

# Larisa Gorelova

City: **St. Petersburg**

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Interviewer: **Alexandra Ulman**

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*In front of me is a woman with lively dark eyes; she is not very tall.*

*Even after retirement she continues to lead an active life: she often goes to the theater, to classical concerts at the Philharmonic and to art exhibitions.*

*Almost every minute of her life is scheduled, so it wasn't easy to make an appointment with her.*

*A very important part in Larisa Borisovna's reminiscences is occupied by the analysis of her father's fate, who spent most of his life in prison; she has a great desire to tell his story rather than her own, as she thinks, she's led a rather common life.*



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## • **My family background**

My name is Larisa Borisovna Gorelova. I was born in 1927 in Leningrad [today St. Petersburg]. My father's parents lived in Minsk, in Belarus. I lived in that town since my birth and until the Great Patriotic War [1](#). Prewar Minsk was a large city and the capital of the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic, a cultural and industrial center. The Belarusian Academy of Sciences and the Minsk State University were located in Minsk. Broad, spacious avenues in the center of the city were built up with new modern buildings, though there were wooden buildings on the outskirts of the city. During the Great Patriotic War Minsk was almost totally destroyed and after the war it was, one might say, constructed anew. I saw it when I visited the town on a business-trip many years later.

My paternal grandfather, Leib Olikier, was a tinsmith. He died when my father was six months old, in 1901. That's all I know about my paternal grandfather. My paternal grandmother, whose name I don't remember, had to raise three small children; she was hired by people to do hard work: she did the washing and cleaned their apartments. She did all she could do alone to raise her children: her elder son, whose name I can't remember, Peisakh-Elya and Ber, my father. Grandmother's elder son volunteered for the Red Army during the Civil War [2](#) and perished as a hero, defending Minsk. Her second son, Peisakh-Elya, was arrested in April 1920 by the Belopolsk gendarmerie and exiled to a Gulag camp [3](#). Upon his return he lived with his mother in Minsk. He must have perished in a ghetto during the Great Patriotic War. My father, Ber Leibovich Olikier, was the youngest, the

third son of Grandmother and Grandfather Olikier. I know nothing else about my paternal grandparents, since I communicated very little with my father - he spent many years in the camps and later left my mother, besides, it wasn't our custom to ask about the past.

During the Civil War [1918-1920] Grandmother assisted the underground Komsomol [4](#) organization, of which her sons were members. I know that she kept and delivered prohibited literature and organized meetings for underground organization members in her apartment. Owing to that in the 1930s she obtained a personal pension upon the solicitation of the Central Komsomol Committee of Belarus. Grandmother was religious only until the Soviet Power came into force in 1917. She died in a ghetto in Belarus during the Great Patriotic War, but our family doesn't know the exact date.

My mother's father, Alter-Girsh Bunin, was born in 1876 in the town of Slutsk, which is located 100 kilometers to the south of Minsk in Belarus, in the Jewish pale [5](#) and studied in cheder. He wasn't an Orthodox Jew, didn't observe Sabbath, only celebrated Jewish holidays such as Chanukkah, Rosh Hashanah and Pesach, for which national meals were cooked at home. After Grandmother's death in 1931 the family forgot all Jewish holidays and celebrated only secular holidays, as all Soviet people did. Grandfather dressed as the petty bourgeoisie did, who his family belonged to: he wore a jacket and shirts with ties. He always had a small full beard. Grandfather was a very fair, kind and diligent man with a sense of self-esteem. Even neighbors came to him to settle some disputes of theirs.

My grandmother, Gita Bunina [nee Shapiro] was born in 1878 in Storobino in Belarus. She finished cheder [6](#), as a grown-up girl of 15 years of age, but later, by the 1900s she was already a mother of a big family and a housewife. She was a very merry and kind woman. She welcomed all distant and close relatives in her home. Her home was very hospitable, relatives came, friends visited, all of Grandmother's sisters, cousins, nephews came to stay, friends of her adolescent daughters came; guests were always seated at the table, even if they were unexpected, and were treated to the best food. The daughters' friends came, sang songs, danced, recited poems.

On big Jewish holidays, like Rosh Hashanah, Pesach and Purim Grandmother collected various delicious things at home and took them to poor families in Slutsk. She was a very beautiful, kind, loving and faithful mother and wife. She dressed like the petty bourgeoisie, not like Jews: she put on dresses, blouses and skirts. Grandmother didn't wear a wig, she had long hair and she braided it into a beautiful braid and placed it on the back of her head. She died in 1931 in Minsk during an operation on her kidneys at a rather young age - she was 53. She was buried in Minsk at the Jewish cemetery. When the Fascists occupied Minsk, her grave was destroyed, so she has been commemorated at Grandfather's, her husband's, grave, who died in 1949 in Leningrad. When Mother's sisters, Grandfather's daughters, put up a monument on his grave at the Jewish Preobrazhensky cemetery, Grandmother's name was included on the gravestone near Grandfather's.

The first child of my maternal grandparents was a boy, but he died in infancy. After that Grandmother gave birth to eight girls: Liber-Esther, Lyubov in her passport [7](#); Beilya, Berta in everyday life - my mother; Maria; Hanna, Anna in everyday life; Reizl, Rosa in everyday life; Matlya, Matilda in everyday life; Eshka, Esphir in everyday life; and Pasha, who was born 21 years after the first daughter was born. As they grew up, the Bunin sisters became assistants to their parents on

the land and at home. They strove for education and read a lot at that time already; they learnt poems by heart and helped each other. The girls were accustomed to labor since their childhood; they got up early in the morning and went to work in the field. They almost had no toys, toys were considered luxury. Dresses and coats were bought cheap and durable, so that they would be worn by the younger daughters. Only Grandfather had a separate bed, all his daughters slept in twos and Grandmother slept with the youngest daughter. Various artistic troupes came to Slutsk from different towns, but the family very seldom went to the circus and theater, they were always busy with the household.

Grandfather Alter had a house, an old wooden one, rather stocky, but a house of his own. When he married my grandmother, he rented some land and was engaged in vegetable growing. They had, though not always, a horse, a cow and geese. In 1912 he bought out the land, about two hectares and continued to do vegetable gardening together with his daughters. All their family worked on the land and an average income was ensured. Their own land gave them food and saved them from starvation. They didn't have food in abundance, but they had enough: the staple food was bread, potatoes, vegetables, curdled milk, a piece of meat. They also had butter, eggs, chicken, white bread and sausage for holidays.

My grandparents' family belonged to the class of the petty bourgeoisie. Their family had no money, only debts. But the neighbors for some reason despised my grandparents, believing them to be rich. They didn't let them live quietly and composed denunciations against them. As a result Grandfather was expelled from the kolkhoz [8](#) and he kept his own household: cattle, geese, chicken and a vegetable garden. Since he was deprived of his right to vote, one of his daughters was expelled from the Party, of which she was a devoted member, and another one was expelled from university.

Grandfather was the favorite of the whole family and of his eight daughters; he spent a lot of strength and energy on their education. Berta, my mother, was the first to enter a gymnasium [high school]. Grandfather didn't agree to it at first, he thought that there wasn't enough funds for the education of all his daughters, and that it was unfair to give education only to one. However, Grandmother insisted and all their daughters obtained education at a gymnasium and at schools after the Revolution [9](#); later all obtained university education. Grandfather understood the benefit of education and was pleased with his daughters' success at gymnasium and when they graduated from university.

During the Soviet time, in 1929, Grandfather was dispossessed as a kulak [10](#) He worked in a kolkhoz and was dismissed from it as a kulak. After his wife died in 1931, he moved to his daughter Maria in Minsk, he stayed in evacuation in Kyrgyzstan with her and moved to Leningrad later. He died in 1949 and was buried at the Jewish Preobrazhensky cemetery in Leningrad, the memory of him is the most respectful and blessed.

My grandparents' elder daughter, Liber-Esther, Lyubov by passport, was born in 1900. When she grew up, she left for Warsaw [today Poland], where she nursed one of her aunt's children, I don't know exactly which aunt's. Then she came back and studied at the History Faculty of the Belarusian University and graduated from it in 1929. She married Georgy Zaitsev, a Jew, born in 1902. He studied at the Belarusian University and, as an undergraduate, was sent to the Institute of Red Professorate in Moscow to study at the Faculty of Economics and graduated from it in 1931.

Lyubov went to Moscow together with him.

After graduation Georgy was assigned to party work in the Caucasus. At first he was a political department head, then he was transferred to the position of First Secretary at the district committee of the Communist Party in a small town. In 1937 he was arrested and in 1938 executed by shooting [11](#). At that time arrests of people, who held high party positions, were very frequent. Usually they were groundlessly accused of anti-Soviet activity. In 1937 Lyubov was also arrested; she worked as a teacher of Russian at that time. They had two sons, born in 1929 and 1934. When she was being driven in the mountains in an open truck to the prison, she managed to tear off a piece of her shirt and write a note, asking to help her children. That note fell into good hands and was sent to the right address in the town, where they lived. Kind people took her children to her sisters in Leningrad. She was in prison until 1939, but the court wasn't able to accuse her of anything, so she was released as there had been no crime committed.

She took her children from Leningrad and remained in the Caucasus before the war. When the war broke out and the Germans approached the Caucasus, she tried to get to the railroad on some cart, in order to get to Russia. The husband of one of her sisters, Boris, helped her. He brought her to the train and sent her to evacuation to Kyrgyzstan, where all our family lived already. After the war Lyubov worked as a teacher of Russian. She died in 1965. She was buried at the Jewish cemetery.

The elder son of Lyubov and Georgy Zaitsev, Vitaly, lived with his mother in the Caucasus. He entered the Ulyanov-Lenin [12](#) Electrical Engineering Institute in Leningrad, graduated from it and worked as an engineer for many years. Now he is retired. He met his wife-to-be, Maya Shapiro, a Jewess, in a line for tickets to the Philharmonic society in Leningrad. They have two children: son Sergey, who lives at present in the USA and daughter Galina, who lives in Petersburg.

The name of Lyubov and Georgy Zaitsev younger son is Sigrid. When his parents were repressed in the Caucasus, Lyubov's sister, Rosa, took him in and brought him to Kyrgyzstan, where she was assigned to work [13](#) after graduation from the First Medical Institute. He lived there with Rosa and her husband until his mother Lyubov was released from prison. Later he returned to the Caucasus with his mother and stayed with her during evacuation. He graduated from the Leningrad Electrical Engineering Institute. At present he lives in Moscow with his second wife. He has four sons, two from his first marriage and two from his second marriage. He still works at the All-Union Scientific Research Institute of Mechanics and Electrical Engineering as an engineer.

The second daughter was my mother, Beilya Bunina. The third daughter of my grandparents, Maria, born in 1905, entered the Law Faculty of the Belarusian University after the gymnasium and worked as a lawyer in Minsk before the Great Patriotic War. Later she was in evacuation in Kyrgyzstan. After the war she worked as a legal consultant in Glavleningradstroy, General Municipal Construction Administration, until her retirement. Maya [Maria] died in 1980 and was buried at the Jewish cemetery [in Leningrad]. Her husband, Meyer Bogin, a Jew, worked as an engineer and was repressed in 1937: he was accused of 'anti-Soviet activity,' as was the custom in those days, and executed by shooting in 1938. Their son, Artyom, born in 1932, an engineer, worked in Giprocement, the Scientific Research Institute of Cement Industry. He died in 1993 and was buried near his mother at the Jewish cemetery. Artyom had two children: Victor, a Mining Institute graduate and Tatiana, a Librarian Institute graduate.

The fourth daughter of my grandparents, Hanna, was born in 1907. She finished school and later the Faculty of Biology of the Minsk University in 1930. In the same year she married Solomon Kaplan, who graduated from the Leningrad Polytechnic Institute. He worked as an engineer all his life at various civil plants. He stayed in Leningrad during the blockade [14](#) and survived. He died in 1984 and was buried in Leningrad at the Jewish cemetery. They had two children. Galina was a German language interpreter, who also knew several other languages; she is now retired. Their son Ilya was born in 1945 after the war. He still works at the plant formerly named after Sverdlov. His wife Natalia is an engineer. They have two daughters, both graduated from the Polytechnic Institute and both married their fellow- students and both live in the USA. Both have children. Hanna worked as a librarian; she died in 2000 in St. Petersburg. She was buried at the Jewish cemetery.

The fifth daughter of my grandparents, Reizl, born in 1909, was the most beautiful in the family. She united all sisters around herself. After finishing school she graduated from the Medical Institute. She got married while at university. Her husband, David, perished during the siege of Leningrad. After graduation from the institute she was assigned to Kyrgyzstan, got married for the second time, to Nikolai Amurov. All family got together at their place during the Great Patriotic War. After the war Reizl worked as a doctor at the Railroad hospital, divorced Amurov and got married for the third time, to Boris Bely, also a doctor, but a veterinarian, with whom she lived for 25 years. He also survived the war; it caught him in Tallinn, in Estonia. He left for Russia on a ship and finished the war in Germany. Bely died in 1971. They had no children, and Reizl was a patroness of all her nephews and nieces. There were twelve of us. She died in 1989 in Leningrad and was buried at the Jewish cemetery.

The sixth daughter of my grandparents, Matlya, was born in 1912. After school she studied at the Librarian Institute, completed three years and quit the institute because of an illness. She worked as an elementary school teacher and a librarian. She married Boris Epstein, a Jew, a communication engineer. Boris was a Soviet Army officer, a communication engineer, during the Great Patriotic War and stayed in Leningrad during the siege, but left for business: he laid the line along Ladoga Lake, where the Life Road [15](#) lay; he also laid the communication line under Volga during the Stalingrad battle [16](#), and he finished the war in Germany. After the war he worked for a long time at the Scientific Research Institute of Communication. He made a lot of inventions and managed the development of communication equipment. He died in 2002 at the age of 90. Matilda died in 1987 and was buried at the Jewish cemetery in Leningrad. Their son, Yevgeny, born in 1935, works as a chief engineer at the river register for the North-Western Shipping Company. His daughter Yelena, an economist, works at the Navy Administration as an accountant.

The seventh daughter of my grandparents, Eshka, was born in 1915. She went to school after the Revolution of 1917, studied at a Jewish school and lived in Slutsk. After finishing school, she left for Leningrad, entered the Leningrad Institute of Fine Mechanics and Optics and graduated from it in 1938. She didn't manage to defend her diploma, as she was assigned to work in Kazan, when the Great Patriotic War broke out. After the war she returned to Leningrad and defended her diploma in 1945. She worked as a teacher in navy schools at the places of her husband's work; she taught engineering sciences. She worked at the Anti-aircraft school, the Navy school in Kronstadt [Kronstadt is a town on Kotlin island in the Finnish gulf, 10 km from the western coastal line of Leningrad] until her retirement age.

Her husband, Naum Fruman, born in 1915, was her fellow-student, but as an undergraduate, he was taken to the Navy Academy, from where he graduated as a navy officer in the field of shooting directing equipment. Right after graduation from the academy he was assigned to work in Tallinn. When the Great Patriotic War broke out, they managed to leave Estonia for Kronstadt with the last ship. Their ship was bombed en route and they were picked up by a Soviet ship which headed for the island. Thus they reached Kronstadt. After that Naum worked at the Artillery Administration during the war and was transferred after the war to Kronstadt as a chief engineer for the Repair plant, where he worked until the Doctors' Plot [17](#) started in 1953. In 1953 he was slandered in connection with the Doctors' Plot, demobilized and fired from the Kronstadt plant. He came to Leningrad and couldn't find a job for a rather long time. His classmates helped him find a position as principal designer in the 'Azimuth' company. He died in 1999.

Eshka and Naum's elder daughter, Galina, was born in 1939. She graduated from university and worked all her life as an engineer in the 'Azimuth' company. Her husband Roman Karpelson stayed in Leningrad with his parents during the war. His parents died during the siege and he was raised in a children's home. Roman graduated from the Mining Institute and worked as a geologist for a long time. They have two children. Their elder son Vadim is an engineer, he lives in Israel now. Their younger son Alexander graduated from university and is now the 'Kodak' company manager in St. Petersburg; he deals with photo and other type of printing. Eshka's son Leonid, born in 1948, graduated from the Bonch-Bruевич Electrical Engineering Institute and worked as an engineer in Petersburg. Now he lives in Boston in the USA. Eshka lives in St. Petersburg, she is 87 years old.

The youngest, eighth daughter of my grandparents, Pasha, was born in 1921. Her mother died, when Pasha was ten years old. Since then she lived with her elder sisters, who considered her their daughter. At first she lived with Berta, my mother, in Minsk and went to school there. Later, when she was a 7th grade pupil, she left for Leningrad, to her sisters' place, where she finished school and entered the Medical Institute. She managed to finish three years before the Great Patriotic War. In evacuation in Kyrgyzstan she finished the Kyrgyz Medical Institute at the end of the war and managed to serve in the army in Ukraine. During the war she married Yakov Umansky, who was killed at the frontline in 1944.

After the war she lived with her sister Berta in Brest where she married Ikheil Manevich, born in 1917. He graduated from the Medical Institute before the war and found himself at the frontline right after. He was a medical officer during the war and finished the war in Berlin. After the war, in 1947 he came to Brest, met Pasha, married her and they both left for Germany. In 1948 their elder son Gennady was born, who graduated from the Pulp and Paper Industry Institute in Leningrad and worked as an engineer in the field of pulp and paper combine construction. At present he lives in Germany. Their daughter, Faina, was born in 1952. She married Ilya Vikstein, who passed away in 1978. Faina and Gennady left for Germany at the beginning of the 1990s with their children, where Faina died in 1993. Pasha worked as a pediatrician for many years and died in 1997.

- **My parents**

My mother, Beilya [Berta] Bunina, was born in 1902 in the town of Slutsk in Belarus. She was the second daughter in the family and helped her parents with the household and in the vegetable garden. She was Grandmother's right hand and helped to look after the younger children. She read a lot and was well-educated. She was the first to pave the way to education before the Revolution,

as she decided to study in a gymnasium, not in cheder. Grandmother, unlike Grandfather, understood the necessity of her daughters' education, supported my mother and Mother finished a gymnasium in Slutsk. After that she moved to Minsk and entered the Minsk Public University, the Faculty of Economics, and graduated in 1925. She married my father, Ber Oliker, who had graduated from the Medical Institute in Minsk and worked as a surgeon. I don't know exactly how my parents met, but I know that they didn't celebrate their wedding, they just registered their marriage; it was a custom to do so in big cities. Mother found a job as an economist-planner at Gosplan [state economic planning institution] of Belarus. In 1927 I was born and in 1935 my brother Ernst was born.

My father, Ber Oliker, was born in 1901 in the town of Rogachev in Belarus. He was the youngest in his family and at the age of 13 became an apprentice at a private tailor shop. Difficult working conditions very soon destroyed his health and he had to leave the shop and become an apprentice at a private textiles store. In 1917, as a 16-year-old young man, he began to participate in the Revolutionary movement in Minsk. In 1918 during the Civil War, when Minsk was occupied by the Germans, he got acquainted with the members of an underground Bolshevik [18](#) committee. Thus he got to know the Party Charter of the Bolshevik Party and he was explained the objectives and tasks of the Bolshevik Party. Soon he began to receive minor assignments from the underground committee; in particular, he was assigned to conduct the work among the working youth regarding international education in accordance with the Bolshevik Party Charter.

After Minsk was liberated from the German occupation, in December 1918 he was selected to the organizational three [19](#) according to the convocation of the First Meeting of Working Youth for the purpose of organization and registration of the Komsomol organization in Minsk. He was elected member of the First Committee of the Minsk Komsomol Organization, among others, at the first organizational meeting of the working youth in December 1918. He joined the Red Army forces among one of the first Komsomol members, was enlisted to the Fourth Komsomol Company of the Minsk Guard regiment and fought against the White Guard [20](#) members to defend our native Minsk.

During the White-Polish occupation [21](#) of Belarus and Minsk, Father, among other Komsomol members, was left in Minsk to conduct underground work. They assisted the underground Party Committee in setting up the underground Komsomol organization and very often, risking their lives, performed important tasks of the underground Party Committee. The underground Party Committee and the underground Komsomol leaders were arrested by the White-Polish gendarmerie. After the arrest of the first underground Komsomol Committee, Father was elected Chairman of the Minsk underground Komsomol Committee.

At the beginning of April 1920 the White-Polish gendarmerie arrested him and other members of the underground Komsomol Committee. He was interrogated, tortured and tormented in the torture cell. Five of his front teeth were knocked out. As a result of torture he had to undergo two operations later, lost his hearing in his right ear and remained disabled for the rest of his life. He was court-martialed as the leader of the underground Komsomol Committee, and the court was supposed to pass a death sentence, but owing to the violent attack of the Red Army the court didn't manage to complete the trial. Father was awarded the Order of the Labor Red Standard of the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic for his active work during the Civil War against the White-Poles. He was the delegate of the III Congress of the Workers' and Peasants' Young League, where Vladimir Ilyich Lenin gave his famous historical speech about the tasks of the Young Communist

League. After the Civil War Father finished the workers' faculty [22](#), after that he graduated from the Medical Institute and he became a surgeon and later the Deputy People's Commissar of Public Health of Belarus.

We had an intellectual Soviet family: my parents had university education and worked in their professional field; Father was a public party activist - unfortunately I was too small at that time to take interest in it, and later my father didn't tell me about it, so I can't give you more details - religion was out of the question [23](#). We lived in a small apartment in downtown Minsk. Father had a big library: mostly they were medical books, the Communist Party history, Russian classics, but it was all lost in the Great Patriotic War, because we left the city without any of our belongings.

In fall 1935 an exchange of documents was commenced in the Communist Party, connected with the beginning purge. Mass arrests and expulsions from the Party began. The incidence of these arrests couldn't put Father on his guard, as he recalled that in 1932 Stalin's letter was published in the 'Proletarian Revolution' magazine about the Party's history falsification. In connection with Stalin's letter all historical books about the Party's history, which had been published before, were called into question. There was no literature in Belarus at that time about the history of the Party and Komsomol, there was only one book about the history of the Komsomol, and my father was one of its authors. Father knew that in case of absence of any other literature the book about the history of the Belarusian Komsomol would be the only target and he wasn't mistaken. On 29th April 1936 Father was arrested and forwarded to the Minsk prison. After that, within 15 months the investigation was carried out. As a result, he was dispatched to the Moscow court in Lefortovo [a district of Moscow], where within twelve minutes his sentence was announced to him - ten years of prison plus five years of deprivation of rights. Father expected that he would be sentenced to death and was even glad that he got a different verdict. From that moment years of wandering in prisons and exiles began.

Father's first prison was the Vologda prison. His second halting point was the Solovetsky monastery. Father stayed for two years in Solovetsky monastery without any work, without communication, without walks. He was allowed only to use the prison library. He read mainly medical literature. Once he was very much carried away with the 'History of Surgery' and he crossed his legs and leaned his elbow on his knee. The guard, who watched him through the crack in the door, entered the cell, hit him and sent him to the punishment cell. This continued until 1939.

In June 1939 some doctors, who worked in the sanitary department of the prison, were mobilized and it was decided to replace them with the imprisoned doctors. Thus Father was engaged in medical practice. In fall 1939 all prisoners were removed from the Solovetsky prison. After the Solovetsky islands he spent his camp life in Karelia, in Archangelsk region and Vorkuta region [north of Russia]. During the Great Patriotic War he worked as a doctor in the town of Medvezhegorsk, constantly asking to be let to the frontline, but, of course, his request wasn't satisfied. He lived like that until 1947. While in prison, he got acquainted with and started to live with a different woman, so he never returned to my mother.

In 1947, after ten years of imprisonment, he was released on probation. He understood perfectly that it wasn't for long, that he would be arrested again. He worked in Kyrgyzstan as a doctor until 1950. In 1950, 14 years after his first arrest and three years after his release, he was arrested for

the second time by the bodies of the State Security Committee [24](#) in Kyrgyzstan and dispatched to the Krasnoyarsk territory, where after long waiting he was appointed as doctor to a village in Yenisey. After two years of exile, in 1952, Father was fired in connection with the beginning of the Doctors' Plot in Moscow and for three months he was waiting for his third arrest. Later the State Security Committee in Kyrgyzstan dispatched him to the Far North to Taymyr National District, where he worked until Stalin's death in 1953.

In December 1954 Father obtained a passport and felt himself to be a free man. He made up his mind to take the most extreme measures and began to write letters to the Communist Party Central Committee and to the Administration of the State Security Committee about his unfair imprisonment. In April 1956, two months after the Twentieth Party Congress [25](#), Father was rehabilitated [26](#) by the resolution of the Supreme Court of the USSR. He was allowed to move to Kyrgyzstan from the Far North, where he was rehabilitated in the Party and assigned to work in Minsk, Belarus, upon his own request. He worked in Minsk until 1967, at the Scientific Research Institute of Sanitary Hygiene as a doctor-research officer and wrote and published several scientific works. He died in Minsk in 1978.

When perestroika [27](#) started, in 1989 during the period of complete rehabilitation of the Gulag prisoners, the Military Board of the Supreme Court of the USSR informed me with a letter that my father had been groundlessly accused of having been a member of the counterrevolutionary trotskyist [28](#) terrorist group in Minsk since 1935. Father didn't plead guilty during the preliminary investigation and in the judicial sitting.

#### • **Growing up in wartime**

From this story one can see that I've seen little of my father, first he was mostly engaged with his public party work after his main work as a surgeon, and he came home very late. I was placed in a kindergarten early, because my parents had to work and they didn't hire any nannies or maids. Later I went to a Soviet high school, and in summer I stayed at children's summer camps [29](#) in the suburbs of Minsk. We also spent Mother's vacation in Leningrad, at her sisters' place.

I don't remember my childhood very well, my strongest impression was when I was nine, Father was put into prison and I became the daughter of an 'enemy of the people' [30](#). I still remember the feeling when everybody turned away from me, all neighbors, my classmates, my teachers. The mass repressions hadn't started yet at that time, and all actions of the authorities were accepted by the nation unconditionally. I have no friends left from my childhood; I made real friends only after the Great Patriotic War, as a student in Leningrad.

At the end of April 1936 my father was arrested based on a denunciation. After that Mother, having become a wife of an 'enemy of the people,' was left without a job with two children. However, with difficulty, afraid of persecutions, she managed to find a job as an economist at the bread-baking plant and worked there as an economist-planner until the Great Patriotic War broke out.

On the day the war was announced, 22nd June 1941, my younger brother Ernst stayed near Minsk at the summer camp of his kindergarten. Mother went to visit him, but being intimidated by repressions and persecutions, was afraid to bring him to the city. Only two days after the war had been announced, when we had to escape from Minsk, we left without my brother. He remained at

the summer camp for several days, but the kindergarten director managed to load the kids onto some passing train and take them to Volga, where Mother's sister found him and later brought him to Kyrgyzstan, where we stayed in evacuation. My mother and I didn't spend a night at home since the war had been announced; we stayed every day in the bomb-shelter.

On 24th June when the town was on fire and many people left the bomb- shelter for the forest, Mother, Grandfather, Aunt Maria with her son and I also decided to leave with everybody. We walked for ten days under the bombs, accompanied by the planes' droning. We weren't let into any village, because the Germans spread leaflets, which said that those who give shelter to Jews would be shot. So we slept in ditches at night, covering ourselves with old coats. We didn't have any belongings. Soon we reached Mogilev, 200 kilometers east of Minsk, which was already empty, full of military people, since the Germans were approaching. The officers gave us food and showed us where the railroad station was, which still had a train with refugees. We managed to get onto the last train, leaving Mogilev. At first we were bombed on our way, but later we passed peaceful territory and soon came to the village of Zavoronezh in Tambov region and settled in an empty village house. We wrote letters to all our relatives in Leningrad, Kyrgyzstan and in the Caucasus, saying that we were alive and needed assistance.

By that time, in the summer of 1941 Mother's sister Rosa and her husband worked in Kyrgyzstan after graduation from the First Medical Institute. They immediately sent us some money and an invitation to come to their place, Bishkek station. Since Grandfather was old and sick, we were afraid to take him with us in such hot weather, so I went together with Mother and left Grandfather in that house in Zavoronezh. After long transfers on different trains we came to Bishkek, to Aunt Rosa and her second husband, Nikolai Amurov. Mother immediately found a job as an economist at the railroad, but from the very first minute understood that she couldn't allow herself to be intimidated as the wife of an 'enemy of the people,' so she wrote in the questionnaire that she had been a widow since 1936. Mother worked as an economist-planner during the evacuation at the Railroad Administration in Kyrgyzstan.

In October 1941 all our relatives from Leningrad came to visit us in Kyrgyzstan: Aunt Maria, Aunt Hanna and Aunt Pasha. Eshka had her preliminary diploma practical work in Kazan, so she and her daughter joined us later. All husbands of my mother's sisters served in the army and stayed in besieged Leningrad during the blockade. Only Aunt Hanna's husband, Solomon Kaplan, was a civil engineer and worked at a plant during the blockade.

There were eighteen people in the two-room apartment of my aunt Rosa: the eight Bunin sisters, their eight children, Grandfather, who came later, and a distant relative of one of my aunts, who kept our household. We lived in harmony like that during the whole war, helping each other. All children went to school. That's all I remember about wartime.

Starting from 1944, at the end of the war, my aunts began to receive invitations from their husbands and returned to Leningrad. In 1945 Mother was assigned to work in liberated areas, in the town of Brest [today Belarus], where she worked as head of the planning department of railroad restaurants until her retirement age in 1959.

My brother Ernst lived with our mother while he was a schoolboy. In 1952 he moved to Leningrad, where I lived, and entered the Cinematographic Engineers Institute. After graduation he worked at the Leningrad 'Sevkabel' plant as an engineer, and at the Scientific Research Institute of Radio

Equipment, where he still works.

In August 1944 I received an invitation from my uncle, came to Leningrad and in September entered the Ulyanov-Lenin Electrical Engineering Institute. That same year, after the siege of Leningrad was lifted, educational institutions started to work again and there were quite a lot of applicants. However, I passed easily. There were no expressions of anti-Semitism, the Great Patriotic War was on and people were united against the Germans, everybody forgot about the Jews both at common and political levels.

I witnessed the end of the Great Patriotic War in May 1945 in Leningrad. I was a witness to the return of Klodt's horses - the famous sculptures on Anichkov Bridge on Nevsky Prospekt, the main street in Leningrad. People, who survived the siege, very much despised those, who had been evacuated, regardless of where the person had escaped from the Germans, and where he/she came back from after the victory [31](#); it was considered that all who returned were those who had fled from the siege. In stores and everywhere people spoke contemptuously about the evacuated. I lived on Mayakovskogo Street in downtown Leningrad and there was a store nearby, on Nekrasova Street, where people bought food with their ration cards [32](#). My relatives lived in Kronstadt and I lived in Leningrad, alone in their own separate apartment. All events of my student life took place on Mayakovskogo Street.

- **Post-war**

As a student I spent my holidays at my mother's place in Brest. I met my husband-to-be, Grigory Gorelov, a Jew, there. He lived there with his parents. They were doctors and as well as my mother, had been assigned to work in a liberated district, in Brest. They were a very nice family of intellectuals. I don't remember anything else about my husband's parents. No one introduced us to each other on purpose; we met by accident at a dancing pavilion and liked each other at once. We spent those holidays together as well as all following ones. We had a very good time together, we were students. Our relations were difficult owing to the fact that we lived in different cities. But we wrote letters to each other very often.

In 1949 my husband graduated from the Polytechnic Institute in Minsk and I graduated from the Electrical Engineering Institute in Leningrad. He came to Leningrad for his preliminary diploma practical work and in June 1949 we got married. I thought that we were just good friends, that is why his proposal to marry him caught me unawares. However, I agreed immediately. On that day we both went to work, and while we talked, he, as if among other things, made me a proposal. I took up his intonation and on our way to work we dropped by the ZAGS [Civilian Registry Office Department] and wrote an application. We didn't have any celebration, we simply registered our marriage. I was dressed very commonly, ordinarily, and my friend, the only guest at our registration, was dressed very beautifully, that is why the ZAGS official addressed her all the time, as if she were the bride. It was very funny, and I remembered it for the rest of my life. In the evening of that day we went to the theater together to watch the Moscow Arts Academic Theater performance.

After the defense of his diploma Grigory got an assignment to work in Leningrad at the Sverdlov plant. We lived here until 1951, when he was enlisted to the Red Army Forces, since the Navy required personnel. In 1951 our daughter Alla was born. In 1953 we moved to Tallinn, where my

husband served as a navy officer at that time. My husband worked at the navy plant in Tallinn up to 1957, and in 1957 he was transferred to work in the Polish People's Republic, the town of Svinemuende, the USSR navy base. I joined him with my daughter a little later. We lived there until 1960. In 1958 I temporarily moved to Brest to give birth to our son, Yevgeny. I didn't want a foreign country to be written in his birth certificate, as we lived in the Soviet Union.

In 1960, before my husband was demobilized, I returned to my mother in Leningrad, who moved there in 1959 from Brest after she had retired. I found a job at the Scientific Research Institute of Radio Equipment, where I worked for 23 years until my retirement. There were never any conflicts at my work place because of my Jewish identity. At the end of 1960 my husband was demobilized under the Order of Khrushchev [33](#) about the reduction of the Army. He returned to Leningrad, got an apartment here, found a job as an engineer at the Design Institute and worked there until his death in 1995; he was buried at the Jewish cemetery in St. Petersburg. My mother lived with us. She died in 1986 and was buried at the Jewish cemetery as well.

In the course of the Doctors' Plot and the 'campaign against cosmopolitans' [34](#) all doctors in our family suffered a lot, as the attitude to them at work changed, there was no elementary respect. This happened both to managers and colleagues; all the rest suffered too, there were a lot of doctors in our family, but no one was fired. Stalin's death in a sense liberated all of the Bunin sisters.

I didn't like Stalin from the moment I understood what had been done to my father. My mother and all the elder Bunins, my aunts, understood perfectly, what kind of oriental-despotic state we happened to live in. After the husbands of the three elder Bunin sisters were arrested in 1937, all their illusions immediately changed into precise understanding of what really happened in Stalin's time. Everything they dreamed about in their youth, everything they strove for, a real life of equal rights, lost its true sense. When Stalin died, someone of the younger sisters tried to cry, but the elder sister Reizl [Rosa] said, 'It won't get any worse, such a despot should have died long ago.'

On 10th March 1953, the day of Stalin's funeral, I worked at the central plant laboratory of the 'Novator' plant located on Obvodny Canal. No one worked on that day, everybody listened to the funeral broadcast and watched, who cried more. A colleague of mine and I had not a single tear in our eyes, so we had to turn away to the window. I wet my finger with my own saliva in order to imitate tears on my cheeks. My friend saw it and began to laugh, but managed to hold it back. Suddenly the USSR anthem started to play and some optimistic program began, conducted by, I think, Molotov [35](#), who said that Stalin was dead, but life went on.

After the war all of my mother's sisters got together in Leningrad and lived a very friendly life. They were all united by blood, by their age, by their common childhood, by their views upon life, by business and common friends. They very often gathered in each other's houses for birthday celebrations, for secular holidays, sometimes without any reason. For some time one of the sisters even arranged family gatherings each Saturday at her place, so that everybody would see each other more often, not only on holidays. It was a joint lunch and everybody came with their families, just to communicate. The sisters went to the theater together, read the same books and the 'Novy Mir,' 'Znamya,' 'Druzhba narodov' magazines, popular periodicals at that time, exchanged them between themselves. They were interested in everything that happened around them. As they grew old, they even spent vacations together at their summer houses [36](#). For me it was a real clan,

where I felt calm and certain that if anything bad happened to me, I would be protected by them. The same applied to all other nephews and nieces.

I was always surrounded by friends and admirers, but my best friends were always my friends from the institute, with whom I still keep in touch; at the age of 60, they are all women of Jewish blood and we are all very close.

When I raised my children, no Jewish traditions were observed in our family, besides, neither me, nor my husband knew about them, we were raised in such a time. My children knew that they were Jews and they were never ashamed of it, though sometimes they faced anti-Semitism at school demonstrated by their class-mates.

My daughter Alla came to Leningrad from Poland earlier in order to go to school, both to the ordinary and music school, so she lived with her grandmother, my mother. She went to the music school, she had a talent. After finishing the music school she entered a school attached to the Conservatory and finished it. By that time she had already married Alexander Baboshkin, in 1970, and they had a son, Andrey. Several years later, she entered a university and graduated from the Department of Choir Conductors. She still works as a ballet concertmaster.

When Alla married Alexander, he was a student. He graduated from the VTUZ [37](#) attached to the Leningrad Metal Plant and he still works as a teacher in that institute. He is a candidate of science [38](#) and is now working on his doctoral thesis. My elder grandson, Andrey, born in 1973, graduated from VTUZ, just like his father and at present works as a sales manager, selling Volvo cars. He has a wife, Lena Krylova, and a son, Vitaly, who is now four months old. My second granddaughter, Natasha [Natalya], born in 1983, finished a school with profound study of English and now is a student of the Cultural College, the Faculty of Tourism Organization.

My son Yevgeny graduated from the Faculty of Philology of the Herten Pedagogical Institute, served in the army and began to work as a school teacher. When his son Vassily was born, they were short on finances and Zhenya [Yevgeny] started to work as a street-car driver, having finished special courses. He still works as a driver. His wife, Olga Belyayeva, also graduated from the Faculty of Philology of the Pedagogical Institute and has been working as a teacher of the Russian language and Russian literature at school for many years. My grandson Vasya [Vassily] is an 11th grade student in a high school.

A lot of my relatives went to live abroad after the break-up of the Soviet Union, fortunately, there was nothing to be afraid of in the 1990s [39](#), so our relations weren't interrupted, we keep in touch - but, of course, only by post or rare phone calls, I've never been abroad. Since I can't afford it, and I never paid close attention to the political events in Israel. Today I lead a pretty active life, but a secular one: I don't celebrate Jewish holidays or attend the synagogue. I get some help and presents on holidays from 'Hesed' [40](#) and I am grateful for it.

## • Glossary

### [1](#) Great Patriotic War

On 22nd June 1941 at 5 o'clock in the morning Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union without

declaring war. This was the beginning of the so-called Great Patriotic War. The German blitzkrieg, known as Operation Barbarossa, nearly succeeded in breaking the Soviet Union in the months that followed. Caught unprepared, the Soviet forces lost whole armies and vast quantities of equipment to the German onslaught in the first weeks of the war. By November 1941 the German army had seized the Ukrainian Republic, besieged Leningrad, the Soviet Union's second largest city, and threatened Moscow itself. The war ended for the Soviet Union on 9th May 1945.

## **2 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.

## **3 Gulag**

The Soviet system of forced labor camps in the remote regions of Siberia and the Far North, which was first established in 1919. However, it was not until the early 1930s that there was a significant number of inmates in the camps. By 1934 the Gulag, or the Main Directorate for Corrective Labor Camps, then under the Cheka's successor organization the NKVD, had several million inmates. The prisoners included murderers, thieves, and other common criminals, along with political and religious dissenters. The Gulag camps made significant contributions to the Soviet economy during the rule of Stalin. Conditions in the camps were extremely harsh. After Stalin died in 1953, the population of the camps was reduced significantly, and conditions for the inmates improved somewhat.

## **4 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.

## **5 Jewish Pale of Settlement**

Certain provinces in the Russian Empire were designated for permanent Jewish residence and the Jewish population was only allowed to live in these areas. The Pale was first established by a decree by Catherine II in 1791. The regulation was in force until the Russian Revolution of 1917, although the limits of the Pale were modified several times. The Pale stretched from the Baltic Sea

to the Black Sea, and 94% of the total Jewish population of Russia, almost 5 million people, lived there. The overwhelming majority of the Jews lived in the towns and shtetls of the Pale. Certain privileged groups of Jews, such as certain merchants, university graduates and craftsmen working in certain branches, were granted to live outside the borders of the Pale of Settlement permanently.

## **6 Cheder for girls**

Model cheders were set up in Russia where girls studied reading and writing.

## **7 Common name**

Russified or Russian first names used by Jews in everyday life and adopted in official documents. The Russification of first names was one of the manifestations of the assimilation of Russian Jews at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. In some cases only the spelling and pronunciation of Jewish names was russified (e.g. Isaac instead of Yitskhak; Boris instead of Borukh), while in other cases traditional Jewish names were replaced by similarly sounding Russian names (e.g. Eugenia instead of Ghita; Yury instead of Yuda). When state anti-Semitism intensified in the USSR at the end of the 1940s, most Jewish parents stopped giving their children traditional Jewish names to avoid discrimination.

## **8 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.

## **9 Russian Revolution of 1917**

Revolution in which the tsarist regime was overthrown in the Russian Empire and, under Lenin, was replaced by the Bolshevik rule. The two phases of the Revolution were: February Revolution, which came about due to food and fuel shortages during World War I, and during which the tsar abdicated and a provisional government took over. The second phase took place in the form of a coup led by Lenin in October/November (October Revolution) and saw the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks.

## **10 Kulaks**

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

## **11 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.

## **12 Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (Ulyanov) (1879, Simbirsk, now Ulyanovsk - 1924, Gorki near Moscow) - the founder of Bolshevism, leader of the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia; initiator and first Head of the Soviet state**

The maternal grandfather of Lenin (Ulyanov), doctor Blank, was a Jew, who converted to Christianity. Lenin was an absolute opponent of anti-Semitism in any of its expressions, which could be seen from his political decisions, articles and speeches. There were many persons of Jewish origin among his associates and personal friends. However, the political ideology, developed by him, did not consider Jews as a separate nation and regarded their assimilation as an inevitable and progressive event. After Lenin died, these views served as basis for elimination of traditional Jewish culture in the USSR.

## **13 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.

## **14 Blockade of Leningrad**

On September 8, 1941 the Germans fully encircled Leningrad and its siege began. It lasted until January 27, 1944. The blockade meant incredible hardships and privations for the population of the town. Hundreds of thousands died from hunger, cold and diseases during the almost 900 days of the blockade.

## **15 'Road of Life' - during the Great Patriotic War the only transport road across Ladoga Lake (in the navigation periods - across water, across ice in winter), which connected the besieged Leningrad with the country within the period between September 1941 and March 1943**

## **16 Stalingrad Battle**

17th July 1942 - 2nd February 1943. The South- Western and Don Fronts stopped the advance of German armies in the vicinity of Stalingrad. On 19th and 20th November 1942 the Soviet troops undertook an offensive and encircled 22 German divisions (330,000 people) and eliminated them. On 31st January 1943 the remains of the 6th German army headed by General Field Marshal Paulus surrendered (91,000 people). The victory in the Stalingrad battle was of huge political, strategic and international significance.

## **17 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.

## **18 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.

## **19 Organizational Three**

the Soviet political system was being developed within the conditions of the Civil War (1918-1920), thus its institutions were of emergency, non-constitution character for a long time. Such 'threes' meant to be bodies of non-judicial punishment of 'Revolution enemies,' were formed in provinces, districts, towns, as part of local Emergency Commissions (EC) aimed at control over counter-revolution, sabotage, and banditry. They passed a lot of death sentences without any judicial or legislative proceedings, based on the 'class feeling.' This practice of mass repressions and non-judicial punishment remained during all years of Stalin's power. Besides, the top local power was called the 'three,' as it consisted of the chairman of the Communist Party Committee, the local Soviet chairman and the head of the local body of the EC/GPU/OGPU/NKVD. They headed the local Party-economic active group, controlled all the information, directed to the superior authorities, and were absolute hosts of all local life.

## **20 Whites (White Army)**

Counter-revolutionary armed forces that fought against the Bolsheviks during the Russian Civil

War. The White forces were very heterogeneous: They included monarchists and liberals - supporters of the Constituent Assembly and the tsar. Nationalist and anti-Semitic attitude was very common among rank-and-file members of the white movement, and expressed in both their propaganda material and in the organization of pogroms against Jews. White Army slogans were patriotic. The Whites were united by hatred towards the Bolsheviks and the desire to restore a 'one and inseparable' Russia. The main forces of the White Army were defeated by the Red Army at the end of 1920.

## **21 White-Polish occupation**

the Polish army occupied significant parts of Ukraine and Poland during the initial period of the Soviet-Polish war of 1920. Polish soldiers were noted for their cruel attitude to the Jewish population. They performed pogroms, robberies and mass rapes of women. The Soviet propaganda called them 'white Poles.' The Red Army launched a counter-offensive and reached Warsaw suburbs, but suffered a defeat on the banks of the Vistula River. According to the Riga Peace Treaty of 1921 the territory of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus were affiliated to Poland. That border existed until September 1939, when as a result of Molotov- Ribbentrop pact, regions with prevalence of Ukrainian and Belarusian population were annexed to the Soviet Union.

## **22 Rabfak (Rabochiy Fakultet - Workers' Faculty in Russian)**

Established by the Soviet power usually at colleges or universities, these were educational institutions for young people without secondary education. Many of them worked beside studying. Graduates of Rabfaks had an opportunity to enter university without exams.

## **23 Struggle against religion**

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

## **24 KGB**

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

## **25 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.

## **26 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.

### **27 Perestroika (Russian for restructuring)**

Soviet economic and social policy of the late 1980s, associated with the name of Soviet politician Mikhail Gorbachev. The term designated the attempts to transform the stagnant, inefficient command economy of the Soviet Union into a decentralized, market-oriented economy. Industrial managers and local government and party officials were granted greater autonomy, and open elections were introduced in an attempt to democratize the Communist Party organization. By 1991, perestroika was declining and was soon eclipsed by the dissolution of the USSR.

### **28 Trotsky, Lev Davidovich (born Bronshtein) (1879-1940)**

Russian revolutionary, one of the leaders of the October Revolution of 1917, an outstanding figure of the communist movement and a theorist of Marxism. Trotsky participated in the social-democratic movement from 1894 and supported the idea of the unification of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks from 1906. In 1905 he developed the idea of the 'permanent revolution'. He was one of the leaders of the October Revolution and a founder of the Red Army. He widely applied repressive measures to support the discipline and 'bring everything into revolutionary order' at the front and the home front. The intense struggle with Stalin for the leadership ended with Trotsky's defeat. In 1924 his views were declared petty-bourgeois deviation. In 1927 he was expelled from the Communist Party, and exiled to Kazakhstan, and in 1929 abroad. He lived in Turkey, Norway and then Mexico. He excoriated Stalin's regime as a bureaucratic degeneration of the proletarian power. He was murdered in Mexico by an agent of Soviet special services on Stalin's order.

### **29 All-Union pioneer organization**

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

### **30 Enemy of the people**

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

### **31 Victory Day in Russia (9th May)**

National holiday to commemorate the defeat of Nazi Germany and the end of World War II and honor the Soviets who died in the war.

### **32 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 abolished in 1947.

### **33 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.

### **34 Campaign against 'cosmopolitans'**

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

### **35 Molotov, V**

P. (1890-1986): Statesman and member of the Communist Party leadership. From 1939, Minister of Foreign Affairs. On 22nd June 1941 he announced the German attack on the USSR on the radio. He and Eden also worked out the percentages agreement after the war, about Soviet and western spheres of influence in the new Europe.

### **36 Dacha**

country house, consisting of small huts and little plots of lands. The Soviet authorities came to the decision to allow this activity to the Soviet people to support themselves. The majority of urban citizens grow vegetables and fruit in their small gardens to make preserves for winter.

### **37 VTUZ plant**

system of higher education, the core of which was harmonious connection of education with production. The VTUZ was a specialized higher educational institution, which trained specialists based on orders made out by enterprises.

### **38 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.

### **39 Keep in touch with relatives abroad**

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

### **40 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 Former Soviet Union 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.