in a small shed on the outskirts of the village. The Yampolskiy family consisted of three people: Miron Solomonovich, his wife Bertha and her sister, Polina Abramovna. They spoke three languages fluently. Before the Revolution of 1917 Miron had been a trader in Europe. He lived in Berlin, Rome and Paris. When the Romanians knocked on our door at night, Miron answered them in German and they left. I remember the last days before the liberation: There was a pretty 16-year-old Jewish girl in our camp called Manya Bakhmach. Her parents were hiding her and painted her face to make her look ugly. A Vlasov soldier noticed her nonetheless and grabbed her. She escaped and ran into our shed for shelter. We managed to hide her in the straw when the Vlasov trooper came in with a gun in his hand "Where is she?", he asked." We pretended we didn't understand what he was talking about. He swore and left. When we pushed the straw aside we found Manya unconscious. We took her to a village woman where she stayed in safety for some time.

The Soviet army came on 28th March 1944. A day before the firing began I learnt from the village boys that the Soviet troops were close to our place. There were still Vlasov soldiers left in the village. I wanted to run to where the Soviet troops were. I thought I could show them a shorter way to the village - I knew every stone in the pavement. In the morning somebody knocked on our door. We opened the door and saw a huge man with a red star on his uniform. Women hugged and kissed him. We ran out and the first question we asked was, "Guys, is it true that there are no Jews among you?" All we heard in occupation was that there were no Jews in the Soviet army, just Russian soldiers. Then I heard one of them say, "Well, you bet there are Jews among us. Abram, come here!" I saw Abram with his pink complexion. He said he was from Moscow. We made sure there were Jews in the army, and our hope that my father was still alive was restored. The Soviet army of 1944 was different from what it was like at the beginning of the war.

We were all interrogated at the field commandant office and released, even though we didn't have any documents with us. Our case with documents and photographs had already been taken from us in the ghetto. We wanted to go to Odessa, but there were still Romanians in Odessa. We stayed in the village for 12 days until Odessa was liberated. Then we went to Odessa on foot. We obtained a residential certificate in the Primorskiy district executive committee, which enabled us to move

into our former apartment. Another family people - a husband, wife and their small daughter - resided in our apartment, but they let us in when we showed them our residential certificate.

They were a husband and wife and their small daughter. My mother needed to obtain a passport [identity card]. The only document we had with us was my father's war certificate that I had kept in the lining of my jacket. There was also a certificate issued by the commandant office when we were liberated. We went to the militia office. When we showed our documents the militiaman on duty asked us, "Why didn't they kill you?" His words were an abuse. My mother said to him, "All healthy men are at the front while you sit here in the office. Your work could be done by a woman or an invalid man". He got very angry. My mother said, "We survived because people saved us, only that they were a little different than you".

Post-war

My mother obtained her passport. Then we went to the military registration office where we received food coupons and rationed food packages. I got a monthly allowance of 200 rubles because I was the son of a military. A loaf of bread cost 200 rubles at the Privoz market. My mother's friend, Shura Morosova, had saved a number of valuable things of ours while we were in the ghetto. My father's suit was altered for me by a tailor. After the liberation we began to search for my father to learn something about his possible fate. Anywhere we enquired we got the answer that his name wasn't on any of the lists of the lost, killed and wounded. My mother had lost her medical certificate, but she still needed to get a job. She lost her medical certificate Doctor Thompson, a Russian woman, helped her. She hired my mother as a dentist for the Maternity Welfare Clinic. My mother's last place of work was the Red Profinter Plant. It's a factory of piston rings at present. My mother worked there until 1952 when the doctors' plot [22](#) began (14). Many Jewish doctors were fired then. My mother was 56 years old and she retired. I began to work in 1952 .

I didn't study during the occupation and had forgotten how to read. I returned to school in May 1944. I was at school for 20 days before the academic year was over in 20 days. My mother's acquaintance, Vera Nikolaevna Berchenko, gave private lessons. She gave me free classes. She was a very good teacher of mathematics, history and Russian. We completed the program of the 5th grade during the summer vacations. In the fall I went to the 6th grade. I was 14. I went to a boy's school. We were all children of the war: Russian or Jewish; it didn't matter. Our fathers were at the front. We all tried to support our mothers. I sold water at the Privoz market. I had my own clients when all of a sudden local boys put an end to my activities. My competitors demanded that I paid bribes or they would beat me. When I told my mother about it she told me to stay away from the Privoz market.

I was lucky with my school: our teacher of Russian and literature, Boris Efimovich Druker, was a popular teacher in Odessa Boris Efimovich Druker. He was brilliant. I was one of his first pupils. It was a hard time, we got a bun and a teaspoon of sugar at school. Like all other boys, I was a hooligan. I finished the 7th grade at the age of 17. My mother and I decided that there was no sense for me to get a higher secondary education. I entered the Automotive Technical School in 1947. There were only boys in our group. I finished this school with honors. When I started to study there, I decided that I wasn't going to join the Komsomol league. I remembered my arrested uncles, but my group mates valued me highly and wanted me to be their Komsomol leader. Frankly

speaking, I generally liked to be a leader so I became a Komsomol member. I was promoted to Komsomol leader. I was even offered to work at the district Komsomol committee, but I refused due to my Jewish nationality. Just at that time, in 1949, the campaigns against 'cosmopolitans' [23](#) began, and anti-Semitism was quite evident in public life.

I was very enthusiastic about the establishment of Israel. We were glad that the USSR was the second country after the US to recognize Israel. Soviet newspapers wrote that "'Israel is a new democratic state in the Middle East'". I remember a crowd of Jews standing in circle around a sailor from Israel in Odessa port. He was telling them about Israel, the kibbutz communities and the war for independence. He spoke in Russian. [Editor's note: For the most part Jews in the USSR were Soviet patriots and did not want to emigrate in those times.]

In 1952, when I finished technical school, our Komsomol organization recommended me to become a party member. I joined the Communist Party in 1952. Before I became a party member my personal file was submitted to the KGB office to be checked. There was a certificate in it that stated that there were no compromising facts in my life. This was a necessary procedure considering that I had been on occupied territory during the war. After I finished technical school in 1952, the director of the piston plant, thatwho taught science in our school, offered me employment at his plant. I began to work there.

When Stalin died I was a production engineer at the piston rings plant. I was grieving over Stalin. I didn't associate the events of 1937 [the so- called Great Terror] with Stalin. Many people worried about what was going to happen to them. I remember standing guard of honor beside the bust of Stalin at the plant. I also wore a black mourning armband. [Editor's note: Leonid, as most Soviet people, thought Stalin to be an undeniable and unique leader, and his death a historical tragedy. He started associating the events of the Great Terror with Stalin after Khrushchev's speech in 1956, during the Twentieth Party Congress. [24](#)]

I worked at this plant for seven years. At 25 I became chief production engineer. The director of the plant recommended me for the position of the Komsomol leader of the plant. I was lucky to meet nice people in life. They always supported me. I quit working at the plant in 1958 for a job in the design office of the KINAP Plant [cinema equipment plant]. This was a better-paid job. I worked there for two years and studied by correspondence at Leningrad Industrial Institute. Later I switched to the Faculty of Production Units and Tools at the Polytechnic Institute in Odessa (Faculty of production units and tools). I worked at the KINAP Plant from 1959 to 1961.

After all I had to go through I was quite an introverted person in my private life. I read a lot and went to the theater. I met girls, but they didn't touch my heart. I only wanted to marry a Jewish girl. My mother shared this decision of mine. During the war I witnessed Russian wives reporting on their Jewish husbands, although some of them also rescued their husbands. In 1957 I met a girl, Ludmila Karachun, at a party at our plant. Ludmila was Jewish. She was born in Odessa in 1936. She worked at the design office and studied at the Polytechnic Institute. I met her again half a year later and fell in love with her. I dated her for a year and a half. She turned out to be a real friend. We got married on 5th December 1959. I wanted to have many children. Our daughter, Marina, was born in 1960 was born and our son, Michael, in 1967. I always helped my wife about the house. It's still customary in our house to share things, whether it's money or house chores.

My wife's father, Grigory Karachun, was born in Odessa in 1910. He finished rRabfak [25](#)(factory trade school), graduated from the Industrial Institute and worked as designer at the design office of the plant named after Lenin. During the Great Patriotic War he wasn't subject to recruitment to the army due to illness and evacuated to Sterlitamak with his family. He had ulcer and worked with hot bricks tied to his abdomen. After the war the Ministry of Industries sent him to restore production units in Odessa. My wife's mother, Anna Karachun, graduated from the Medical Institute in 1936. During the war she worked as a doctor in a hospital in Sterlitamak. -After the war she was the manager of the cardiologic department at the Russia Recreation Center". My wife's grandmother, Fira, wasn't religious. She was a housewife and helped to take care of her granddaughter. She helped me and treated me very kindly.

I went to work at the plant of radial units in 1961. I became a designer at the design office,. and I worked at this plant for 30 years until 1991. I became then the supervisor of a department. I wasn't promoted higher due to my nationality. I had many patents. I took part in the start up of an automatic line at the Volzhskiy Automobile Plant. At work I got the opportunity to buy a car without having to stand in line for a few years, which was quite an ordinary thing at the time. I worked at this plant for 30 years until 1991. I retired when I turned 60,. but I continued to work at my private business: I designed production units. and mMy wife and I were doing fine.

Our daughter graduated from the fFaculty of mMathematics at Odessa University. She was a teacher at a secondary school for ten years. She married Alexandr Buberan,. a Jew, Hewho graduated from the Institute of Communications. They've been together for 20 years. They have two children: Dima, who studies at Odessa University, and Boria, who studies at grammar school. My son-in-law is a successful businessman. He owns a furniture manufacture facility. My daughter works for him as an economist and chief accountant. HerMy son graduated from the pPolytechnic Institute. He served in the army in Azerbaijan, 40 kilometers from Baku). He also owns a furniture shop. He's been married for 15 years. His wife, Natasha Medzhybovskaya, is Jewish. She lectures at the University of Economics. She is candidate of economic sciences. Their son, Stasik, studies at grammar school.

There are 11 of us in my family: my wife and I, our children, grandchildren and my in-laws. We get together for all the birthdays of my relatives and on holidays. We mainly celebrate Soviet holidays: New Year's, 1st May and October Revolution Day [26](#). Our mostly cherished holiday was 9th May, Victory Day [the official date of the victory over Nazi Germany in the USSR]. On Pesach we always had matzah, we bought it at the synagogue in Peresyp [27](#). My mother, who lived with us, taught my wife how to cook gefilte fish. My children knew they were Jewish. They studied in a Soviet school and had both Jewish and Russian friends. In my house we used to read a lot. We liked to go to the theater. We were fond of guest performances from Moscow and Leningrad.

In the 1960s I built a summerhouse in Bolshoy Fontan [a recreation zone in Odessa]. In the summer we went there for vacations. I enjoyed these gatherings as much as my parents did. My mother died in 1984. When she was dying she bequeathed me to burn my father's belongings after her death and to bury her. She took off her wedding ring and gave it to me. She was devoted to her husband her whole life. Some years ago I met Boris Gelman, a journalist from Sevastopol, who helped me to get information about my father's death. My father served in the hospital of the 172 division in Sevastopol and perished in November 1941 when the ship Armenia sunk.

In 1989 I read in the newspapers that an Association of Former inmates of Ghettos and Camps was being established in our country. I took an active part in the organization of such a society, and thus an association of former inmates of ghettos and camps was also established in Odessa in 1991. Anna Kelina, a doctor from Odessa, was elected first chairwoman. of this association She's a very respectable lady. In the association I met Boris Gidalevich thatwho compiled a Book of Memory about Jews who had perished in Odessa. I helped him to install memorials at the locations of mass executions of Jews in Odessa and Nikolaev region. Gidalevich moved to Israel in 1996.

I continued to collect all data about those who had perished. I began to write a book of my memoirs. "Or Sameach", a Jewish newspaper, published my memoirs. I took children from the Or Sameach school [28](#) to the places of mass executions of Jews during the Great Patriotic War. After that the children wrote compositions, which were very touching. I sent lots of documents related to the extermination of Jews in Odessa region to Yad Vashem [29](#) in Israel. This museum authorized me to collect these documents from the archives of our town. I collected some material and wrote a book, ("Remember and Prevent,") on the basis of this material. It was published in Odessa in 2002. I don't go to the synagogue, but I think that my activities are of importance to the Jewish community in Odessa.

Glossary

[1](#) Guild I

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

[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 WWI, and during which the tsar abdicated and a provisional government took over. The second phase took place in the form of a coup led by Lenin in October/November (October Revolution) and saw the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks.

[3](#) Odessa pogrom in 1905

This was the severest pogrom in the history of the city; more than 300 Jews were killed and thousands of families were injured. Among the victims were over 50 members of the Jewish self-defense movement. Flats, shops and small enterprises were looted by the pogromists. The police stood by and did not defend the Jewish population.

[4](#) Black Hundred

The Black Hundred was an extreme right wing party which emerged at the turn of the twentieth century in Russia. This group of radicals increased in popularity before the beginning of the Revolution of 1917 when tsarism was in decline. They found support mainly among the aristocrats and members other lower-middle class. The Black Hundred were the perpetrators of many Jewish pogroms in Russian cities such as Odessa, Kiev, Yekaterinoslav and Bialystok. Although they were

nowhere near a major party in Russia, they did make a major impact on the Jews of Russia, who were constantly being oppressed by their campaigns.

5 NEP

The so-called New Economic Policy of the Soviet authorities was launched by Lenin in 1921. It meant that private business was allowed on a small scale in order to save the country ruined by the Revolution of 1917 and the Russian Civil War. They allowed priority development of private capital and entrepreneurship. The NEP was gradually abandoned in the 1920s with the introduction of the planned economy.

6 Jewish self-defense movement

In Russia Jews organized self-defense groups to protect the Jewish population and Jewish property from the rioting mobs in pogroms, which often occurred in compliance with the authorities and, at times, even at their instigation. During the pogroms of 1881-82 self-defense was organized spontaneously in different places. Following pogroms at the beginning of the 20th century, collective defense units were set up in the cities and towns of Belarus and Ukraine, which raised money and bought arms. The nucleus of the self-defense movement came from the Jewish labor parties and their military units, and it had a widespread following among the rest of the people. Organized defense groups are known to have existed in 42 cities.

7 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.

8 Domanevka

District town in Odessa region. Hundreds of thousands Jews were exterminated in the camp located in this town during the war.

9 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.

10 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.

11 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.

12 Rehabilitation in the Soviet Union

Many people who had been arrested, disappeared or killed during the Stalinist era were rehabilitated after the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956, where Khrushchev publicly debunked the cult of Stalin and lifted the veil of secrecy from what had happened in the USSR during Stalin's leadership. It was only after the official rehabilitation that people learnt for the first time what had happened to their relatives as information on arrested people had not been disclosed before.

13 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.

14 NKVD

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

15 Romanian occupation of Odessa

Romanian troops occupied Odessa in October 1941. They immediately enforces anti-Jewish measures. Following the Antonescu-ordered slaughter of the Jews of Odessa, the Romanian occupation authorities deported the survivors to camps in the Golta district: 54,000 to the Bogdanovka camp, 18,000 to the Akhmetchetka camp, and 8,000 to the Domanevka camp. In Bogdanovka all the Jews were shot, with the Romanian gendarmerie, the Ukrainian police, and Sonderkommando R, made up of Volksdeutsche, taking part. In January and February 1942, 12,000 Ukrainian Jews were murdered in the two other camps. A total of 185,000 Ukrainian Jews were murdered by Romanian and German army units.

16 Dalnik

Village 20 km from Odessa, the site of mass executions of Jews during the war.

17 Slobodka

Neighborhood on the outskirts of Odessa.

18 Collective farm (in Russian kolkhoz)

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

19 Bessarabia

Historical area between the Prut and Dnestr 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.

20 Vlasov military

Members of the voluntary military formations of Russian former prisoners of war that fought on the German side during World War II. They were led by the former Soviet general, A. Vlasov, hence their name.

21 Kalmyk

A nationality living on the Lower Volga in Russia. During World War military formations set up by Kalmyk prisoners of war fought on the side of the Germans.

22 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.

23 Campaign against 'cosmopolitans'

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

24 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.

25 Rabfak

Educational institutions for young people without secondary education, specifically established by the Soviet power.

26 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.

27 Peresyp

An industrial neighborhood in the outskirts of Odessa.

28 Or Sameach school in Odessa

Founded in 1994, this was the first private Jewish school in the city after Ukraine became independent. The language of teaching is Russian, and Hebrew and Jewish traditions are also taught. The school consists of a co-educational primary school and a secondary school separate for boys and for girls. It has about 500 pupils every year.

29 Yad Vashem

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