

Zoya Shapochnik

Zoya Shapochnik

Kishinev

Moldova

Interviewer: Zhanna Litinskaya

Date of interview: July 2004

I met Zoya Shapochnik in the Kishinev Hesed [1](#), where she works as a volunteer. It took Zoya a long time to agree to an interview. She lives in a modest, tidy apartment in a typical five-storied building constructed in the 1960s, the so-called Khrushchovka [2](#). There were photos on the table. I could feel that she was getting ready for the meeting. The interview wasn't just a formal thing for Zoya, but the opportunity to leave a trace about her relatives. Her story is imbued with sincerity, romanticism, strong feelings and love for people.



[My family background](#)

[Growing up](#)

[During the war](#)

[After the war](#)

My family background

In spite of the fact that I was born in 1934, I remember a lot about my childhood and know certain things about my grandparents from the tales of my kin. My parental grandfather, Haim Shapochnik, was born in Moldova, in the small town Leovo [about 70km from Kishinev, on the Romanian border] in 1875. He wasn't a very educated man. He only finished cheder. I don't know about my grandfather's kin. I don't even know how many siblings he had. I knew his nephew Isaac Shapochnik. He lived in Kishinev after the war and worked as an accountant. At present Isaac, his wife and three children live in Israel. He's an elderly man now. Grandfather Haim was involved in wine making. He bought grapes from the peasants, made wine and sold it. He had a small vineyard which he cultivated himself.

My paternal grandmother, Dvoira Shapochnik, nee Khazina was born in Leovo in 1878. I knew my grandmother's siblings: Jacob, Sapsai and Enna. Enna, who was much younger than Grandmother Dvoira, lived in the small town Cahul, not far from Leovo, with her husband and children. Her husband was rather well-off. They had a churn and mill. In 1940 when the Soviets came to power [see Annexation of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union] [3](#), their property was nationalized and Enna, her husband and children were exiled to Siberia, Akmolilinsk oblast. When the war was over, they came back to Moldova [4](#). Enna died in the early 1960s. Her sons: Anatoliy, a construction engineer, and

Grigoriy, a turner, and daughter Haya lived in America with their families. My grandmother's brothers, Jacob and Sapsai, came back to Moldova with their wives and children, during the Great Patriotic War [5](#). I don't remember their names. I saw them only once in the early 1950s at a family reunion at Sapsai's place. I keep a big family picture. Sapsai, who was much older than my grandmother, died in the 1950s. Jacob passed away shortly after him.

My grandparents got married in 1895. They had a traditional Jewish wedding. It couldn't have been any different. Then, after the wedding they settled in Leovo. Haim and Dvoira had a small house with a thatched roof. They were neither rich nor poor. They had five children in the family, who had to be fed, clad, and educated. I've never been to Leovo. My father told me about them. I saw Grandmother Dvoira only once, when she came over in 1937. She was a large, debonair woman. Her head was covered with a beautiful knit kerchief. My grandmother never went out with her head uncovered. Both she and Grandfather Haim were very religious. My grandfather also wore a hat. In the mornings he put on a kippah, tallit and tefillin when he was praying. Grandmother Dvoira died in 1938. She was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Leovo. My grandfather died in 1941 on our way to evacuation.

All the children of Haim and Dvoira weren't very religious, except my father. The boys finished cheder, and Charna, my father's only sister got elementary Jewish education at home. She mostly helped my grandmother about the house. Charna was younger than my father. She was born in 1905. She was single and lived with her parents. Charna died at a young age, in the early 1930s. I don't know the reason of her death. My father loved his sister very much. He was always in tears when he spoke about her.

Boris was the eldest in the family. He was born in 1897. He, his wife Manya, and daughter Haya, born in the 1930s, lived in Kishinev. Boris was a supply agent. When World War II was unleashed a large kin of Manya talked Boris into staying in the city. Many people disbelieved at that time that the Germans could do harm to the Jews. Besides, Soviet propaganda induced people to believe in the soonest victory of the Red Army. Manya, Boris and Haya stayed in Kishinev thinking that they could hole up the occupation in the basement. They perished in the Kishinev ghetto [6](#). No one survived out of Manya's large family.

My father also had a brother, who was much younger than him. He died young. I don't even know his name. The youngest in the family, David, born in 1907 lived in Iasi. He was also a supplier and his wife Dora an accountant. When Bessarabia became part of the Soviet Union, David's family moved to Kishinev. Like many Jewish families they fled from the fascists. They went to the USSR having left what they had. At the outbreak of war, David and Dora left for evacuation in Chimkent [today Uzbekistan]. Their only child Jacob was born in 1944 in Chimkent. After the war David's family came back to Kishinev. His son's life was the embodiment of the life of a talented Jewish guy in the Soviet environment back in that time. Having finished school with a gold medal Jacob went to Kiev [today Ukraine] to enter the medical institute, knowing that it was hard for a Jew to enter the institute in Kishinev. But as they say: out of the frying pan and into the fire.

Kiev was one of the anti-Semitic cities of the USSR and Jacob, being fluent in English flunked the English exam and wasn't admitted to the institute. He worked as a projectionist for a year. The following year Jacob easily entered the Leningrad Medical Institute. He was a brilliant student and got a scholarship. Later, he defended his dissertation [see Soviet/Russian doctorate degrees] [7](#) on

medicine and genetics. After that he worked in the affiliate of the All-union Scientific and Research Institute of Oncology, located in the vicinity of Leningrad [today Russia]. Jacob married a Jew, Lily from Moldova, who had moved to Moscow [today Russia]. They had lived in different cities for seven years and then Jacob found a job in Moscow and moved there. In 1980 David and Dora left for America, planning for Jacob to follow them. A few years later Jacob and his wife left for America. Now he lives in Las Vegas as a doctor of the higher category. Their daughter also graduated from a medical institute. David died in 1991 and was buried in Buffalo, the place where his family lived at that time. His wife Dora passed away in 2000.

My father, Joseph Shapochnik, was born in 1902. He was the only one of the brothers who had thirst for knowledge and striving to get educated. Upon finishing cheder my father entered the nearest Realschule [8](#) in Leovo. Gagauz [9](#), Moldovans and Russians mostly studied there. Several Jewish boys made friends and decided to go on with their education. By that time Bessarabia had been annexed to Romania [see Annexation of Bessarabia to Romania] [10](#) and my father dreamt of studying in one of the European universities. Grandfather Haim scraped up some money for him to get to university with a lot of difficulty. That was the only thing he could help his son with. My father and three or four of his friends, I don't remember their names, went to Prague [today Czech Republic], and entered the Prague Polytechnic Institute, electric and mechanic department. The friends shared an apartment and saved money that way. They had to work to get by.

My father worked as a stevedore, tutor, and sang in the choir of the Prague Opera. A lot of students from Russia studied at the university [in Prague]. There was a whole course, where the lectures were held in Russian. After graduation, the graduates found good jobs at the Prague power station. They were there on night duty. It was the time of revolutionary changes. The Bolsheviks [11](#) had come to power in Russia, intending to spread communist ideas all over the world. Outstanding Bolshevik activists took the floor at the university, where my father was studying. They held lectures there and my father attended all of them. My father also joined some communist groups. He adhered to those views all his life though he never became a member of the Party. Usually students went home on summer vacations. Joint [12](#) helped pay for the round trip ticket to the parents. My father went home every year. He felt tedious in the hick town Leovo and often went to Kishinev. Here, in the late 1920s he met my mother at a party. He was enchanted by her at once. It was love at first sight.

My mother, Pesya Treiger, was born in Kishinev. Her grandfather was a simple and pious Jew, whom I didn't know. He was from Ukraine. When he was over the hill, he came to Kishinev to see his son, Grandfather Gersh, and died with the words, 'The lord is calling me.' My grandfather, Gersh Treiger, was born in Ukraine in the 1870s. He worked in the municipal administration. He was responsible for cartage, which was one of the main vehicles back in that time. My grandfather was very tall and handsome. He didn't wear a kippah at work. He put it on when he was praying. He wasn't a religious Jew, but holidays were observed in his house. My mother said that on Pesach all traditional Jewish dishes were on the table and her father reclining at the table led the seder. On holidays he went to the synagogue. Sometimes he went there on Sabbath. On the whole, he was a secular man. He liked theater, literature and poetry.

My maternal grandmother's name was also Dvoira [nee Hadji]. There were a lot of Jewish names of mixed origin in Bessarabia. They had the imprint of Turkish and Romanian languages. [Hadji in the Muslim tradition refers to a pilgrim.] My grandmother mostly took care of the children. There was a

maid who came over to do the household chores. Dvoira was mostly keen on theater. She nurtured the love for theater in her daughter, my mother, who passed it on to me. There was a Russian theater in Kishinev. Plays by Gogol [13](#) and Chekhov [14](#) were staged there, but it existed only before Bessarabia was annexed to Romania. My grandmother was a frequent theater-goer. It was a real treat when famous actors came from Moscow and Petersburg [today Russia]. Dvoira would take the whole day to get ready. She put on her best bib and tucker, and wore modest jewelry so that the children felt that something great was going to happen. The Treiger family lived very modestly. They never owned a house, just rented small apartments. Education and upbringing were prioritized.

There were three children in the family. The eldest, Lazar Treiger, born in 1895, graduated from Odessa institute. He was a pharmacist. He owned an apothecary in the center of Kishinev. The apothecary was small, but a steady income was derived. Lazar's wife Annette was a teacher. After getting married she took care of her children. They had a son, Izrael and a daughter, Riva. When the Soviets came to power, Lazar voluntarily gave up his apothecary. In spite of that the whole family was exiled, and even worse it was severe. Lazar happened to be in Ural [today Russia], where he died soon during timbering. His family was in Kazakhstan. During the war my father found them via the information center in Buguruslan [today Russia]. After the war Lazar's wife and children went to Odessa [15](#). It was hard for them to live in Kishinev, as they were constantly reminded of their Lazar. Annette died in 1972. Izrael, who had worked as an accountant all his life, is currently living in Odessa with his wife Sarah. Riva became an engineer. She married a Jew called Mark Gerber, whose father perished in the Fighting battalion [16](#) in the vicinity of Odessa. There is a monument on the curb of one of the villages where his name is embossed. Riva and Mark are now in Boston, USA. They left Odessa in 1989.

My mother's younger brother Boris was born in 1907. He was educated in the Romanian city of Ploiesti, Prahova. He finished medical school and became a dentist and prosthetist. His wife, a Romanian Jew called Paula, spoke only Romanian and their son Evgeniy spoke only Romanian during his childhood. In 1940 Boris and his family moved to Kishinev, when the Soviets came to power. When the war was unleashed, they were evacuated. We happened to be in one car. After the war Boris and his family came back to Kishinev and Boris resumed working as a dentist. Paula was a housewife. Boris died in the 1980s. Aunt Paula died a couple of years after him. Evgeniy and his family immigrated to Israel in the late 1980s.

My mother Pesya was born on 25th December 1902. They said that my mother was a rare beauty in her childhood. The neighbors used to say, 'Go look, what a beauty has been born from Gersh.' The maid, a Moldovan, who worked for my grandmother, crossed herself and prayed saying, 'What a miracle, such a beautiful girl is born on Christmas!' My mother, the only daughter in the family, was the favorite. In her early childhood tutors came over to teach her so that she would be prepared for lyceum. It was a state lyceum. There were wonderful teachers in it. My mother remembered her Russian literature teacher Orlov, who plied her with love for Russian classics. My mother recited poems written by Pushkin [17](#), and Lermontov [18](#) till the end of her days. She was very knowledgeable about Russian playwrights. She was interested in theater in her adolescence, following in my grandmother's footsteps. My mother worked in the apothecary of Uncle Lazar. First she weighed and poured the medicine in the bottles. Then she learnt how to make medicine. She was so good at it that she became a professional pharmacist.

My parents fell in love at once. In 1929 they got married. They had a wedding in Kishinev. The newly-weds were rather modern and unreligious, but in spite of that they went under a chuppah, in the central synagogue. There was a posh wedding with music and many guests from Leovo and other cities. My mother wore a gorgeous dress. It wasn't snow white, but pinkish. When I was a child I often asked her to show me her wedding gown and imagined myself in it.

When the feast was over, my parents had quite a lot of things to do. My father was to finish the last course of the institute. That year the tuition in Prague had increased and my father transferred to the French town [city] Cannes, in the south of France. My mother went with him. After some time they rented an apartment in Paris. They were so indigent that they didn't have money to attend the renowned museums and palaces and it was a pity. They weren't entitled to work as it was written in their documents: 'Not permitted to work.' Their main food was rice porridge without meat. They were lucky if they could add some chocolate to it.

In 1931 my father graduated from the institute and obtained a diploma of electric engineering. They returned to Bessarabia. They moved in with my mother's parents in Kishinev. It was hard for my father to find a job, as Bessarabia wasn't an area where industry was developed. He was jobless for a few months and then was employed by a power station in Bucharest [today Romania]. My parents moved there.

Growing up

I was born on 19th September 1934. I was named Zoya after my distant relative, whose Jewish name was Zlata. I was born in Kishinev and had spent the first years of my life in the house of my maternal grandparents: Gersh and Dvoira Treiger. I remember my early childhood: the old low house, a drawing room with a big round table and laced cloth on it in the center of the room, my grandmother in a dressy white kerchief lighting the candles, chest of drawers, which caught my attention. I was less than two years old, but I remember it as if it was yesterday. Such bright pictures are still in my heart. On Sabbath Uncle Lazar, his wife and children, who were older than me, came over to see us. I remember a beautiful park, where my mother liked taking me for a stroll. That park, named after Pushkin, is still there. We were rather poor as my father didn't make that much money in Bucharest. Part of his salary was to pay for the apartment and food. He sent my mother the remaining money. Sometimes my mother bought me scrumptious ice-cream or sweets in the park. Often there wasn't enough money for these dainty things.

Then our life had a sudden turn. One of my father's friends Dulitskiy, a famous engineer introduced him to a Romanian, Romascu, who commenced the construction of a spa for tuberculosis of the bone in Bugaz [small spa area, 50km from Odessa, Ukraine]. The town Bugaz, on the firth of the Black Sea was part of Bessarabia. [The Black Sea region was taken away from Moldova and attached to Ukraine after World War II.] Romascu offered my father the management of the construction. So, my father left for Bugaz. Soon we moved there, too. I was two and a half or three years old. For some time we lived in a poky apartment in some sort of a building, reminding me of a shanty. I was bothered by the gnats and my mother covered my bed with a gauze. She was in despair. My aunts Paula and Zhenya came over from Ploesti to support my mother. Grandmother Dvoira also came. It was the first and last time I saw her. My grandmother stayed with us for some weeks helping my mother about the house. She wore a dark kerchief, prayed in the mornings and evenings and spoke only Yiddish with my father.

My father was given a separate small house consisting of two rooms and a kitchen. There were no Jews in the whereabouts. We were mostly surrounded by Moldovans. There were a lot of Ukrainians. Since childhood I came to like sad old Ukrainian songs, which were even more euphonious because they were sung by the sea. My mother was on very good terms with the neighbors and soon learnt those beautiful melodies. Those ladies also taught my mother how to bake fancy bread on Orthodox Easter. So, there was no matzah in Bugaz as there was no place where we could get it. We ate Easter cakes on Orthodox Easter.

I spent almost all the time with my mother. My father was always tied up at work. He had various duties: he was a superintendent, foreman, cashier and accountant. He got money from Bucharest and paid off wages to the workers. My mother was scared that he could be robbed and killed as everybody knew that he was carrying large amounts of money. On weekends my father took us for a walk. I remember the park along the firth. The wind band played there. The King of Romania came for the opening ceremony of the sanatorium. My parents and I were on the platform waiting for the train to come. We met the King with flowers and then all of us went to the feast. It was held in the only restaurant in town. The King, clad in a white suit, was at the head of the table. My parents and I weren't far from him. When the sanatorium was opened, my father was offered a job as an administrator and supervisor. He got quite a high salary and our life got better. It was a marvelous sanatorium. A Hungarian surgeon, Janos, worked there. [After World War I Romania gained Transylvania and parts of Eastern Hungary and as a result the country inherited a substantial ethnic Hungarian population from the previous Austro-Hungarian monarchy.] He was a miracle-maker. Crippled people came from all over the world and they left healthy and happy.

My father still believed in high ideals of communism. Bugaz was close to the border with the USSR. There were times when people crossed the firth to get there. At that time we didn't know what was in store for them. As a rule they were caught by the NKVD [19](#) and then sent to Stalin's camps. My father's dream was to live in the USSR. If it hadn't been for my mother, my father most likely would have crossed the border. At least he could listen to the radio. My father rose when the International [Anthem of the International Worker's Movement and of the Soviet Union between 1918 and 1943. Originally French it has been translated into most languages and has been widely used and is still used by various Socialist and Communist movements worldwide.] was played. I also stood by him being solemn and strict. My mother laughed at us.

I remember how my father brought a telegram in 1938, where it was written that my maternal grandmother had passed away. My mother and I went to Kishinev and stayed at Uncle Lazar's house by the apothecary. I wasn't invited for the funeral, so I don't know whether all the Jewish traditions were observed. I remember looking out of the window to see the funereal procession. I saw the hearse drawn by horses and the relatives following it. I'll never forget the lamentation of my mother. We went back to Bugaz and in two weeks my father got another sad telegram: my paternal grandmother had died and my father went to Leovo to attend her funeral.

In winter it was very sad in Bugaz. It was very windy and cold. My father took my mother and me to Inkerman [now Izmail, Ukraine, 700km south-west of Kiev]. He rented a small house there where we spent winter. Inkerman was big as compared to Bugaz. There were stores and a cinema. In spring we went back to Bugaz. Here, in June 1940, the Soviet regime came to power. At once the management left. The director, chief physician, and surgeon Janos quit. Work practically stopped. We moved to Inkerman, where I saw Soviet soldiers for the first time. Bessarabians welcomed them

with flowers. We left Inkerman for Kishinev. We had no place to live. Grandfather Gersh lived in a separate poky room. Uncle Lazar and his family were evicted and exiled. We moved to my mother's friend Fanya Berekhman. After a few months there was a strong earthquake in Kishinev. Part of the house, where we lived, collapsed. Fortunately, my father managed to take me and my mother from the house. Then we rented a small room. My father found a job at a railroad design institute: Dorproject. My mother was a housewife. On 21st January 1941, Grandfather Gersh died. The Jewish cemetery was full at that time and he was buried in a different place, in the city cemetery. During the war the cemetery was in a mess and we couldn't find the grave of Grandfather Gersh.

During the war

On 22nd June 1941 the war was unleashed. Kishinev was bombed on the first day. A dairymaid came over and said that the railroad had been bombed. That was the way we found out about the war. We hid in the basement during the bombing. Water and lime were brought there for some reason. My father said that it was in accordance with the civil defense instructions. I didn't know that my mother was pregnant. Later, she mentioned that she went to the hospital to have an abortion, but she was refused, as the hospital was being frequently bombed and they made only vital operations. When we lived in Bugaz, my father's friend Dulitskiy often came there on business trips. He brought a Russian magazine, 'Soviet Union,' with beautiful glossy covers and fairy-tales for me. World War II was on, and the atrocities of the fascists on the occupied European territories were covered in those magazines. My mother remembered it and insisted that we should be evacuated immediately. I don't remember how Grandfather Haim came from Leovo. In early July 1941 my father hired a cart, loaded all our precious things and we went to the train station. It was crowded and was next to impossible to get on a train. In the evening the representatives of the authorities came to the platform and father asked for help saying that his wife was pregnant. I, considering my father to be my idol, was shocked thinking that he had lied; I didn't know that my mother was expecting.

We were helped to get on the locomotive. It was a long and hard journey. The train was often bombed and we had to get out and hide in the bushes. We came to Rostov oblast [about 900km from Kishinev] [today Russia] and were sent to a kolkhoz [20](#). We settled in the house of a lady from the kolkhoz. She gave us a warm shoulder. My parents worked in the field and I stayed at home with Grandfather Haim. The kolkhoz gave some rations. I remember how we were treated to tasty scones with honey. I tried to help my mother. Once, I even tried to fry some potatoes, but they got burnt. Grandfather Haim scolded me and I had a grudge against him. I didn't know that these were his last days. By the way, my grandfather, even here, tried to observe the kashrut even under such severities. We ate everything we were given. We didn't even grouch over a piece of pig's fat, but Grandfather Haim strongly reprimanded my father for that. There were times when he remained without food if it wasn't kosher. We didn't stay in that kolkhoz for a long time.

I picked up berries of violet color from the bush and was stricken with typhus fever. I was taken to the hospital in Novoshakhtinsk [today Russia] and my mother went with me. I stayed there for three weeks. It was fall. Fascists [Nazis] were approaching Rostov oblast. We had to move and my father didn't know what to do. On one hand he couldn't leave Grandfather Haim and on the other he had to come get us. My grandfather insisted on my father's going. He left my grandfather in the kolkhoz, made arrangements with some man to get my grandfather to Novoshakhtinsk or Krasny

Sulin [today Russia], where we were supposed to meet. My father was so upset about my grandfather that he left our things, photos and my mother's jewelry. He came to the hospital with a small suitcase. He felt so dreadful for leaving his father that he swooned in the hospital. We were discharged from the hospital and went to Krasny Sulin in summer clothes, without our belongings. We waited for my grandfather for a few days, but he didn't show up. The Germans were approaching and we had to move.

Again we, hungry and cold, took the train. My father kept our documents and a little bit of money. My father got off the train at a stop, which was supposed to be long. He and an elderly man went there to look for food. The train had left, when my father came back. My mother and I burst into tears. My mother's pregnancy was rather difficult. She fainted often. There was a doctor in our car. She had camphor and gave my mother injections with the same syringe. At one of the stations the old man who was with my dad caught up with us. My mother started sobbing again. She thought my father was dead. The old man said that my father put him in some sort of echelon, and didn't manage to get there himself. We had been on the road for two weeks without knowing anything about my father. We were starving. Sometimes people took pity on us and gave us a slice of bread. I remember how long I sucked on a hunch of the bread. We were told that we should get to some bigger town and go to the hospital and my mother was parturient. We got off in Saratov [today Russia]. We went to the evacuation point located at the polytechnic institute. We settled in a room which was partitioned. There were cadavers behind the partition. My mother got food cards [see Card system] [21](#) and bread. She feared death in the coming parturition, and most of all she was afraid that I would remain by myself. She was given a document for me to be settled in an orphanage in case she died.

First, the director of the orphanage didn't want to take me as there were no space, but she sympathized with my mother. She took me to the orphanage and on that very day my mother fell from the staircase in the orphanage. Amniorrhea took place and the parturition began. She had strong furuncles, so she was afraid of a possible sepsis, which would lead to death. A Russian lady doctor stayed with my mother all the time. She delivered the baby and bandaged furuncles. My mother gave birth to a little boy, weighing a little over two kilograms. Though she was starving, she covered herself with a blanket when the food was brought, and was abundant with milk. She even was placed in the day nursery to suckle other babies. After a few days the milk was gone and my tiny brother died from pneumonia. All those events took place within two or three weeks. I lived in the orphanage. We were fed very well. At times we were even given sweets or tangerine.

We, the famished children, instinctively were afraid of hunger and tried to take a slice of bread from the canteen. It was forbidden and we hid the breadcrumbs in the sleeves or clothes. At night we woke up, took out the stashed things and munched on them in the darkness. When my mother came over, Muromtseva received her in her office. She had sweet tea and muffins brought in. She let my mother eat first. When I came in my mother could barely recognize me, as I had turned into a plump girl from the rack of bones I had been before. My mother often came over and Muromtseva gave her tea and rolls. Evacuation points in the cities were overloaded and it was easier to survive in the village. My mother decided to leave. Muromtseva tried to talk her into leaving me in the orphanage before she had settled, but my mother was afraid to lose me and took me with her. Muromtseva cordially said good-bye to us. She gave us clothes, which I was already wearing, a warm coat for me, and food. I'll never forget that wonderful woman who practically

saved my life. My mother always prayed for her and the gratuitous doctor, who delivered her baby and bandaged the wounds. Those great women rescued our lives.

My mother and I headed to the village. First we went to a kolkhoz and then finally settled in a kolkhoz named after Kalinin [22](#), in Novoguzskiy region, Saratov oblast. Since my mother was literate she found a job as an aide of the secretary of the village council. Besides, she was involved in propaganda. She read newspapers to the field workers. She was also involved in harvesting of potatoes. The farm ladies said, 'Pelageya, take home a bucket of potatoes,' but my mother was embarrassed without understanding how she could have taken anything without permission. We, who didn't live in socialist conditions, weren't used to that, but it was normal for the Soviet people to take things belonging to the state. In the end my mother also started taking potatoes home, about half a bucket. We weren't that hungry because of that scrumptious 'sugary' potato. My mother was ready to assume any job. She, without knowing how to sew, became a seamstress because of her natural talent. She made brassieres, skirts. Once she even made a sheepskin, though her fingers were hurt. A peasant lady brought some potatoes and a keg of sauerkraut for that.

There was another family of evacuees from Saratov. We were the only Jews. People from the kolkhoz treated us well. We lived in the house of Tanya Monakhova. Her father-in-law had a beehive. When he took honey he brought me a honeycomb on a saucer and said, 'Zoyka, this is for you!' I felt so happy at that moment. I fainted a couple of times because of malnutrition. Once I fell on the iced river and some women helped me come around. The second time it happened in the hall of the house we lived in. The hostess' daughter, Nina, told her mother that I was sleeping in the hall. She was two years older than me. I went into the field with that girl to pick the remaining wheat ears. A terrible thing happened in our kolkhoz. Ladies burned a barn and it turned out that there was a Russian guy, evacuated from Saratov, inside. He was on fire and ran up to them. Silly, uneducated women took him as an apparition and fled instead of helping him. The guy stayed in the hospital for a few days and died. The entire village was at the funeral.

I'll never forget the funeral repast. [It is an Orthodox Christian tradition to arrange a funeral repast right in the cemetery, near the grave. When people come to visit the graves of their relatives on Russian Orthodox holidays, it is also traditional to eat some food 'for the peace of the soul' and leave pieces of food, candies and hard-boiled eggs near the tombstone or directly on the grave.] It seemed to me that I had never eaten such tasty millet gruel. Once in the winter time, when my mother was sick and lied on the Russian stove [23](#), Nina and I went to gather the wormwood. We used it instead of firewood, as we had no logs. We, knee length in semi-thawed snow and with bundles on our backs, saw a huge bull, which had escaped. We dropped the bundles and darted home screaming. There were a lot of funny and sad things happening. There was much sadness though. I went to school there in the kolkhoz. My mother made me some boots to have something to wear. Four grades studied in one premise. I was interested in things we were taught as well as in the things taught to the older ones. Here I learnt a lot of things from the third and fourth grades.

My mother was constantly writing letters to the information center in Buguruslan, desperate to find my father. Finally, in spring 1943 she got a response saying that my father was working for a mining enterprise in the Uzbek town Chirchiq [3500km from Kishinev]. My mother wrote him a letter and he replied. My father wrote about his hardship. He had spent a night at the train station, wherefrom he managed to get his traveling fellow on the train. He failed to leave. He fell asleep on

the bench and at night his watch and remaining money were stolen. My father was in despair. It seemed to him that he had lost everybody: first his father, then his wife, and me. There he was caught by the raid aiming to pick the men eligible for military service. He was drafted into the labor front [24](#) and sent to work in the mines, first to Angren [today Uzbekistan], then to Chirchiq.

My mother and I were happy. We started getting ready. Again it was hard for us to get on a train. This time it wasn't a locomotive, just an ordinary car. We reached Chirchiq and gingerly stepped on the suspension bridge trying to cross the rapid mountain river. A military guy helped with our things. We reached the hostel, where my father was living. It's difficult to put in words what we felt when we saw my father. Even now my heart is thumping when I go back to that moment. We embraced each other, crying and laughing at the same time. My father didn't say anything about the child. I think he had a lot to talk about with my mother. We spent the first night in the room of the hostel for men. There were six more men apart from my father. Then my father found a tent where we settled. There was an aryk [artificial irrigation channel] close by. We drank water from it and bathed there. We didn't stay there for long, we moved to barracks. My mother found a job at a fertilizing factory and soon she was given a room in a warm barrack. Our life was getting better.

By that time, my mother had found her younger brother Boris. He and his family came to us. First we stayed in one tent, and then Uncle Boris found a job and was also given lodging. Then my mother found a job in a pharmacy. She used her skills, acquired when she worked for Uncle Lazar. My mother was a good worker. The manager of the pharmacy gave her cod liver oil. She used that oil to fry corn flower scones, I couldn't eat them. We weren't starving as badly as in Chirchiq, but still there wasn't enough food for me and I swooned. I went to my father's canteen and got food there by some cards. Once I fainted in the line, between two huge workers. When I came around, I heard, 'She's hungry. Bring the soup!' Kind people took me to the table, fed me and filled my containers with food.

Here in Chirchiq I went to school, where I studied for two years. in the third and fourth grades, and became a pioneer [see All-union pioneer organization] [25](#). I did well at school. I was equally good at liberal arts and sciences. I took part in extra curriculum activities, recited verses on festive events. I had a friend, Inga Golunova. Both of us took an oath that we would never part. We corresponded with each other. Inga graduated from Moscow State University [26](#), the history department and got a mandatory job assignment [in the USSR] [27](#) in Pensa [today Russia]. She worked in a history museum. In 1962 we stopped keeping in touch. I don't know what happened to her.

After the war

We experienced Victory Day in Chirchiq. I still think that it was the happiest day of my life. When on 9th May 1945 we were informed of the capitulation of Germany, we rushed to each other and started kissing and hugging no matter whether we knew each other or not. We were crying out of boundless joy.

Uncle Boris and his family were on the point of leaving for home. My father insisted that my mother and I should go with them. The problem was that he was still under military service and wasn't entitled to leave Chirchiq. My mother and I suffered from malaria: we needed a change of climate. In summer 1945 we came back to Kishinev. We had no place to live. We stayed in the house of my father's brother David for a while. My mother found a job as a cashier in the cinematograph

department. It was a wonderful time. Every day my mother and I watched wonderful movies free-of-charge. Then she was fired, as another person was taken because of somebody's connections. So, my mother went to work in the pharmacy once again.

My mother went to the institute, where my father had worked before the war and asked them to send him an invitation letter. First they were reluctant, as they said there were no vacancies, but my mother promised that my father wouldn't seek a job at the institute. Thus, he got the invitation letter. In late 1946 my father came to Kishinev. He was hired by the sanitary and technical trust Moldsantekhmontazh and given a small room in a communal apartment [28](#) without conveniences. It was mere joy for us. The war was over, and both my parents were working to provide for our living and we had a place to live. We hadn't even dreamed of that. We lived in that apartment until 1968. Then we got the apartment where I'm living now. At that time we accidentally found out how Grandfather Haim died.

My father's cousin, Isaac Shapochnik, left his things in Chuchuleny in the house of a Moldovan. After the war he went over to take them back. There, in Chuchuleny he dropped by the Jews he knew. He saw our family album on their table. Isaac asked where they got it. They said that Grandfather Haim had been with them on the road. They were in Makhachkala [today Russia]. My grandfather died on the ferry boat and they took his things. They didn't say how he died nor were he was buried. Isaac wanted to take our things, but they only returned my mother's seal fur coat and photo album. The rest of the things, including my mother's jewelry, were appropriated by them. My mother was so happy to get the pictures back! She thought she would never see any of her things.

I was a good and active student. I was a patriot of the USSR considering my country to be the best in the world. It couldn't have been otherwise, as the propaganda was very strong! I and my contemporaries entered the Komsomol [29](#). I was involved in Komsomol work, took part in the meetings, extra-curriculum activities and other events connected with collection of scrap metal and cleaning of the school territory. In 1951 I finished school with a gold medal. [Editor's note: the gold medal was the highest distinction in USSR secondary schools. A student was supposed to have straight excellent marks (100%) to get the gold medal.] I had to choose my future profession. In spite of the fact that I liked the arts more, loving theater and poetry most of all, I decided to deal with technology. I wanted to work at a big plant. I was attracted with workers, large workshops, metal and tools. I applied to Kishinev University, the chemical and technological department. Though, I didn't like chemistry that much. I was an excellent student. Our teachers were strong and I came to like my specialty. These were hard years, when state anti-Semitism was exacerbated. I remember how our family as well as Boris' took hard the Doctors' Plot [30](#).

Of course, we didn't quite believe the articles in the papers about malicious Jews; we couldn't have totally disbelieved. Even though, we weren't touched by repressions: none of our family members were fired. It appeared that people were looking at me in the transport and institute, classifying me with those poison doctors. It was good that my mother was a housewife at that time and wasn't working in the pharmacy any more. I remember that in the second year we considered the Doctors' Plot and stigmatized the doctors in the classes of Marxism and Leninism. When the doctors were exonerated after Stalin's death we were told opposite things in the classes. Then one of the students asked whom we should we believe. She was reprimanded for questioning the correctness of the actions taken by the authorities. She was even summoned to the Komsomol committee and

they wanted to expel her, but she got off with a reprimand. When Stalin died in 1953, I was in the tram on my way to university. It seemed to me that people were looking at me as if I had murdered him. I took Stalin's death hard. I mourned with the others, being in the honor duty by his portrait. At that time we didn't know what kind of a villain he had been.

I did well. I had a probation period at the production facility in Dneprodzerzhinsk [today Ukraine]. I was proud of being part of the great labor and walk in the crowd with the workers. I remembered the words of Mayakovskiy [31](#), 'My labor is infused with the labor in my republic.' All of us were full of enthusiasm and belief in a bright happy future and each worker felt his role in making that future and took pride in it. I gladly left on my mandatory job assignment in 1956. Upon graduation I was sent to the Moldovan town Bendery [60km from Kishinev] on the recently launched starch plant. I was a young expert and worked as a second technologist of the workshop. I was happy. I especially enjoyed the night when I was responsible for work of all people and each mechanism; when the whole workshop depended on me. I finished the evening department of the supreme party school [32](#). I conducted classes on political ideology with the workers after night shift. I took it very seriously. I was called by the Party committee several times and offered to enter the communist party. I sincerely considered myself unworthy and was sure that such honor should be deserved by outstanding and dedicated labor for the motherland.

The feat of the heroes of war was the highest level I imagined. I pictured myself in the role of those heroes who had sacrificed their lives, going through ordeals and torture, and I understood that I wouldn't have been able to go through that. That is why I thought myself to be unworthy because I wouldn't be able to die voluntarily for the high ideals. Apart from political classes I was active in other fields: singing in the choir, making performances. I remember I recited an excerpt from a Pushkin poem on the stage. The event was on the occasion of the 50-year anniversary of the plant. After that I was told, 'You could have been an actress, what do you need that chemistry for?' I considered histrionic art to be unworthy as compared to work at the plant. Those were happy years. I had my own room, many friends and felt myself in the lime light.

Then I was interested in non-ferrous metallurgy. I wrote letters to many plants in the country and was invited by the plant in Bereznyaki, Ural. My parents advised me not to go there, as it was hard to get a hold of products in those years, especially in the remote places. I went to the south, to Alatala, Northern Armenia, to the copper and chemical mill. The Armenians treated me very well. I made new friends. There were wonderful scenic views. Though, the grass was burnt because of the waste from our mill and nylons were spoiled on the second day after wearing. I was involved in social work here as well. I didn't stay in Alatala for more than a year. My mother got severely ill and I had to go back to Kishinev in late 1964.

I was employed by an instrument making plant. I worked there for 14 and a half years. First I worked in the department of the chief technologist; then I was the head of the finishing bureau. I was loved and respected here. In 1978 my father got severely ill. It was hard for me as the head of the bureau at the large plant and I changed my job. I had a less responsible job at a tractor plant and worked there until retirement. I retired in 1991 when my mother got seriously ill again.

I had a lot of friends, including a young man. We went to the theaters, cinemas, read books, magazines and exchanged opinions. I had a very active life attending cultural places. I was also a passionate traveler. Every year I went on a tour. I was on the rivers Yenisey, Ob and Irtish, in the

cities of Norilsk, Dudink, Taimyr, in many Siberian towns such as Novosibirsk, Omsk, Tomsk, Tobolsk, Khanty-Mansiysk. I took a voyage on the White Sea and the Sea of Barents, visited Solovki, Kizhi, Archangelsk. I was on Valaam Island, near Leningrad. [Editor's note: All the places mentioned by the interviewee are today in Russia.]

I had a lot of Jewish friends and we followed the Israeli events with a bated heart, the period when Israel was associated with insecurity. We listened to the radio stations following the events of the Six-Day-War [33](#) and Yom Kippur War [34](#). Another reason why I didn't want to join the Party was my not being able to prevaricate and be a hypocrite.

My parents knew what was happening in my life, I shared everything with them. After the war, to be more exact, after Grandfather Haim had perished, my father started observing some Jewish traditions: bought matzah on Pesach, went to the synagogue. He died in 1978. In late 1980 almost all our relatives immigrated either to Israel or America. I started panicking and thinking that I had remained alone. I don't know how I managed to do that, but I processed the documents to leave for Israel. I was frenzied, suffered from insomnia. I began packing my things. Everyday I was weighing my books as I didn't want to leave them behind. Every day I was getting more and more doubtful, fearing to leave my motherland, Moldova. When our relatives from Israel, who invited us, wrote that the situation there was rather inauspicious, my mother said, 'We aren't going anywhere!' The insomnia was gone and the load was off my mind. My dearest friend, my mother, passed away in 1994. I remained by myself.

When I start thinking about my life, I can't say why I'm alone, or why I remained single. First of all, I was very shy and had an inferior complex and secondly, I wanted the maximum. I fell in love with interesting people, who paid no attention to me, and those who wanted to date me weren't interesting in my view. That's life.

Nonetheless, I'm not lonely now. I am a volunteer at Hesed. I work there once a week, hand out medicine and food. I got new friends and feel needed. I hold lectures in the daytime center. Here I hold a lot of lectures on different topics: poets, writers and on the places I've seen. I'm so happy to hear the words of gratitude for things I'm doing for people.

Now my life is multisided, on one hand there was the break up of the Soviet Union [in 1991]. It was a catastrophe for me, who liked to travel all over the huge USSR and who had friends in different parts of the country. Besides, there was a slump in the economy, and all of us became indigent and depending on the 'alms' from Hesed. On the other hand, there was a real opportunity to revive Jewish culture. I'm not a religious person. I don't know either the language or the traditions, and it's too late for me to change my views, but it's good for the youth to be interested in the history of their people and culture. It's so good that they go to the synagogue. A lot of different cultural and charitable organizations emerged uniting the Jews, helping them to survive both materially and spiritually. Recently, there was a festival of klezmer music in Kishinev. We marked the anniversary of Israeli independence in the best palace of Kishinev. The Ambassador of Israel and the President of Moldova were present. The anthem of Israel was played. There were fireworks in the city. I was happy. The only thing I regret is that my parents didn't live to see that.

Glossary:

1 Hesed

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

2 Khrushchovka

Five-storied apartment buildings with small one, two or three-bedroom apartments, named after Nikita Khrushchev, head of the Communist Party and the Soviet Union after Stalin's death. These apartment buildings were constructed in the framework of Khrushchev's program of cheap dwelling in the new neighborhood of most Soviet cities.

3 Annexation of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union

At the end of June 1940 the Soviet Union demanded Romania to withdraw its troops from Bessarabia and to abandon the territory. Romania withdrew its troops and administration in the same month and between 28th June and 3rd July, the Soviets occupied the region. At the same time Romania was obliged to give up Northern Transylvania to Hungary and Southern-Dobrudja to Bulgaria. These territorial losses influenced Romanian politics during World War II to a great extent.

4 Moldova

Historic region between the Eastern Carpathians, the Dniester River and the Black Sea, also a contemporary state, bordering with Romania and Ukraine. Moldova was first mentioned after the end of the Mongol invasion in 14th century scripts as Eastern marquisate of the Hungarian Kingdom. For a long time, the Principality of Moldova was tributary of either Poland or Hungary until the Ottoman Empire took possession of it in 1512. The Sultans ruled Moldova indirectly by appointing the Prince of Moldova to govern the vassal principality. These were Moldovan boyars until the early 18th century and Greek (Phanariot) ones after. In 1812 Tsar Alexander I occupied the eastern part of Moldova (between the Prut and the Dniester river and the Black Sea) and attached it to its Empire under the name of Bessarabia. In 1859 the remaining part of Moldova merged with Wallachia. In 1862 the new country was called Romania, which was finally internationally recognized at the Treaty of Berlin in 1878. Bessarabia united with Romania after World War I, and was recaptured by the Soviet Union in 1940. The Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic gained independence after the break up of the Soviet Union in 1991 and is now called Moldovan Republic (Republica Moldova).

5 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.

6 Kishinev Ghetto

The annihilation of the Jews of Kishinev was carried out in several stages. With the entry of the Romanian and German units, an unknown number of Jews were slaughtered in the streets and in their homes. About 2,000 Jews, mainly of liberal professions (doctors, lawyers, engineers), and local Jewish intellectuals, were systematically executed. After the wave of killings, the 11,000 remaining Jews were concentrated in the ghetto, created on 24th July 1941, on the order of the Romanian district ruler and the German Einsatzkommando leader, Paul Zapp. The Jews of central Romania attempted to assist their brethren in the ghetto, sending large amounts of money by illegal means. A committee was formed to bribe the Romanian authorities so that they would not hand the Jews over to the Germans. In August about 7,500 Jewish people were sent to work in the Ghidighici quarries. That fall, on the Day of Atonement (4th October), the military authorities began deporting the remaining Jews in the ghetto to Transnistria, by order of the Romanian ruler, Ion Antonescu. One of the heads of the ghetto, the attorney Shapira, managed to alert the leaders of the Jewish communities in Bucharest, but attempts to halt the deportations were unsuccessful. The community was not completely liquidated, however, since some Jews had found hiding places in Kishinev and its vicinity or elsewhere in Romania. In May 1942, the last 200 Jews in the locality were deported. Kishinev was liberated in August 1944. At that time no Jews were left in the locality.

7 Soviet/Russian doctorate degrees

Graduate school in the Soviet Union (aspirantura, or ordinatura for medical students), which usually took about 3 years and resulted in a dissertation. Students who passed were awarded a 'kandidat nauk' (lit. candidate of sciences) degree. If a person wanted to proceed with his or her research, the next step would be to apply for a doctorate degree (doktarontura). To be awarded a doctorate degree, the person had to be involved in the academia, publish consistently, and write an original dissertation. In the end he/she would be awarded a 'doctor nauk' (lit. doctor of sciences) degree.

8 Realschule

Secondary school for boys. Students studied mathematics, physics, natural history, foreign languages and drawing. After finishing this school they could enter higher industrial and agricultural educational institutions.

9 Gagauz

A minority group in the territory of Moldova and the Ukraine, as well as Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and Turkey. It numbers about 200,000 individuals. Their language is Turkic in origin. In the Ukraine their written language is based on the Russian alphabet. They are Christian.

10 Annexation of Bessarabia to Romania

During the chaotic days of the Soviet Revolution the national assembly of Moldovans convoked to Kishinev decided on 4th December 1917 the proclamation of an independent Moldovan state. In order to impede autonomous aspirations, Russia occupied the Moldovan capital in January 1918. Upon Moldova's desperate request, the army of neighboring Romania entered Kishinev in the same month recapturing the city from the Bolsheviks. This was the decisive step toward the union with Romania: the Moldovans accepted the annexation without any preliminary condition.

11 Bolsheviks

Members of the movement led by Lenin. The name 'Bolshevik' was coined in 1903 and denoted the group that emerged in elections to the key bodies in the Social Democratic Party (SDPRR) considering itself in the majority (Rus. bolshynstvo) within the party. It dubbed its opponents the minority (Rus. menshynstvo, the Mensheviks). Until 1906 the two groups formed one party. The Bolsheviks first gained popularity and support in society during the 1905-07 Revolution. During the February Revolution in 1917 the Bolsheviks were initially in the opposition to the Menshevik and SR ('Sotsialrevolyutsionery', Socialist Revolutionaries) delegates who controlled the Soviets (councils). When Lenin returned from emigration (16 April) they proclaimed his program of action (the April theses) and under the slogan 'All power to the Soviets' began to Bolshevize the Soviets and prepare for a proletariat revolution. Agitation proceeded on a vast scale, especially in the army. The Bolsheviks set about creating their own armed forces, the Red Guard. Having overthrown the Provisional Government, they created a government with the support of the II Congress of Soviets (the October Revolution), to which they admitted some left-wing SRs in order to gain the support of the peasantry. In 1952 the Bolshevik party was renamed the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

12 Joint (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee)

The Joint was formed in 1914 with the fusion of three American Jewish committees of assistance, which were alarmed by the suffering of Jews during World War I. In late 1944, the Joint entered Europe's liberated areas and organized a massive relief operation. It provided food for Jewish survivors all over Europe, it supplied clothing, books and school supplies for children. It supported cultural amenities and brought religious supplies for the Jewish communities. The Joint also operated DP camps, in which it organized retraining programs to help people learn trades that would enable them to earn a living, while its cultural and religious activities helped re-establish Jewish life. The Joint was also closely involved in helping Jews to emigrate from Europe and from Muslim countries. The Joint was expelled from East Central Europe for decades during the Cold War and it has only come back to many of these countries after the fall of communism. Today the Joint provides social welfare programs for elderly Holocaust survivors and encourages Jewish renewal and communal development.

13 Gogol, Nikolai (1809-1852)

Russian novelist, dramatist, satirist, founder of the so-called critical realism in Russian literature, best known for his novel the Dead Souls (1842).

14 Chekhov, Anton Pavlovich (1860-1904)

Russian short-story writer and dramatist. Chekhov's hundreds of stories concern human folly, the tragedy of triviality, and the oppression of banality. His characters are drawn with compassion and humor in a clear, simple style noted for its realistic detail. His focus on internal drama was an innovation that had enormous influence on both Russian and foreign literature. His success as a dramatist was assured when the Moscow Art Theater took his works and staged great productions of his masterpieces, such as Uncle Vanya or The Three Sisters. and also had some religious instruction.

15 Odessa

The Jewish community of Odessa was the second biggest Jewish community in Russia. According to the census of 1897 there were 138,935 Jews in Odessa, which was 34,41% of the local population. There were 7 big synagogues and 49 prayer houses in Odessa. There were heders in 19 prayer houses.

16 Fighting battalion

People's volunteer corps during World War II; its soldiers patrolled towns, dug trenches and kept an eye on buildings during night bombing raids. Students often volunteered for these fighting battalions.

17 Pushkin, Alexandr (1799-1837)

Russian poet and prose writer, among the foremost figures in Russian literature. Pushkin established the modern poetic language of Russia, using Russian history for the basis of many of his works. His masterpiece is Eugene Onegin, a novel in verse about mutually rejected love. The work also contains witty and perceptive descriptions of Russian society of the period. Pushkin died in a duel.

18 Lermontov, Mikhail, (1814-1841)

Russian poet and novelist. His poetic reputation, second in Russia only to Pushkin's, rests upon the lyric and narrative works of his last five years. Lermontov, who had sought a position in fashionable society, became enormously critical of it. His novel, A Hero of Our Time (1840), is partly autobiographical. It consists of five tales about Pechorin, a disenchanted and bored nobleman. The novel is considered a classic of Russian psychological realism.

19 NKVD

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

1934.

20 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.

21 Card system

The food card system regulating the distribution of food and industrial products was introduced in the USSR in 1929 due to extreme deficit of consumer goods and food. The system was cancelled in 1931. In 1941, food cards were reintroduced to keep records, distribute and regulate food supplies to the population. The card system covered main food products such as bread, meat, oil, sugar, salt, cereals, etc. The rations varied depending on which social group one belonged to, and what kind of work one did. Workers in the heavy industry and defense enterprises received a daily ration of 800 g (miners - 1 kg) of bread per person; workers in other industries 600 g. Non-manual workers received 400 or 500 g based on the significance of their enterprise, and children 400 g. However, the card system only covered industrial workers and residents of towns while villagers never had any provisions of this kind. The card system was cancelled in 1947.

22 Kalinin, Mikhail (1875-1946)

Soviet politician, one of the editors of the party newspaper Pravda, chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets of the RSFSR (1919-1922), chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR (1922-1938), chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (1938-1946). He was one of Stalin's closest political allies.

23 Russian stove

Big stone stove stoked with wood. They were usually built in a corner of the kitchen and served to heat the house and cook food. It had a bench that made a comfortable bed for children and adults in wintertime.

24 Labor army

it was made up of men of call-up age not trusted to carry firearms by the Soviet authorities. Such people were those living on the territories annexed by the USSR in 1940 (Eastern Poland, the Baltic States, parts of Karelia, Bessarabia and northern Bukovina) as well as ethnic Germans living in the Soviet Union proper. The labor army was employed for carrying out tough work, in the woods or in mines. During the first winter of the war, 30 percent of those drafted into the labor army died of starvation and hard work. The number of people in the labor army decreased sharply when the larger part of its contingent was transferred to the national Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian Corps, created at the beginning of 1942. The remaining labor detachments were maintained up until the end of the war.

25 All-Union pioneer organization

a communist organization for teenagers between 10 and 15 years old (cf: boy-/ girlscoouts in the US). The organization aimed at educating the young generation in accordance with the communist ideals, preparing pioneers to become members of the Komsomol and later the Communist Party. In the Soviet Union, all teenagers were pioneers.

26 Moscow State University

founded in 1755, the university was for a long time the only learning institution in Russia open to the general public. In the Soviet time, it was the biggest and perhaps the most prestigious university in the country. At present there are over 40,000 undergraduates and 7,000 graduate students at MSU.

27 Mandatory job assignment in the USSR

Graduates of higher educational institutions had to complete a mandatory 2-year job assignment issued by the institution from which they graduated. After finishing this assignment young people were allowed to get employment at their discretion in any town or organization.

28 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.

29 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.

30 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.

31 Mayakovsky, Vladimir Vladimirovich (1893-1930)

Russian poet and dramatist. Mayakovsky joined the Social Democratic Party in 1908 and spent much time in prison for his political activities for the next two years. Mayakovsky triumphantly greeted the Revolution of 1917 and later he composed propaganda verse and read it before crowds of workers throughout the country. He became gradually disillusioned with Soviet life after the Revolution and grew more critical of it. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1924) ranks among Mayakovsky's best-known longer poems. However, his struggle with literary opponents and unhappy romantic experiences resulted in him committing suicide in 1930.

32 Party Schools

They were established after the Revolution of 1917, in different levels, with the purpose of training communist cadres and activists. Subjects such as 'scientific socialism' (Marxist-Leninist Philosophy) and 'political economics' besides various other political disciplines were taught there.

33 Six-Day-War

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

34 Yom Kippur War

The Arab-Israeli War of 1973, also known as the Yom Kippur War or the Ramadan War, was a war between Israel on one side and Egypt and Syria on the other side. It was the fourth major military confrontation between Israel and the Arab states. The war lasted for three weeks: it started on 6th October 1973 and ended on 22nd October on the Syrian front and on 26th October on the Egyptian front.