

# Adolf Landsman

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Moscow

Russia

Interviewer: Ella Levitskaya

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*Adolf Landsman is a short stout man. His gray hair is getting thinner. He has a pleasant face. He speaks slowly and pensively. Adolf is very affable. He eagerly speaks of his family showing his family relics. After his wife passed away he now lives in a small two-room apartment in one of the "dormant" districts of Moscow. The apartment is very clean and cozy.*

*There are a lot of books there. There are pictures of Adolf's wife all over the apartment. It's hard for Adolf to get over his wife's death and he is constantly mentioning her name in the conversation.*

*They must have loved each other very much and been heart and soul for each other.*



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## My family history

I don't know much about my father's family. They lived in a Belarusian town called Liozno [450 km from Moscow]. My grandfather, Boruh Landsman, was a drayman. I don't know exactly where he was born. All I know is that it was either in Belarus or in Lithuania in the 1860s. I saw my grandfather only once, when I was five. He came to see us. He was a stubby man with a gray beard. He wore a black felt cap. As far as I can remember, my grandfather didn't speak very good Russian, but he understood it very well. He preferred speaking Yiddish. I saw my grandmother, Helena Landsman, only in pictures. There is hardly anything I can say about her. She was a housewife. She was petite, amiable, kind-hearted, tacit and modest. Her hair was gray. Her head was covered with a kerchief.

There were three sons in the family. All of them were born in Liozno. The eldest brother, Morduhai, was born in 1887, my father Isaac was born in 1893, and the youngest brother Pavel [see common name] [1](#), Jewish name Pinhas, was born in 1895. My father never told me about his childhood and adolescence. His family spoke Yiddish. I think my father's family was religious. It couldn't have been different at that time, especially in hick towns. My father and his brothers moved to Nizhniy Novgorod [400 km east of Moscow] before World War I. It was a big city, but it was included in the Jewish Pale of Settlement [2](#), and Jews were permitted to live there. My grandparents stayed in Liozno. I'm ashamed to say that I have never been there and there is nothing I know about that town. My father and his brothers were married in Nizhniy Novgorod. Morduhai's wife was Khana-Khaya Lemfort. Their son, Jacob, was born in 1924. Pavel was married to Etya Spungina. They had two children - a daughter, Sofia, born in 1918, and a son, Arkadiy, born in 1923.

My grandfather died in 1934. He was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Liozno. My grandmother stayed by herself. She went to live with the family of Morduhai, who lived in the city of Pushkino [25 km from Moscow] at that time. But Morduhai didn't live much longer than his father; he passed away in the winter of 1934. My grandmother still stayed with his family and came to see us a couple of times. She died in 1937. She was buried in the Jewish plot of the Pushkino cemetery next to her son Morduhai. [Editor's note: In the USSR city cemeteries were territorially divided into sectors. Usually all city cemeteries have common land plots, plots for the burial of children, sectors for the burial of the titled militaries, a Jewish sector, land plots for political leaders, etc. People were usually buried in accordance with the will of the relatives of the deceased or the testament.]

Nizhniy Novgorod was one of the few large Russian cities, where Jews were permitted to live in the tsarist times. There was a large Jewish community and a large choral synagogue, the construction of which commenced in 1881. In August 1883, there was the first prayer house there. This synagogue is still there. There were also smaller synagogues and chapels. There were a lot of Orthodox churches, chapels and monasteries in the city. Nizhniy Novgorod was a city of commerce and merchants. There were a lot of rich and well-off Jews. They were charitable, helped out the indigent, built community houses, schools, hospitals, hospices and orphanages. There was a spiritual, and a public rabbi. [Editor's note: The interviewee means the rabbi and the community representative, who was at the governmental service, being a link between the government and the Jews of the district. He was responsible for the Jewish community. There was also a rabbi elected by the people - the spiritual rabbi. He was the most just, educated and intelligent man, who was supposed to resolve disputes and find solutions to the issues addressed by the people.]

After moving to Nizhniy Novgorod, my father's eldest brother, Morduhai, learned the craft of glass-blowing. My father and his younger brother rented the premises for the shop and sold secondhand men's suits. My father met his future wife in Nizhniy Novgorod. My mother told me the story of how they met. The central street in Nizhniy Novgorod was called Bolshaya Pokrovskaya; it has the same name now. In the evenings and during the weekends young people used to saunter in the street, sing songs and eat ice-cream. My father was with his friends and my mother was with hers. Somebody broached the conversation and they got acquainted. In 1920 they got married.

My maternal grandfather, Gersh Sherman, was born in the 1860s in the town of Vitebsk [Belarus, 450 km from Moscow]. My grandmother's name was Basya- Mirra. I barely remember her. There is only one picture with her, where she holds me in her arms. My grandfather was a painter. He was a window dresser. His kin lived in Nizhniy Novgorod. That was the reason why he was called there.

Besides, his profession was in demand. He moved to Nizhniy Novgorod in 1909, got his own shop and commenced his work successfully.

There were seven children in the Sherman family. I knew two of my mother's younger sisters, who lived with their families in Moscow. I didn't see my mother's relatives from Moscow very often, and there isn't much I can say about them. Her sister, Marta, Jewish name Mariam, was the eldest. Then Berta was born. Her Jewish name was Basya. The third one was Evgenia; her Jewish name was Genya. Then Lev and my mother followed. After my mother two more children were born: Isaac and Elisavetta - Jewish name Leya.

My grandparents were religious. My grandfather went to the synagogue on holidays. I think he went there on Sabbath as well. Jewish holidays and Sabbath were celebrated at home. I don't know the details, as I only remember bits and pieces of my mother's tales from my childhood. Both parents and children spoke good Russian, but Yiddish was spoken at home. The family was most likely well-off before the revolution [see Russian Revolution of 1917] [3](#) because the two elder daughters finished lyceum. The rest of the children, except for Elisavetta, weren't able to get a thorough education. Elisavetta graduated from a medical institute in Nizhniy Novgorod and became a pediatrician.

Marta was a seamstress before getting married. She married a Jew, Naum Krivin, before the revolution. He was a pharmacist. Before the revolution he had a small pharmaceutical enterprise, where several people made medicine. After the revolution, his enterprise was taken over and the Krivins moved to Moscow. Naum worked as a pharmacist in the state apothecary. After getting married Marta was a housewife and raised the children. They had three children: the eldest, David, was born in 1912, then Vladimir was born in 1926, and the youngest, Tatiana, was born in 1929.

Berta graduated from a lyceum and knew Latin very well. She finished some courses and worked in the pharmacy dealing with prescriptions for medicine. She was married to a Jew called Boris Rothstein. Boris didn't acquire any education, but he was a very brisk man and soon after their arrival in Moscow, he began to work for an ammunition manufacturer. Then in the course of time he was appointed for a very responsible position in one of the trusts of the Ministry of Mortar Armament. They didn't have any children.

I know very little about my mother's relatives who stayed in Nizhniy Novgorod. I'm sorry to say that I hardly asked anything about the lives of my relatives. Only last year when I visited my nephew in Nizhniy Novgorod, he told me about my kin from Nizhniy Novgorod and about my parents' life in that period, in his mother's words. From his story I understood that my parents were considered rather well-heeled, and I wasn't aware of that. All I know about my mother's sister Evgenia is that she was married. She was a housewife and had two children. Her husband, Lev Khudalov, was the director of the rope factory in Nizhniy Novgorod. They had two daughters: Sofia, born in 1922, and I don't remember the name of the second child but she was born in 1926.

My mother's brother Lev Sherman was very good at painting without acquiring special education. Her second brother, Isaac, hadn't got any special education either. He was very gifted: he played the violin very well, and was good at painting. He worked for some company. Isaac was married. He had a daughter, whose name I don't remember. I know she was married to a certain Feltermester. Her son became a composer, professor and rector of Nizhniy Novgorod conservatoire. Elisavetta worked in a district polyclinic as a pediatrician. I don't remember her husband's name; all I know is

that his surname was Kugel. He worked for the NKVD [4](#) as a steward. They had a son of my age.

My mother finished six grades of the Jewish school. She worked in a pharmacy before getting married. She weighed the components of the medicine. She quit her job after getting married. I think my parents had a traditional Jewish wedding as my grandparents would have objected to a non-Jewish one as they were very religious. My parents didn't have their own house. They got very lucky - they moved into the apartment with the Lubotskiy sisters. They said they didn't mind us moving into their apartment. Those sisters' brother was the closest counsel of Lenin [5](#), the first secretary of the Moscow Party Committee. He died tragically in 1918. A bomb was thrown in the office where the party committee was. Lubotskiy took that bomb to throw it away, but it exploded in his hands. Many people died. His revolutionary pseudonym was Zagorskiy and that's why the town Sergiev Posad was named after him - Zagorsk.

One of his sisters was a seamstress, and the other, Elena, was involved in revolutionary activities even before the revolution. She probably didn't get a higher education, but she finished lyceum and was an intelligent and well-mannered woman. She often conversed with my mother and later on, my mother told me that she acquired all her knowledge at a mature age owing to Elena Lubotskaya. Of course, I don't remember those sisters very well from back then, as we left Nizhniy Novgorod when I was four. When I went to Nizhniy Novgorod after the Great Patriotic War [6](#), I went to see the Lubotskiy sisters. Amazingly enough they recognized me at once. We spent the whole day together, having tea along with a pleasant chat, remembering the past.

I was born on 14th April 1924 in Nizhniy Novgorod. My parents called me Adolf. I don't have a Jewish name. My father still worked in his shop with his brother Pavel. My mother was a housewife and took care of me. We were pretty well-off during the NEP [7](#) times, and the Soviet regime encouraged entrepreneurship.

## Growing up

I hardly remember anything about my life in Nizhniy Novgorod. We left for Moscow in 1928. Pavel's family moved from Nizhniy Novgorod with us. In Moscow my father and Pavel rented a shop for rubber manufacturing. They hired a manufacturing engineer, who helped them launch the manufacturing process. Then he worked with clientele and orders. He knew which plants required rubber products and recommended my father's shop to the plant. The plant made production samples, provided them with the raw materials and orders were manufactured in the workshop. My father and Pavel worked together. When there were no large orders, they manufactured consumer goods such as footballs, baby comforters, hot water bottles, etc. They didn't hire people to work full time; they just hired workers for odd jobs, e.g. a drayman and stevedores when they were supposed to take orders somewhere. Other than that they coped with the work themselves, but in spite of that they were considered entrepreneurs.

At that time such entrepreneurs as my father and Pavel were called 'sole motorized artisans', i.e. the artisans that were equipped with tools and gadgets. The owners of such petty enterprises were thought to grow gradually and become owners of big factories, who would exploit workers. There were also sole artisans without motor, i.e. cobblers, hair-dressers, etc. These were primary terms for my generation. My mother didn't approve of my father's activity. She came from a common family, and didn't get any education except for the six grades of Jewish school. She wanted my father to become an engineer. She thought it was very honorable to be an engineer. There was an

extramural technical institute not very far away from us. There were no entrance exams, they didn't even ask for a secondary school certificate. It was possible to get enrolled and attend classes. My father was enrolled there and attended classes after work.

We lived in the city center in Moscow, on Alexander Nevskiy Street. The name of that street hasn't been changed. We lived in a communal apartment [8](#), where there was another family apart from us. Our neighbors were Russians. It was the Nikiphorov family. The husband was an engineer, and his wife was a school teacher. They didn't have children. They were very friendly, I don't even think that they got irritated judging by the tone of their conversation, and there were no quarrels. We had two small rooms and a hall.

My parents spoke only Russian with me. They spoke Russian, too [with each other] and they switched to Yiddish when they needed to conceal something from me. Unfortunately, I wasn't taught Yiddish. I don't think my parents were religious. They stuck to Jewish traditions rather conventionally. My parents didn't pray. My father worked on Sabbath and my mother also had things to do. Maybe it was connected with the rigid struggle of the Soviet regime against religion [see struggle against religion] [9](#). Religious people were persecuted and disdained. Pesach was the only holiday we celebrated at home. We bought matzah for the holiday. My mother cooked traditional festive dishes: chicken broth and gefilte fish. She also baked strudels. I think they just paid tribute to the tradition. My mother never went to the synagogue. My father went on Pesach and Yom Kippur. He had a prayer book and a tallit made from rich silk. That tallit was kept in the family for many years.

When we moved to Moscow, my parents decided to give me the best education possible. I went to a private German kindergarten, where there were eight to ten children. [Editor's note: there were no private kindergartens in the USSR. Some people who couldn't find a job otherwise were involved in such businesses running the risk of being arrested.] The group was organized by a German lady, from the Froebel Institute [10](#). She wasn't young and had graduated from that institute before 1917. She spoke only German with us. Children were good at learning foreign languages and soon we spoke pretty good German. In the morning we went to her and brought food for the whole day. We went strolling with her. She played with us. We didn't speak German only with her; we were supposed to communicate in German amongst ourselves. We were forbidden to speak Russian. Then we went back home and had lunch. She read books in German. Then we took some rest. I continued studying German at school. When I went back home after the war my hatred towards the Germans was so strong that I couldn't stand hearing German speech and gradually I forgot the German language.

When I reached school age, my parents managed to send me to the best school in Moscow. It was the privileged school # 25 [11](#), where the children of the Party and the governmental elite studied. It was a hard time. There wasn't enough food but our school breakfasts were pretty good. Before the revolution this school used to be a lyceum, and some teachers from that lyceum taught there. Of course, I wasn't aware that the children of governmental authorities went to our school. The teachers had the same attitude towards everybody. They treated everybody equally and in a good-wishing manner. I became a Young Octobrist [12](#) in the first grade.

## Exile

I finished the first grade when my father was arrested. Authorities knew that my father was a businessman and during the NEP his business was closed down, but entrepreneurs were persecuted and restricted in civil rights. When in 1933 there was a passport exchange, Pavel and my father weren't given new passports for being NEPists, and they were put behind bars. My father strongly disliked talking about his imprisonment. Only when I grew up I understood that my father had been beaten and teased during interrogations judging from skimpy recollections of that time. My father and uncle were charged for political reasons, but in actuality the police merely wanted gold and currency. Of course, my father and Pavel had gold but they decided not to confess that and not to give away anything to the sleuth. There was nothing they could indict my father and Pavel for, they were innocent, and that is why they framed them for illegitimate currency operations. So my father and Pavel were charged with crimes, which weren't proven, and they were exiled to Arkhangelsk by a court ruling [about 1,200 km north of Moscow].

My mother and I remained on our own. My father had some savings and we lived comfortably for some time. My mother wasn't given a passport as she was the wife of an exiled. It was very strict at that time, if the husband was exiled the wife was supposed to follow him and a passport could be issued only in the area of the exile. Even if spouses were divorced, wives were supposed to go to the exile anyway, as they thought that the divorce might have been fictitious. Such people were called deprivées [see Admission privilege] [13](#) - they weren't only deprived of the election rights, which would be easily overcome, but many other rights, and one of them was the right to live in a big city.

My mother couldn't find a job without a passport, she couldn't even go to the polyclinic to see the doctor as she was supposed to show her passport with the registered address at the reception. Soon after my father's arrest, my grandfather, Gersh Sherman, passed away. My mother couldn't go to his funeral, as she was supposed to show her passport at the railway stations and in the train during the stops as the passengers were checked by the patrols of railroad police. She would be forced to leave the train immediately at any station. My mother and I were evicted from the apartment. We lived with Marta, my mother's sister, for about a year.

My mother tried to take some actions. She managed to get an appointment with Maria Ulyanova, Lenin's sister. She wanted to ask her to help us stay in Moscow. When my mother went for the appointment she was asked for her passport at the reception and she wasn't let in. She went to the hall hoping that when Maria Ulyanova left the office she would have a chance to have a talk with her in the hall. She understood that she might have to stay there for the whole day and had brought a bag with sandwiches with her. She had the bag in her hands. When Ulyanova left the office, my mother went up to her. She started out with her request, but Ulyanova wasn't listening to my mother, just looking at the bag. Later my mother said that Ulyanova had such frightened eyes. She might have thought that there was a bomb in the bag. She didn't react to my mother's request and left hastily. It had been the last chance to hang on, so my mother and I had to go to exile.

My father and Pavel were lucky not to be sent to the Gulag [14](#). It was an administrative exile under surveillance of the militia. They were supposed to go to the district militia department twice a week. The rest of the time they could lead a normal life - rent an apartment, get a job, etc. It was a very lenient punishment as compared to the others. My father didn't have a passport, only a certificate from the militia. He was entitled to get a passport only when the term of exile was over.

He rented a room from a landlady, whose husband was an entrepreneur during the NEP and had the same deprived status. He was also exiled.

People from the European part of the USSR were exiled in Arkhangelsk and those who were from Arkhangelsk were exiled further to the Polar circle. [Arkhangelsk is in fact a major port city in the extreme north of European Russia on the White Sea. However, it is not the northernmost place in the Russian arctic]. The only way to get there was by steamboat. Navigation could last three to four months, the rest of the time, rivers were covered with ice. Each time during navigation time the landlady left to see her husband. My father found a job as an economist in forestry. My mother was immediately given a passport in Arkhangelsk. The population of Arkhangelsk was doubled at that time due to the exiled. There were many families from Leningrad and Moscow. I went to the second grade. Half of the class consisted of the children of the exiled. We were treated very well. Neither teachers nor classmates gave us a cold shoulder. Maybe not all school teachers knew who we were. Anyway when in 1936 my father's term of exile was over, and we were going to leave, I went to my grade master to get a certificate stating that I had attended school. She asked me why I was leaving and was very surprised when I said that we had been exiled. Maybe she pretended to be surprised. I became a pioneer [see All-Union pioneer organization] [15](#) in the third grade.

My father didn't have the right to live in Moscow. He got a passport after exile and in there was a line saying that the passport was issued in accordance with the certificate stating the service of the full term in the administrative exile [see passport 24] [16](#). There was no way to get registered in Moscow or other large cities with such a passport [see residence permit] [17](#), and it was impossible to get employed without a registration. We settled in the dacha village [holiday village] of Tarasovka and rented a room there. My father was given a job owing to connections of one of his pals.

It was a very brave deed of the director of the enterprise to hire my father, as my father didn't have a labor book, because he had never worked for a state enterprise. [Editor's note: The labor book was the main document of the track record of the employee in the USSR. All employees of an enterprise, company or organization were issued labor books if they had worked for at least five days. The labor book contains information about the employee, his job title and all bonuses or awards for exceptional work. Sanctions weren't to be written in the labor book with the exception of dismissal as a disciplinary sanction.]

Clever people advised my father to be very quiet and tacit. It didn't matter that my father was arrested half a year before graduation, and in spite of his being an intelligent and entrepreneurial man he became a worker after exile. He worked as a supply agent with different factories. He was organized, bona-fide and did what he was told without taking any initiative. Besides, my father had to change his work place every half year or every year. When we lived in Arkhangelsk, Kirov [18](#) was assassinated in 1934, and that assassination caused the commencement of 'enemy of the people' [19](#) trials, and mass repressions [Great Terror] [20](#). Then the personnel department was given an assignment to compile a dossier for every employee.

If a person worked for a long time, there was collection of information about him. If a person didn't work for a long time, they merely had no chance to do that. We were very aloof. My parents tried not to make friends with anybody, even not to have friends. They didn't visit anybody. When I went to school I also was very offish. I had very few friends and they never came to our house. Even in

their conversation my parents didn't remember the prosperous life they used to have. They survived a personal tragedy and didn't want to recall anything and make me an antagonistic against the Soviet regime, which had taken away everything from us.

The enterprise my father had to work at had a warehouse base in Moscow on Dmitrovskoye highway. There were accountants and security guards there. Then the warehouse was liquidated but the base still pertained to the trust. The base premises were remodeled into apartments and our family and another family were given apartments there. My father had to go to the militia every year for a record and a renewal of registration because Dimitrovskoye highway was considered governmental [All roads of strategic purpose were considered governmental as well as the roads that governmental leaders and dignitaries used to drive through. Such roads were kept in special order and were guarded by security] as Voroshylov [21](#) lived not very far away from it. My father decided to get rid of the black stain for ever and filed a report in the militia that he had lost his passport, but he was sent a new passport with the same indication of exile in Arkhangelsk.

At that time repressions were continual. Every single day there were articles in the papers disposing a new peoples' enemy. Almost all of those peoples' enemies were well-known and respectable people, governmental authorities, party activists, eminent military commanders. I was about 14 or 15 and I understood a lot about life in exile. I remember how I was shocked when Tukhachevskiy [22](#) was arrested. He was a brilliant military; boys considered him an idol. I remember the phrase that I heard about him on the radio, 'the peoples' enemies were divulged and neutralized and now the Red Army would be strong and invincible.'

I was flabbergasted as Tukhachevskiy was the one who did the most for the Red Army to be strong. My father never talked to me about repressions, but I understood that he didn't believe anything. There were things I couldn't speak of in spite of the propaganda. I didn't believe in the treason of military leaders, who gave their lives for communist ideas; Trotsky [23](#) and Tukhachevskiy were some of those decent people. It was a subconscious disbelief on my side and an organic protest of common sense. Of course, I didn't share my thoughts with anybody as I was aware how perilous it was.

There were children of the repressed in my class maybe because the school was on the outskirts of Moscow. I never came across that. I had doubts but anyway I became a Komsomol [24](#) member. I didn't join the Komsomol because I believed in its ideas; I just did what everybody else was doing. I understood many things in those years and considered myself to be an adult. But now I can definitely say that I was influenced by continual Soviet propaganda.

In 1933 Hitler came to power in Germany. The USSR condemned fascism. There were antifascist articles and movies. I remembered two movies: 'Professor Mamlock' [25](#) and 'The Oppenheims' screen adaptation of the novel by Lion Feuchtwanger [26](#). [Editor's note: The feature film 'The Oppenheim family' is about the tragic fate of a Jewish family in Nazi Germany. The film was shot by Russian director and producer, Grigoriy Roshal, and screened since 1939.] In 1939 we were surprised to find out that Germany was our friend and ally [following the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact] [27](#). It began with the message about Ribbentrop's visit to Moscow. [Joachim von Ribbentrop (1893-1946): Nazi diplomat and Foreign Minister (1938-1945).] There was no television at that time but Ribbentrop's meeting with Stalin and Molotov [28](#) was shown in a newsreel. Then the non-aggression pact was signed, and again we didn't understand whether this was right or



wrong.

Now they say that the USSR became an accessory of unleashing the war because the pact had been signed. In accordance with the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact there was a division of the territory. The Baltic countries joined the USSR [see Occupation of the Baltic Republics] [29](#). On 1st September 1939, Hitler's troops invaded Poland [see Invasion of Poland] [30](#). On 18th September our troops went to Poland [Editor's note: The Soviet invasion lasted from 17th to 28th September] and after that Western Belarus and Western Ukraine were joined to the USSR [see Annexation of Eastern Poland] [31](#). Now, pondering over those events, I can say that from the standpoint of tactics, that pact was advantageous for the USSR, as we were able to widen our Western boundaries for 200-400 kilometers. From the standpoint of morale it was treason to Poland. I remember Molotov's speech on the radio where he said, 'There is no State of Poland anymore.' I was shocked by those words. What kind of attitude did the Poles have towards us after that? Of course, they were very antagonistic towards our country.

After finishing the Polish war the Soviet Red Army was eulogized as invincible. But after the Finnish campaign [see Soviet-Finnish War] [32](#) our army wasn't as strong, as a small Finnish army was able to resist it for such a long time. Like everybody, I believed that if someone attacked our country we would banish the enemy from our land immediately with minor casualties. My parents didn't seem to strongly believe it especially after getting to know about Hitler's 'walkover' in Europe. We knew how the German troops raided Poland and France, and the way they encroached onto new territories.

Eight days before the war was unleashed, i.e. 14th June 1941, there was the following message in the newspapers as far as I remember, 'There are rumors overseas that there are a lot of German troops close to the boundaries of the Soviet Union. In actuality this gossip is spread by our enemies and instigators. We believe that Germany as well as the USSR will stick to the peace agreement and Germany is no threat to the USSR.' Smart people said it was a trick and that the government was waiting for the Germans to respond along the lines of: 'Yes, we are loyal to the non-aggression pact and the troops are having peace.'

At that time France was raided. They awaited Hitler's answer but it didn't come. Later I read in Zhukov's [33](#) memoirs that the Soviet ambassador to Germany was constantly being called and told to have an audience with Ribbentrop and find out why there was no answer from Hitler. The ambassador tried to get an appointment with Ribbentrop, but failed. And on 22nd June 1941, the German troops crossed the border of the USSR. When they called the German attack disloyal it was true, but when they said it was unexpected it was totally wrong. They were expecting attack and were well aware of that and our intelligence reported on that. They knew, but it appeared that we would be the first to attack. There wasn't enough ammunition to attack. We didn't even have automatic weapons. The first year of the war, the soldiers were armed with the rifles that had been used during World War I.

## **During the War**

In June 1941 I finished the ninth grade of school. The Great Patriotic War started on 22nd June 1941, at 12:16am. I went to school. All senior pupils got together. We weren't of the drafting age, but all of us were willing to go to the front as volunteers. They told us in the military enlistment

office that we were needed at home and that we should come back in a year if the war was still on. The senior schoolboys organized volunteer fighting battalions [34](#). We went from house to house and explained how to equip air-raid shelters, i.e. dig-outs should be at a distance of ten meters from the house. Most of the houses were wooden, and they would burn immediately if a bomb hit them. We stood sentry in the street.

When the bombing started we covered fire-bombs with sand. In a week we were offered to join the Komsomol squad, which was supposed to be involved in the construction of defense fortifications on the access road to Moscow. There were throngs of senior pupils and students at Kiev train-station in Moscow. We went in freight cars in the western direction. We stopped in a village of Bryansk district. We settled in the houses of the villagers and we were fed in the canteens of the collective farmers. Military engineers were commanders of our squads. We dug anti-tank trenches. It was a pretty hard job for the urban teenagers, who had never used a spade before. We stayed there for a couple of months.

At first we used to work during the day then we started working at dusk, taking a rest during the day. We tried not to go outside if there was no need to. It was difficult to work at night, especially during those nights when there was no moonlight, as the trenches were to be of a certain configuration. There I got my first 'battle injury' - I jumped into a trench and at that time somebody threw a spade there and I didn't see it. I was strewn by sand and my head was hit by the spade. I was sent to the sanitary unit, where my head was bandaged. I was released from work for some time. In the middle of August we got together again. We were given certificates of the diggers of a certain category and were even paid money for our work. It was my first salary. At the end of August they took us back to Moscow.

Shortly after my departure to Bryansk district the expiration date of my father's passport issued in Arkhangelsk was getting close and he had to exchange it for a new one. My father was really afraid of exile from Moscow and being refused the issuance of a new passport. His position was almost illegal. We constantly talked about that, and wondered what would happen to us. When I went back home being lean and lice-ridden, the first question I asked my father was that regarding his passport. He got really lucky. When he went to the passport officer and gave him the certificate from work, an air-raid signal came in. The officer said that he had to lock the room and go down to the air-raid shelter. My father began talking to him to issue him a passport, elucidating that the air-raid was on the opposite side of the city. The officer was in a hurry trying to get rid of the issuance procedure as soon as possible.

He issued my father a Moscow passport with a Moscow registration without even looking in his expired passport. Due to this miracle my father was employed by the ministry of mortar armament, as an economist. Soon the ministry was evacuated to Penza [550 km east of Moscow], and the whole family left for Penza. I finished the tenth grade of the compulsory school in Penza. My father saw me off to the collection point. His valediction was, 'Take care of yourself! You are our only son.' I was sent to Penza artillery school. In May 1943, I completed the school and was sent to the front, to the 20th separate artillery squad of the Russian Supreme Command.

Like many other officers in my position I had to smell gun powder for the first time in my life. I was appointed as a commander of the firing platoon. Two gun groups, six people each were under my command. There were two cannons among our ammunition as well. Half of my subordinates were

battle-seasoned soldiers, many of them twice as old as I was, who had taken part in the Stalingrad battle [34](#) and been awarded with orders and medals, and such an unseasoned lieutenant as I was supposed to give orders during tactic classes when we were to work out different tank defense options. It was hard to make them resign to my control, but gradually they began to respect me.

My name, Adolf, was associated with Hitler and sounded almost indecent. In military school everybody called me Arkadiy. I didn't change my name officially, and I was called Arkadiy on the front, too. In my documents Adolf was written, but I didn't mind people calling me Arkadiy.

On 5th July 1943, the Germans attacked at Kursk [battle] [35](#). They wanted to take revenge for their defeat in Stalingrad. From the very outset of the attack, the Germans used a lot of tanks, including the tanks of the newest makes such as 'Tigers' and 'Panthers', and self-propelled weapons: 'Ferdinand'. On that day our squad went to the town of Maloarkhangelsk in a railway echelon. It was my baptism of fire. Over sixty years have passed but some episodes are engraved in my memory and I remember them as if it was yesterday. It was almost a momentary transition from the peaceful life to a fierce war life. At dusk our squad was to take a firing position, i.e. we were supposed to fire at the tanks of the adversary as soon as they appeared in front of us. The weapons were placed at a distance of 60-70 meters from each other and my trench was right between them.

At dawn I noticed that I was at a distance of 1.5 kilometers from the leading edge of the enemy in the second layer of defense. Behind us there was ammunition of a larger caliber. The adversary noticed us and started continuous mortar fire, but we didn't have any casualties as we stayed in the narrow pits. On the second day we heard the roaring of a motor. We were given a signal to kick-off tank attack. The engine roaring was getting strong and finally it was heard all over the place. We understood that an armored column was moving towards us, which was out of sight. Tanks seemed to be a couple of kilometers away. I could see from my trench that piercing shells were ready to fire at Tigers and Ferdinands, which had the thickest armor. Everybody was very strained as we knew many of us would fall in this battle.

Threats and curses towards Germans were heard from our trenches. Artillery and mortar fire was terminated by the Germans. The sound of the tank roaring continued for another hour and then faded out. We were despondent and exhausted despite there being no battle. Later on that evening when we discussed that case with the regiment commander, somebody made an assumption that it was a psychological tank attack in order to instill fear and uncertainty. There were more such attacks, but we didn't react to them so acutely. On the nights of 11th and 12th July, our battalion was transferred to another place. Early in the morning the commander said that counteroffensive was expected and we were supposed to accompany the infantry and exterminate enemy tanks and firing-points.

We couldn't use gun-transporters as they might have become a good target for the enemy. We were supposed to move the weapon ourselves. We had to go up a hill. The first attempt to move the weapon seemed futile as it weighed around 1.5 tons. Two groups of people were required to move only one weapon a little bit. We were supposed to carry the boxes with shells. While we tried to move the ammunition, the artillery preparation began. Hundreds of weapons and mortars were included and the eminent Katyusha as well [Rocket launchers built and fielded by the Soviet Union in World War II. They got this unofficial, but immediately recognized name from the title of a Soviet wartime song]. We could hardly hear each other in the din of cannonade and had to cry out at the

top of our lungs. We were located on the slope of a mountain opposite the Germans and they couldn't see us.

At that moment a lot of planes appeared in the sky, both our planes and the Germans. Shell bursts could be seen in the sky and it was unclear who was firing. Both columns of the planes were wedging into each other. I saw one plane split in two parts by an anti-aircraft shell. I couldn't figure out whether it was our plane or the Germans'. The infantry was ahead of us as it was easier for them to go uphill. They marched in a couple of chains at a distance of 50 meters from each other. Mobile headquarters with radio were in the second chain. All soldiers were clad in new uniforms as the replenishment division was sent to our counterattack. We could hardly move the ammunition and were considerably lacking behind as compared to the infantry. Finally our ascent was over and we were on ground level. Our leading edge was here with the trenches and separate pits of the machine guns. There was nobody in the trenches. Everybody was attacking.

We happened to have a great view of the adversary and the Germans had an obstructed sight of us and started firing. My soldiers jumped in the trenches to take cover from the gun fire. When the firing was over I shouted and swore to make my soldiers leave the trenches and level them with the earth so we could move our weapons closer. We were frightened by our prospects. There were a couple of killed soldiers, and one of them who was severely wounded, was convulsing. The soldiers around him were raising their hands up from time to time. Then I was told that those soldiers were Muslims and they were reading prayers without paying attention to the shell burst and whistling bullets. One of the soldiers, probably a sergeant was trying to make them move forward, but he didn't succeed; the soldiers kept praying.

There was another group of wounded and killed not very far from us. Those were the officers and the soldiers of the headquarters who outran us. They were mostly likely hit by a mine. One of the soldiers and a lady nurse were helping the wounded. I got very scared. I remembered my father's valediction as I was aware that I might be killed any minute. I could escape death by hiding in a pit, but at the same time I understood the responsibility of being a commander. If I rushed to the pit my subordinates would follow my example. I deliberately banished that sense of fear from me. I understood that I ought to fulfill my duty. I got to understand that in my very first battle. However, I was very reckless in my first battle as I was young and inexperienced. Later I became experienced, and wasn't headlong any more.

It was arid and sultry on that day and there were swarms of dust due to multiple shell bursts, and the visibility depended on the direction of the wind, and whether it changed from better to worse and vice versa. Suddenly, I saw the group of our soldiers who were trying to take cover from the machine-gun firing. I gave an immediate order, 'Get the weapons ready', and in a couple of minutes all was set. I determined the distance to the machine gun and indicted the target to the pointer, determined the type of the shell, detonator and the range setting [an artillery term meaning angle of slope of the weapon to visible horizon]. The first shot missed. I adjusted the range setting and commanded once again. The second shot was precise and the machine-gun ceased fire. Our weapon was noticed by a German from another machine gun and he, in his turn, started firing at our weapon. I and two more soldiers were wounded. I was wounded in the leg and fell down. The weapon commander put a tourniquet over the wound and when the battery commander found out that I had been wounded, he ordered me to crawl back to my initial position.

I returned to the weapon commander, who bandaged my wound. He showed me the way to the sanitary unit. I began crawling again. It started raining and in no time I was drenched to the skin. Soon I saw the cart with the nurse and the soldiers. I began crying and waving my hands as I couldn't get up. They noticed me, came up and helped me get in the cart with the wounded. We were taken to the medical battalion. It was a very large tent with a few tables with wounded soldiers on them. Military doctors and nurses were taking care of the wounded. I was put on the table and given an injection. A young lady- doctor began to treat me. The whole procedure didn't last more than 15 minutes and when it was over, the doctor told me that I had a penetrating wound on the shin. My bone wasn't touched and I would be back in the squad in a month. In a couple of hours the truck came to the medical battalion. I was taken to the hospital in that truck together with other wounded soldiers. My first battle was over.

I was discharged from hospital in a month, just the way I had been promised by the doctor and sent to the separate tank fighter division #874 of the artillery regiment. I took part in the battles of Dnepr and the liberation of the left-bank of Ukraine. In April 1944 I went to the first Ukrainian front and was allocated to the 2nd Guards airborne division. I was lightly wounded in one of the battles, but remained in commission.

Now I noticed rapt glances of the officers, who newly arrived from the school. I was a real combat officer to them, while they were still to go through the first battle. Of course I got scared, but not as much as in the first battle and there were no such difficult situations as compared with the very first battle. Usually we fired from the trench where death might be caused by a direct mortar shell. If a shell burst five meters from us, it wasn't that perilous. The trenches were large for the cannons to be turned if needed. The cannon was placed in the center of the trench so that the muzzle could be turned in any direction.

In January 1945 I was wounded for the second time in the battle close to the Czechoslovakian town of Kosice. When I was discharged from the hospital, I was sent to the separate antitank squadron #108 of the artillery division #8. I stayed in that squadron until the last day of the war.

I didn't feel anti-Semitism at war. There were different values and morale. One of the pointers in my squadron was a Jew from Birobidzhan [36](#), a gaunt slouching man with a big hooked nose. People treated him in the kindest and most respectable way. Commanders always included him in the list of awardees, writing his name on the top of the list as an artillery pointer was a very important duty. The whole squad, including the commander could stay either in the trench or take a crouching position by the weapon. But a pointer in his turn was supposed to stay by the weapon sight of the cannon in order to observe the enemy. If the pointer quailed or hid in the trench he would die and the whole squad might be killed, too. That man had the greatest courage and equanimity. That is why people treated him very well. His nickname was 'iron man.'

There was a situation during the battle, which could be indirectly referred to my nationality. In April 1945 we drove on Czechoslovakian hilly terrain. The road was to the right, the river was to the left, and there was a cluster of houses to the right of the river. There were hills right behind the houses. It was impossible to turn the ammunition of our squadron, consisting of twelve cannons. The soldiers over there needed only one cannon. Then there was a certain schedule - the first cannon, then the second, the third, the fourth, etc., that is one cannon for each day. The second battery was planned for the next week. Being commander of the platoon I was supposed to stay by two of

my weapons. Both of my cannons were moved in turns. I was to stay close to both of my cannons. Then I left, and the defense position was taken over by another platoon commander with both of his cannons.

Once at dusk, we came closer to the leading edge, which was along a brook or ravine. We started to uncouple the cannons from the machines. When a cannon such as ours, was uncoupled, it still remained in downward position - the rear part of the barrel was fastened to the stand. When the cannon was fired from, the barrel would back off due to the impact of the explosive gases, that's why the barrel is supposed to be loose. If the barrel was fastened, then the cannon would blast as it would be taken off the stand. First the stands should be separated, then rooted and only after that the barrel is to be put in the horizontal position so that the cannon can be used for shooting. So, it takes time to get the cannon ready for battle. Hardly had we uncoupled the cannon from the retriever, we noticed that the infantry was retreating and there were shouts from the opposite side of the river bank, 'Capture, Russian! Capture, Russian!'

Judging by the number of shots, we understood that it was a small group of Germans - five or six people. The cannon still wasn't in the firing position, and we tried to take cover from the shooting behind the shed. The truck which brought the cannon didn't drive far as the shells were to be unloaded from it. Because of the firing, we couldn't get close to the cannon to separate the stands and start shooting. I told one of the soldiers to get a gun from the truck and an extra disk to circumvent the ravine from the opposite side, and start fire at that group of Germans. As soon as he started firing from the gun, the Germans stopped shooting at us and fired at the gun-soldier. We turned the cannon rapidly, loaded shrapnel i.e. small pellets, in it. The Germans were rather close to us, 100-120 meters. It was dark already and we were aiming at the flashes from the firing. After the first shot with the shrapnel we could hear savage screams, and after the second shot there were no sounds any more. We killed the entire group at once.

Then we got the cannon on the truck and moved to the place where our infantry had left. The whole skirmish lasted for 10-15 minutes. We knew that my cannon commander had been captured by the Germans at the beginning of the war. We didn't know the details. We didn't ask him and he didn't tell us anything. When the skirmish was over and we left to take our new positions, the cannon commander said to me that he had already been captured by the Germans once, and he wouldn't want to be captured ever again. Then he told me to shoot him if he were wounded, so that he would escape being captured again. He said that he had seen what was happening to the Jews in captivity, and he told me that I should escape that as well. Then I also asked him to shoot me if I were wounded and incapable of doing it myself. That was the only conversation where my nationality was mentioned during my entire front-line experience.

At the end of April 1945 we understood that the war would be over very soon. Nevertheless, we came across a fierce hold out of the adversary, who was to cover the retreat of the major troops. In one of the battles on 5th May 1945, two of the youngest officers of our squadron were killed. They joined our squadron only in the middle of April 1945. On 6th May, in the afternoon, we happened to be among the officers of the Czechoslovakian army [see Army of General Svoboda] [37](#) in one of the small Czechoslovakian towns. At noon we were told by them that on 6th May, a surrender document regarding the capitulation of German troops in the West was to be signed in London, and that the war would be over in a couple of days. We constantly discussed the news, having hope that we would survive the war. On 8th May, we were given the task to support the artillery infantry,

which was supposed to capture the closest settlements. We remembered the words of the Czech officers. In actuality we didn't have any collisions with the Germans for the last couple of days, and now we had the order to attack and we didn't know how the events would unfold.

After a short training, our and Czechoslovakian infantry started attacking. All cannons of the squadron were on direct pointing range, and we rapidly fired at those positions which were in the way of the infantry. The battle lasted for three hours, and by the evening of 8th May, the town was captured. There were no casualties in our squadron, but there were the wounded and killed in the infantry. When the battle was over the cannons of our squadron were placed along the road. We awaited the order to attack, but the order didn't come. Around 9pm, we heard desultory fire. We thought that our rear regiment, which was trying to move to the west, had a battle with the Germans. Soon we saw our soldiers holding their rifles and guns in vertical position and shooting in the air. They rushed towards us and cried out something but we couldn't hear the words.

Of course we had a hunch what their words meant but were afraid to rejoice preliminary. Finally we could hear clearly, 'The war is over!' Then our squadron commander followed them and confirmed the joyful news by saying that Germany had surrendered, and at midnight of 9th May, military actions were terminated on all fronts. We were congratulating each other on the victory, kissing each other, singing and laughing. We loaded a couple of weapons and made fireworks to celebrate the end of the war. Then we started to remember our kin, friends and comrades, who fell in battle. We felt especially sad for those who died on the victory day. On 9th May our division commander let our squadron march before the infantry.

As all of our weapons were mechanized, we moved very fast and happened to be the first representatives of the Soviet Army in Czechoslovakia during the official termination of the war. The villagers exclaimed with joy as we passed. They gave us flowers. In one of the villages they even met us ceremoniously. At the exit of the village, there was an arch, adorned with coniferous branches and there were portraits of Stalin and Benes [38](#). There was an orchestra playing nearby, and tables were laid along the road with wine and food. Our main task was to follow the drivers for them not to drink up. The joy of victory and the warm reception in Czechoslovakia was embossed in my memory as the happiest day of my life.

During the second half of 9th May we caught up with the first column of Germans. As my comrades told me later on, the first driver who approached the column gave a signal. It was a group of Germans, going in carts without heavy ammunition. They turned to the right immediately giving us the traffic way as they mistook us for Germans. When the trucks passed the column, the Germans realized who we were and rushed to the side of the road. Our column passed, leaving the carts, and the scattered Germans behind. Neither we nor they fired. Soon, our fighter planes appeared in the sky above us. We paid no attention to them, but the planes made a circle and then suddenly they began firing from guns. They must have mistaken us for the retreating German column and wanted to prevent us from moving to the West. Now it was our turn to run. Luckily there was only one wounded, who had a light injury in the buttock.

According to the rules of capitulation, all German troops were supposed to remain in their positions and wait for our troops, and surrender. We didn't know that. Attack aircrafts made a couple of circles above us and left. We kept on moving forward. In a while we caught up with the second German column and the same happened. Hardly had we leveled out with the column, and the

Germans scattered. We stopped this time and as per order of the commander brought all the Germans together. There was no shooting. Everybody knew that the war was over. Many of them were shouting, 'Hitler kaput! War kaput!' There was no animosity and circumspection. Then there was spontaneous mixing of Russian and Germans. Everybody was curious to have a look at each other. We patted each other on the shoulders.

First, it seemed very unclear and unnatural as we remembered what we had felt towards each other the day before, a week earlier, a year ago. But what was doubtless was that both we and our adversaries were sick and tired of war. Besides, all of us understood that there would be no casualties from any side. The meeting with the Germans was real proof that the war had been terminated. There was hatred towards the enemy, who stepped on our land, killed our kin bringing so much sorrow and calamity. The hatred was towards the enemy, and the adversary, and it was instilled by the political department of the army. But the hatred vanished into thin air when we met our unarmed enemy.

I have kept the map with the route of our squadron of 8th and 9th May as real precious thing. Every year I used to look at that map recollecting the events of the last days and minutes of the war. In 1999, I gave that map to the museum of the Jewish history.

I've never been a party member. I didn't become a party member in the lines. It was almost mandatory and I escaped it by miracle. I was aware that I couldn't say directly that I didn't want to become a member of the Party. That is why I pretended to be a fool saying that it was a very responsible matter and I wasn't mature enough for such an honor. They tried to convince me, they were biased, but at the same time there was no pressure or insistence. Then after the war, my cousin, Arkadiy Landsman, explained one of the reasons for mass acceptance in the Party during the war. By the way, Arkadiy joined the Party in the lines unwillingly; he was forced. The reason was the following: when our soldiers were captured by the Germans, they were told at once, 'Jews and communists, step forward!' They were exterminated immediately.

Everybody knew that a member of the party would fight till death, especially being a Jew. At that time the party membership cards were considered sacred and not to be given to the enemy no matter what. When people were in the siege instead of rescuing their lives, they thought of the party membership cards, burying them in the land. I was steadfast, and they didn't manage to talk me into becoming a party member. I didn't believe in the communist party, its impeccability and correctness. I didn't want to prevaricate. I wasn't the only one though. The battery commander wasn't a party member either.

When our troops entered Germany, there were cases of plundering and raping. Unfortunately, it happened in our squadron on our way back to the USSR from Czechoslovakia. I didn't witness anything. I found out about what had happened later. Such cases were strictly punished. [Editor's note: The number of German women raped by Soviet soldiers in the war is estimated to be two million, half of them gang-raped (Antony Beevor, 'Berlin-The Downfall 1945', Penguin Books, 2002). Along the way towards Germany women of other nationalities were raped massively too, including thousands of Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, etc. The vast majority of these incidents weren't investigated and went unpunished.] We tried to admonish plundering, raping or other criminal offenses towards the civilians. When we were crossing the border of a certain country, we were given leaflets with the reference about the country and with the recommendations to treat the



population of the country loyally. Though, sometimes civilians didn't treat us loyally.

Before invading Poland, we got together and were told that our trucks weren't to stop in any Polish settlement no matter what. We stopped in the forests without having any contact with the Poles. We were told that there was some kind of epidemic in Poland. But there was one emergency stop of our column in the center of the town of Czestochowa. It was a very large city. We were warned not to leave the trucks. We had a stop for an hour and then left. The next day we were told a story. One of our commanders disobeyed the order and went to some bar in Czestochowa to have vodka. He drank vodka and died at once as the drink was poisoned. To die right after war is more horrible than to be killed in battle. Maybe it was connected with the negative attitude of Poles after the year 1939.

I was awarded with two Orders of the Great Patriotic War [39](#) of the first class, the first was obtained in 1944, and the second in 1995 to commemorate the 40th jubilee of the victory, with the Order of the Red Star [40](#) in 1945 and with medals for the liberation of different cities and for the victory in the Great Patriotic War [Medal for Victory over Germany] [41](#).

I corresponded with my parents during the entire period of the war. In 1943, my parents went back to Moscow after the Germans' retreat from Moscow. I craved for going back home, but I was able to demobilize from the army only in 1946. I was sent to Lvov [Ukraine, about 550 km from Kiev] for urgent army service. There was a peculiar situation in the army at that time. Such soldiers like I, having completed secondary school and military school, and having gone through war, were convinced to stay in the army and go on with higher education in the academy. My mother was ill. I was their only son. I wanted to go back to my parents. That's why I made desperate attempts to get demobilized.

## **After the War**

After the war, young officers eligible for a military career were supposed to go through a physical examination. I finished the war in the rank of a lieutenant. I was so unwilling to stay in the army that I even made indications to my commanders for them not to promote me in rank. But in accordance with my data - ten grades of school, artillery school and combat experience - I was supposed to stay in the army and continue the service. I met a doctor who was a member of the medical board. He was a laryngologist. I had a contusion, so he was supposed to examine me. I asked him to put my ailment in brighter colors. Then I remembered that I read somewhere that when the Germans sent young people from the occupied territories to Germany, they had to go through a medical checkup. Young people mixed tobacco and tea, put them in rolls and then smoked them before the physical examination. Then they were told that they had heart trouble and they weren't sent anywhere.

I smoked such a roll before going through a physical check. The doctor, whom I had asked to help me out, checked my heart and said that there was something wrong with it. Some other doctors also examined me and confirmed my physically restricted status. Based on the findings of the commission I was demobilized from the army in one month. I don't consider my deed shameless; I was a rather good soldier at war and did my best for my country and for the Red Army, but after the war I wanted to be a civilian. Moreover, there were a lot of people who had the intention to stay in the army. They had a different situation. Our battery commander, who had the rank of a captain,

was eager to stay in the army, but he had only completed five grades of school, he was a hostler in a collective farm [42](#) before the war. He was promoted in the army during the war. He was demobilized as he wasn't educated despite being agog for serving in the army. He didn't want to go to the collective farm, and I understood him very well. I was happy to get demobilized.

My relatives also participated in the war. Jacob Landsman, the son of my father's elder brother, went to the front as a volunteer. He was a radio operator in the army. During the crossing of the Order he was severely wounded. He was demobilized as incapacitated. After demobilization, Jacob graduated from the juridical department of the university and worked as a lawyer. My cousin, Arkadiy, Pavel Landsman's son, also went to war. He went through the entire war. He was seriously wounded several times and survived miraculously. After the war, he graduated from the physics department of Moscow University and worked as a researcher.

My cousin Sofia Khudalova, the daughter of my mother's sister Eugenia, was in an airborne battery, which defended the district of the machine plant in Nizhniy Novgorod. She belonged to the squad. David Krivin, the son of my mother's sister Marta, was the only cousin who was of drafting age, and didn't go to war. Before the war, he graduated from the Technical University and was employed at the design bureau of plane designer Iliushin. [Iliushin, Sergey Vladimirovich (1894-1977): major Soviet aircraft designer, academician, general-colonel of the engineering troops, thrice the Hero of Socialistic Labor. Under his guidance many types of civil and military aircrafts were designed.] He took part in the development of new types of planes. He was released from drafting and he stayed in the bureau. My other cousins were too young to go to war.

I returned to my parents and entered the Moscow Energy Institute in a month. It was hard for me to pass the entrance exams. At that time it wasn't because of my nationality, just because I lost my knowledge for four years and my brain worked differently after the war. But it was taken into consideration that I was a front-line soldier and had awards, so I was accepted.

My father had his chin up after the war. He had an ordinary Moscow passport and he had a job in the trust, which belonged to the system of mortar armament. He became the deputy director of the planning department. However, my parents and I were deeply affected by my father's arrest and our illegal residence in Moscow. For many years we had lived with the fear of exile. When I returned from the front, I thought that my father might be exiled, but I wouldn't be touched for being a veteran of the war. I still remained offish and recluse. When I saw my teacher of the junior grades on the street, I was afraid to go up to her and talk as she knew that my father had been exiled. I still remember this meeting. I wanted to go to her and didn't.

At that time, even the closest people to me didn't know that we had been in exile. It wasn't a delirium of persecution as it might seem to a person born after 1960, or who never lived in the USSR. We were influenced by the repressions of our fathers. One of the brightest examples is my cousin, Arkadiy Landsman, who was exiled with my father. After the war, Arkadiy graduated from the physics department of Moscow University, and after graduation he was given a mandatory job assignment [43](#) in a very inconspicuous institute. Then when the era of cosmos exploration began, his institute began elaboration and manufacture of energy elements for satellite borne equipment. This institute acquired the status of top secret.

Arkadiy invented and implemented a solar battery which was installed on the satellite. He was conferred the title of candidate of science, then he acquired a doctorate degree [Soviet/Russian

doctorate degrees] [44](#), and became a professor. Arkadiy was conferred with governmental awards for his scientific work, like the Order of Red Labor Banner [45](#), Order of Lenin [46](#), and many others; he was one of the few Jews who were the laureates of the State Prize. He had considerable merits. But when he went back to our past, he told me once, that he was supposed to fill in all kinds of forms in his institute and was scared to think what might have happened if those forms were checked. He never mentioned in his forms that his father had been exiled.

I told him, that being such a dignitary with so many awards he had nothing to fear. Arkadiy told me that he knew that system very well because once the head of the special department [entitled to checking political reliability of all employees] being a little drunk told him things about the system. He said if they found out about uncle Pavel's exile, Arkadiy could be reduced to dust in the camp because he knew many state sectors and the cosmos development program of ten years in advance, and was one of the leaders of the group of energy supply for the satellite equipment. This is the way our fathers' repressions were reflected on the second generation.

During the war my father went to the Moscow synagogue. Beginning from 1947 he went to the synagogue on Yom Kippur and on the day of his parents' death. My parents celebrated Pesach and Rosh Hashanah. Of course they didn't adhere to the tradition totally. My father didn't lead seder. He just went to the synagogue and prayed at home. On Yom Kippur both my parents fasted for the whole day just the way it's supposed to be done. I didn't object to that though it wasn't good for their health. Besides, I didn't fully understand the Jewish traditions.

At the end of the 1940s, anti-Semitism was gradually emerging and later on it was streamlined. I didn't feel that from my own experience, maybe because my appearance wasn't particularly Jewish. But I witnessed insults and brusqueness towards Jews and I thought it to be my duty to interfere and put the twerp in his place. In 1948, anti-Semitism was almost displayed as a civil position. Cosmopolitan trials started in 1948 [see campaign against 'cosmopolitans'] [47](#). First those campaigns referred to the scientists and cultural activists, and then there were repulsive anti-Semitic articles about the intelligentsia and engineers, where Jews were pictured as bad characters. There were Jewish names in the articles all the time and if some of the authors had an alias they were happy to dispose of their real Jewish surnames with such an implication so that their names couldn't be concealed. Of course, the authors of those articles were close to delirium but many people believed them.

I remember the article in the paper Izvestiya [48](#) about a Jew, who baked meat patties. He had a special gadget to separate meat from the bones with the help of which he was able to get more meat than when using a knife. Of course, his profit increased, and he paid his income tax. But he was charged with fraud against the state because he was able to get a higher profit that was provided by a technological process, and his rational idea turned out to be a criminal offense. Such was the year of 1948. Of course, there were no direct anti-Semitic attitudes, but they were implied in every phrase. I wouldn't even mention the phrase rootless cosmopolitans: that is how they called outstanding scientists, renowned actors. A word such as combination was used in the vocabulary of many Soviet people. At that time apart from fighting cosmopolitans there was a struggle against the science of genetics and cybernetics. [The Soviet regime declared genetics a 'corrupt wench of imperialism' and cybernetics 'bourgeois pseudoscience'. They were officially banned until the beginning of 1970. The government was baiting the scientists who dealt with them.] No doubt, it retarded the development of our science for many years.

I remember how in 1948 the case against genetics commenced. I was a third- year student at the Energy Institute, which was a technical institution that had nothing to do with genetics. We were called for a general meeting at the institute with the requirement to condemn the criminal actions of our biology scientists. Among ourselves we shared the common opinion that he had nothing to do with that and biologists could give their opinion in this matter. But we talked about it unofficially, and when the speaker of the meeting asked us to raise our hands to condemn genetics, everybody raised their hands. I raised my hand too as there was no way out to survive and not get in the KGB [49](#), and put pressure on one's conscience.

In January 1953 there was the very 'trustful' doctors' case [Doctors' Plot] [50](#). It was the time of horror. It was the time when anti-Semitism reached its peak. People were afraid to go to Jewish doctors. My father was in the hospital at that time. His physician was a female Jew, the head of the department. My father said that the senior nurse went from ward to ward saying to the patients, 'I don't trust that Jew.' If the head of the department reprimanded her for something, the nurse started shouting and insulting the doctor. Could you possibly imagine anything like that? I was a witness of this bizarre scandal. It was a very hard time. Neither I nor many of my acquaintances believed in the verity of the articles about the doctors being poisoners.

It was impossible to picture a doctor, whose calling was to save people, to poison his patient. There were people who believed that slander. There were even more people who used it to their advantage. Some people sincerely believed in the verity of the official information. One of my acquaintances, Lubov Mogilin, a Jewish doctor told me, 'How terrible! How could they have done that?' I asked her whether she believed that and she said she couldn't help believing things published in the newspapers.

In 1948 the state of Israel was founded. First we were more bewildered than glad, as the USSR supported the founding of the state of Israel being a member of the UN. And it happened when the struggle against cosmopolitanism was in full swing. The USSR supported Israel thinking of its own advantage. It was caused by the expectation of the USSR that the state and its communist party with Meir Vilner at its head would be providing USSR politics in Israel. They thought it would be the same satellite as Bulgaria, Poland, and Romania, and that was the reason for the support. When they found out that Israel wanted to follow its own way and not be a protectorate of the USSR, the Soviet Union dramatically changed its attitude towards Israel. All decent people kept abreast with the events in Israel and sympathized with Israelis. Israel showed its vitality, making a blooming garden out of the stony desert. Israel also showed its defense capability during the Six-Day-War [51](#) and Doomsday war [Yom Kippur War] [52](#). Many people were rapt by that and Israel gained even more respect.

I graduated from the institute in 1952 during the swing of anti-Semitism. My mother was seriously ill at that time. She was confined to bed and stayed in hospital from time to time. She caught a cold during the war and since that time she had deforming poly-arthritis. My father had two apoplectic attacks and one infarction. It was hard for me to get a certificate in the hospital, as my mother was a bed-ridden patient requiring permanent nursing. I brought that certificate to the institute. The most important thing for me was to get a mandatory job assignment in Moscow. I couldn't leave two helpless old people. Due to that medical certificate I stayed in Moscow and the rest of the Jews were sent to hick places. It was hard for them to leave afterwards. I was assigned as an engineer to the foundry 'Isolite,' where anti-Semitism was flourishing.

They couldn't fire me within three years as I was a 'young specialist.' [A person given a mandatory job assignment after graduation was called 'young specialist' and couldn't be fired within three years in accordance with the Soviet law.] As soon as the three-year term was over I was fired right away in 1955; my job position was reduced and I was fired because of the needlessness of my position. The director even removed my position from the staff schedule and shortly after I was fired, my position reappeared in the staff schedule again. I had to go to multiple interviews wandering from one place to another. First they told me that I was qualified, and then when they checked my form, they said that there were no vacancies.

Finally, I was employed at a design institute of water supply systems, 'Giprovodkhoz.' There were many Jews there. First I worked as an engineer, and then I was a senior engineer. In 1973 I requested to be transferred to the All-union organization 'Soyuzvodoprojekt' [All-union water project]. I worked there as the head of the group of designers of municipal water supply, then I became a 'chief expert' - that was my job title. My functions included the check of quality and control over all design projects carried out by our department. I designed electric equipment for hydraulic power stations, elaborated automation of technological processes in melioration and took part in the adjustment of our systems in melioration sites.

I published seven articles of mine, and received five copyright certificates for inventions and I was awarded - two silver and one bronze - medals of the exhibition of the achievements in national economy. [The Exhibition of the Achievements in National Economy was located on the outskirts of Moscow and was opened in 1939. It contained modern pavilions, where the last achievements in science, technology and agriculture were demonstrated to the visitors. Winners of the annual contests were awarded in each of the above-mentioned categories. In the 1950s such exhibitions were opened in all capitals of the USSR Republics.] I retired in the year 1990.

I was despondent by Stalin's death in 1953. Stalin had been my idol since my childhood like for many other children. I believed in Stalin, in his brilliant mind and his justice. In 1953 I worked at the plant. There was a radio set in our office and I remember how we cried listening to the funeral ceremony for Stalin. It was the common mood; it was the psychology of the crowd. Everybody cried, including me. My father, who had had two apoplectic strokes and had to walk with a cane, said that he wanted to say good-bye to Stalin in spite of the fact that he was repressed and had to hide for many years without an opportunity to live and work normally. Of course, neither my mother nor I let him go to Stalin's funeral. He was worried about it. We thought it was the end of the world and we didn't know what would happen to our lives.

The shock passed and we kept on living. There was another shock after the Twentieth Party Congress [53](#), where Nikita Khrushchev [54](#) took the floor disposing Stalin's cult and divulging the crimes of Stalin and his apparatus. The whole text of his speech wasn't published in the papers or broadcast on the radio. There were only excerpts. There was a general meeting of all employees a few days after the party congress. The secretary of the party organization read us Khrushchev's speech in its entirety. I asked her if I could hold that historic document in my hands for a couple of minutes. I couldn't help believing Khrushchev and not because we were used to believing things spoken on behalf of the Party. Khrushchev said that all of us at the back of our minds understood the things he had been a witness of. Though there are people who even now say that Khrushchev calumniated Stalin, and I don't understand why. Others are prone to think that Khrushchev divulged the truth, which was to be hidden from the people. I disagree with both of those opinions.

I think people are entitled to know the truth about their leaders who govern the state and about things going on in their country. Though, before the Twentieth Party Congress there were people who had known the true personality of Stalin. These were mostly people who had suffered from Stalin's regime. They were smart and didn't blindly believe in Stalin's propaganda. My father told me that in 1949, when he was having tea, one of his good Jewish pals, the secretary of the party organization of the trust, whispered to him, that Stalin was a hard-core criminal. There were very few people who could say that. The majority of people, especially of my , believed Stalin was a genius, and we won the war because of him, and there is no way they could be convinced otherwise. They merely didn't listen to the proof. And these aren't necessarily retarded, ignorant or illiterate people.

I lived with both of my half-paralyzed bed-ridden parents. I worked and then I was supposed to do all the household chores, and take care of my parents. I didn't even have the opportunity to see girls. I couldn't invite anybody to our house, so as not to make my parents feel awkward. My father died in 1956. He was buried in the city cemetery and his funeral wasn't in accordance with the Jewish rites. My mother lived another half a year longer and she was able to find out that I was seeing a girl, who later became my wife. She was happy for me. She died in the late fall of 1956, and she was buried next to my father.

Alla Chonskaya was my fellow student, two years younger than me. We knew each other and met during classes. Then we bumped into each other in 1956. I was 34. She knew I was single and she invited me to the birthday party of her little daughter and said that she would introduce me to her cousin. When I went over and saw Nora I decided at once: either I marry Nora or remain an old bachelor. I still remember the moment how I entered the room and saw how Nora took Alla's daughter in her arms to conceal her embarrassment. She turned to me with a child. I even remember how she was dressed on that day. She wore a light grey and red checked dress. We kept that dress for ever. When my dear wife passed away [in 2002], she was buried in that dress.

Nora Chestnetskaya was born in Moscow in 1929 into a Jewish family. Her father, Ilia Chestnetskiy, was an engineer, and her mother, Sofia Chestnetskaya, was a housewife. Nora was an only child. Russian was Nora's mother tongue. Yiddish wasn't spoken in her family. Nora was a schoolgirl when the war began. Her father was drafted in the lines, and Nora was evacuated to Ufa [Bashkortostan, 1,200 km from Moscow] with her mother. In 1943, Nora's father died in the battle close to Voronezh. When Nora came back from evacuation with her mother she finished school and entered the German philological department of the Moscow Teachers' Training Institute.

Her mother got married a second time. She was married to a wonderful man, Isidor Mazur, who became Nora's stepfather. I knew Isidor. He was a remarkable man, who had a very complicated life. Isidor was born in Poland, in Lodz. He came from a very rich family. Poland was part of the Russian Empire at that time. [Poland was reunified after World War I, in 1918. Before that its territory had been controlled by its three powerful neighbors (Russia, Prussia and Austria-Hungary) for more than 100 years]. He went to a German school, where Polish was taught as a foreign language. He had only two hours of Polish language per week. His parents spoke Russian at home. When Isidor was at an adolescent age, he was keen on revolutionary ideas. After the commencement of the Russian Revolution of 1917, Isidor left Lodz for Moscow and entered the Bauman Institute [Moscow High Technical School named after renowned revolutionary Nikolay Bauman, today it is called Technical Institute].

After graduation he was employed at the Ministry of Foreign Trade and he was sent to Germany to purchase equipment with a group of engineers. He was sent with the same assignment to France and Italy. With the outbreak of repressions at the end of the 1930s the whole group of engineers was arrested. Both leaders of the group were shot, and Isidor was blamed for espionage in Germany, France, Italy and Japan for some reason. He was imprisoned in Moscow. He was tortured daily and was required to sign a testimony as they couldn't file a suit without a signed testimony. Isidor told me about the interrogation procedure. He stood leaning towards the wall. Having asked a couple of questions, the investigator struck him strongly on the jaw so that Isidor hit the wall and lost consciousness. Then there was an 'assembly-line' where the group of investigators interrogated in shifts for 48 hours. Then he was hung so that his arms were suspended to hooks attached to the door post.

After two days of being suspended his skin cracked and blood would seep from the wounds. They gave him a paper to sign; he couldn't even see what it was. His case was in the court now, and he was sentenced to ten years in the Gulag. He served there for five years only, and then he was sent to some settlement to work as an engineer. Isidor knew Nora's mother before he was arrested. They were in love with each other before his arrest, and in the year 1945 Nora's mother, Sofia, went to him and they got married. In 1948 he was released as he had served the full term in the camp; he had been in custody for ten years: five years in the camp, and another five years in exile.

Isidor was conferred the rank of a major of the engineering troops and was sent to Korea. [Engineering troops formed one of the divisions of the Soviet Army. They were involved in the design and building of defense and military constructions.] After the Twentieth Party Congress, Isidor was exonerated and the first thing he did was he went to the head of the camp to pay him a 'courtesy visit.' To his surprise the head said that he owed Isidor an apology. I dwelled on Isidor's life as he became a dear person not only to my wife but to me as well. My outlook was affected by him, he made me see things I hadn't noticed before. My wife and I lived with Nora's parents. We celebrated birthdays of family members, New Year's and Victory Day [55](#). Soviet holidays such as 1st May, and 7th November [see October Revolutionary Day] [56](#) and Soviet Army Day [57](#), were also celebrated. It was customary to mark those holidays at work and they were extra days off for us.

After graduation from the Teachers' Training Institute, Nora was given a mandatory job assignment at the Moscow Railroad Vocational School to work as a German teacher. She worked there all her life. Her students remained her friends. Nora was a wonderful person, a very kind and cordial woman. She couldn't be called beautiful, but she was comely and witty. She was always the life and soul of the company. Nora was a book-worm and I always was interested in her opinion on the books I read. She was able to notice details overlooked by me. Unfortunately, we didn't have children. Maybe it was the reason why we were able to talk to each other more than other spouses could afford to.

In 1970, when Brezhnev [58](#) was the head of the government [First Secretary of the Communist Party], mass immigration of Jews to Israel started. On one hand, immigration of certain Jews wasn't officially approved, and on the other, anti-Semitism still remained in the country. It was difficult for Jews to get a job or enter an institution of higher education. Maybe they thought the harder anti-Semitism was the more Jews would leave the country. I can't say it for sure. I, in my turn, wished the best to those who were departing, and tried to assist them in any way I could. Though there

were some Jews who were ill-disposed towards the Jews who were leaving the country. Some of my acquaintances used to say that those Jews who left the country for permanent abode, betrayed their real motherland, and others said that because of mass immigration it would be harder for the remaining Jews to live in the country and they would be treated even worse.

It was very hard for Jews to get a job, as the employers used to say frankly that they wouldn't hire Jews as they would immigrate, which would cause trouble for the management. Jews were hated because they left the country, and on the other hand they were envied as they were entitled to immigrate and other nationalities couldn't do that. My wife and I didn't want to immigrate. Nora had heart disease and she couldn't stand heat. That's why we were afraid to go to this country with its sultry weather. If we had had children we would have sacrificed for their future, but we didn't have children and so we remained in the USSR. And now that I am by myself, I can't live anywhere else as there would be nobody to attend Nora's grave.

When at the end of 1980 the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Mikhail Gorbachev [59](#), declared the new course to be taken by the party, i.e. perestroika [60](#), I was rapt by the coming prospects as we would have opportunities we had never had before. We would have the freedom of speech, the freedom of press, no censorship in the press and all kinds of other liberties. It seemed like a godsend. Frankly speaking, I couldn't even imagine anything like that in my lifetime. There was no Iron Curtain [61](#) anymore, which had isolated our country from the rest of the world for decades. People were able to go overseas, invite their friends and relatives who resided in foreign countries. Liberty of religion was only in the USSR constitution, but in actuality religious people were persecuted.

Finally, people were able to observe religious rites, without concealing it and taking a risk. Now people could be entrepreneurs openly. All those things brought delight. However, many communists couldn't abide what was happening; they were against free entrepreneurship. One of my intelligent friends asked me in despair, 'Are we to become capitalists?' I was happy, and he was perturbed. Perestroika turned things upside down, which caused a considerable stratification, which became more and more conspicuous every year. Very wealthy people appeared as well as really indigent ones. Then the country happened to be in a very complicated economic position and I wasn't delighted. Many leaders of the old school couldn't accept perestroika and did their best to block it. It was caused by the incorrect policy of Gorbachev's predecessors.

Our goods weren't competitive. Things had to be purchased with the gold reserves of the country. When Gorbachev was in power the country practically ran out of those reserves. Only the most vital medicines, which weren't produced in our country, were purchased. Peoples' discontent was growing and it caused the breakup of the USSR [in 1991]. It was a shock for me. There were many reasons for the breakup and the main one was written in the constitution: the USSR is the union of the independent republics, which could become separate states. I think it was a tragedy for such a large and powerful country, but it couldn't have been prevented. The republics realized their constitutional rights. As an engineer I was interested in the technical issues as well, like the electric energy supply, transport network and others, as all those branches were interlaced and interdependent between all Republics of the USSR. There were certain every-day issues that worried me. I feared that I wouldn't be able to visit my friends in the other republics.



Jewish life, which emerged during perestroika, had a revival in new Russia. There were a lot of Jewish papers and magazines, concerts of Jewish music and dance. One of the biggest events for me was the construction of the memorial synagogue at Poklonnaya Mountain. [The memorial synagogue at Poklonnaya Mountain was built in the period of 1996-1998 by the Congress of Russian Jews under the auspices of Moscow Municipal Authorities. It is devoted to the commemoration of the Jews - Holocaust victims. There is a museum of the Jewish Community of Russia on the premises of the memorial]. I have celebrated victory day starting on 9th May 1997 in that synagogue. The members of the Council of Jewish Veterans were taken to the synagogue by bus. Only the skeleton of the building was constructed, there were no windows and doors.

We were invited into the synagogue, where the rabbi was reading a prayer. Then we were invited to take seats at the laid festive table. After the feast was over, each of us was given a red carnation. We took a bus and drove along the territory of the memorial complex. When we reached the exit we were asked to get off the bus. We saw a crowd of people there. There were Russian women clad in black and wearing mourning kerchiefs, and the Tartar women clad in white kerchief [white is the mourning color of Tartars]. The mayor of the city of Moscow held a speech. He said that people got together on that day to commemorate their kin and other close people who had perished in the war.

Jews in the synagogue, Russians in the Orthodox Church, and Tartars in the Mosque. Now all of us got together to bow before the monument of our motherland, which is a symbol for all people who perished in the war, and brought flowers. We weren't going to do it separately. All of us got together, just the way it was at war. I was in a kippah and close to me there was a Tartar woman clad in a white mourning shawl. We put our carnations on the monument of the motherland. It was a very solemn event and I will always keep it in my memory. The synagogue was opened in 1998. My wife and I were present at the opening ceremony and used to go there every year for the anniversary of the victory day.

I am an active member of the group 'Russia-Israel,' founded by the Russian Committee of the Veterans of War and Military Veterans. Russians and Jews belong to this group. According to the mutual agreement, the chairman of the group is a Jew and the deputy chairman is Russian. All Russian members of the group have a very good attitude towards Jews. Our group is often invited to the Israeli cultural center, where meetings with interesting people are organized for us. Lectures and concerts are held there too. Besides, I joined the military group of the Holocaust fund. I'm also the member of the [Moscow] Council of the Jewish Veterans of War [62](#), which is headed by Moses Marianovskiy. I am a centurion, the head of a group consisting of one hundred people. My duty is to call those people for meetings, apprise them of events to be held in the fund and keep abreast with the times. I'm also responsible to keep their records.

When I was supposed to fill in the form for the group 'Russia-Israel,' I put 'Judaism' in the line 'Religion.' In actuality I don't consider myself to be a true Jew from the standpoint of religion. The pantheistic philosophy of Baruch Spinoza [61](#) is closer to me. There isn't the slightest doubt that God exists, but we can't imagine him due to our restricted thinking power. In my understanding God is like a forester, who guards his forest. He does his best to protect the anthill, but he wouldn't be taking care of every single ant. It is the responsibility of the ant to take care of himself. I think that the main task of religion is to bring the human society in order, nurture morale in people, which should be done by any religion. Maybe that is why I don't even go to the synagogue. I enjoy

listening to Orthodox and Catholic sermons, if they are interesting. I enjoy talking to truly religious people no matter what religion they profess.

I often go to the Jewish history museum at Poklonnaya Mountain. From time to time I take some materials there. Some dignitaries from Israel go to this museum sometimes. I was asked to give some things to the museum, which I kept from the war. There are my personal exhibits in the museum. I gave them the compass, the map of those routes I used to take in the year 1945 and the waterproof cape - very few people know what it looks like. It is tarpaulin material of 2?2 meters. It is possible to make a cape or a tent out of it. During the war we had to sleep on the snow. For two soldiers we made the following - we put a thick layer of coniferous branches either from spruce or pine and then put a waterproof cape over it. Then we used another waterproof tent as a cover. I kept that waterproof cape as a keepsake. Now this cape is exhibited in the museum. I also gave my father's tallit to the museum. I had kept and cherished it as a sacred thing.

In 2000 my wife got severely ill. She had Parkinson's disease and suffered a lot. I tried not to leave her by herself. My friends helped me about the house. There was a nurse from the Jewish community who came to assist us. Nora couldn't stay without me even for a minute. If I had to go outside, I called her every hour. Nora died in 2002. She was buried in the Jewish cemetery. Her grandmother, mother and aunt were buried there and she wanted to be buried next to their graves. Her students came to her funeral, even the students from the first graduation year. They loved her very much. Even now I feel that she is close to me. She helps me when I ask her for advice. I believe that one day we will be together again.

## **Glossary:**

### **1 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.

### **2 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.

### **3 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.

### **4 NKVD**

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

### **5 Lenin (1870-1924)**

Pseudonym of Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, the Russian Communist leader. A profound student of Marxism, and a revolutionary in the 1890s. He became the leader of the Bolshevik faction of the Social Democratic Party, whom he led to power in the coup d'état of 25th October 1917. Lenin became head of the Soviet state and retained this post until his death.

### **6 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.

### **7 NEP**

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

### **8 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.

## **9 Struggle against religion**

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

## **10 Froebel Institute**

F. W. A. Froebel (1783-1852), German educational theorist, developed the idea of raising children in kindergartens. In Russia the Froebel training institutions functioned from 1872-1917. The three-year training was intended for tutors of children in families and kindergartens.

## **11 School #**

Schools had numbers and not names. It was part of the policy of the state. They were all state schools and were all supposed to be identical.

## **12 Young Octobrist**

In Russian Oktyabrenok, or 'pre-pioneer', designates Soviet children of seven years or over preparing for entry into the pioneer organization.

## **13 Admission privilege**

After the Revolution of 1917 people that had at least minor private property (owned small stores or shops) or small businesses were deprived of their property and were commonly called 'deprivees'. From 1917 to the middle of the 1930s this part of the population was deprived of civil rights and their children were not allowed to study in higher educational institutions. Communists declared themselves to protect the interests of the oppressed working class and peasants and only representatives of these classes enjoyed all civil rights.

## **14 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 were 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.

## **15 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.

## **16 Passport 24**

Such passports were issued to people that authorities didn't put full trust into: they were former political prisoners or those that had recently arrived in the USSR, etc. There was a note in such passports stating that the owner of that passport was not allowed to reside in the 24 biggest towns of the USSR.

## **17 Residence permit**

The Soviet authorities restricted freedom of travel within the USSR through the residence permit and kept everybody's whereabouts under control. Every individual in the USSR needed residential registration; this was a stamp in the passport giving the permanent address of the individual. It was impossible to find a job, or even to travel within the country, without such a stamp. In order to register at somebody else's apartment one had to be a close relative and if each resident of the apartment had at least 8 square meters to them.

## **18 Kirov, Sergey (born Kostrikov) (1886-1934)**

Soviet communist. He joined the Russian Social Democratic Party in 1904. During the Revolution of 1905 he was arrested; after his release he joined the Bolsheviks and was arrested several more times for revolutionary activity. He occupied high positions in the hierarchy of the Communist Party. He was a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, as well as of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee. He was a loyal supporter of Stalin. In 1934 Kirov's popularity had increased and Stalin showed signs of mistrust. In December of that year Kirov was assassinated by a younger party member. It is believed that Stalin ordered the murder, but it has never been proven.

## **19 Enemy of the people**

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

## **20 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.

### **21 Voroshylov, Kliment Yefremovich (1881-1969)**

Soviet military leader and public official. He was an active revolutionary before the Revolution of 1917 and an outstanding Red Army commander in the Russian Civil War. As commissar for military and naval affairs, later defense, Voroshilov helped reorganize the Red Army. He was a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party from 1926 and a member of the Supreme Soviet from 1937. He was dropped from the Central Committee in 1961 but reelected to it in 1966.

### **22 Tukhachevskiy, Mikhail Nikolayevich (1893-1937)**

an ardent revolutionary, Soviet military leader, marshal of the Soviet Union. During the Civil War he was the commander of a number of armies in the South, the Urals, Siberia; troops of the Caucasian and Western front. In 1921 he took part in the suppression of anti-revolutionary uprising. He was commander of the troops, which put down a rebellion of the peasants in Tambov and Voronezh provinces. Since 1931 deputy minister of the army and navy, since 1934 deputy minister of defense, since 1936 1st deputy of defense minister of the USSR. In 1937 he was commander of the troops of Volga Military District. Tukhachevskiy's works had an impact on the development of Soviet military science and military practice. He was repressed and shot in 1937 on the grounds of treason against the motherland; in 1956 he was posthumously exonerated.

### **23 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.

### **24 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.

## **25 Professor Mamlock**

This 1937 Soviet feature is considered the first dramatic film on the subject of Nazi anti-Semitism ever made, and the first to tell Americans that Nazis were killing Jews. Hailed in New York, and banned in Chicago, it was adapted by the German playwright Friedrich Wolf - a friend of Bertolt Brecht - from his own play, and co-directed by Herbert Rappaport, assistant to German director G.W. Pabst. The story centers on the persecution of a great German surgeon, his son's sympathy and subsequent leadership of the underground communists, and a rival's sleazy tactics to expel Mamlock from his clinic.

## **26 Feuchtwanger, Lion (1884-1958)**

German-Jewish novelist, noted for his choice of historical and political themes and the use of psychoanalytic ideas in the development of his characters. He was a friend of Bertolt Brecht and collaborated with him on several plays. Feuchtwanger was an active pacifist and socialist and the rise of Nazism forced him to leave his native Germany for first France and then the USA in 1940. He wrote extensively on ancient Jewish history, also as a metaphor to criticize the European political situation of the time. Among his main work are the trilogy 'The Waiting Room' and 'Josephus' (1932).

## **27 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact**

Non-aggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, which became known under the name of Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Engaged in a border war with Japan in the Far East and fearing the German advance in the west, the Soviet government began secret negotiations for a non-aggression pact with Germany in 1939. In August 1939 it suddenly announced the conclusion of a Soviet-German agreement of friendship and non-aggression. The Pact contained a secret clause providing for the partition of Poland and for Soviet and German spheres of influence in Eastern Europe.

## **28 Molotov, V**

P. (1890-1986): Statesman and member of the Communist Party leadership. From 1939, Minister of Foreign Affairs. On June 22, 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.

## **29 Occupation of the Baltic Republics (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania)**

Although the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact regarded only Latvia and Estonia as parts of the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, according to a supplementary protocol (signed in 28th September 1939) most of Lithuania was also transferred under the Soviets. The three states were forced to sign the 'Pact of Defense and Mutual Assistance' with the USSR allowing it to station troops in their territories. In June 1940 Moscow issued an ultimatum demanding the change of governments and the occupation of the Baltic Republics. The three states were incorporated into the Soviet Union as the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republics.

### **30 Invasion of Poland**

The German attack of Poland on 1st September 1939 is widely considered the date in the West for the start of World War II. After having gained both Austria and the Bohemian and Moravian parts of Czechoslovakia, Hitler was confident that he could acquire Poland without having to fight Britain and France. (To eliminate the possibility of the Soviet Union fighting if Poland were attacked, Hitler made a pact with the Soviet Union, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.) On the morning of 1st September 1939, German troops entered Poland. The German air attack hit so quickly that most of Poland's air force was destroyed while still on the ground. To hinder Polish mobilization, the Germans bombed bridges and roads. Groups of marching soldiers were machine-gunned from the air, and they also aimed at civilians. On 1st September, the beginning of the attack, Great Britain and France sent Hitler an ultimatum - withdraw German forces from Poland or Great Britain and France would go to war against Germany. On 3rd September, with Germany's forces penetrating deeper into Poland, Great Britain and France both declared war on Germany.

### **31 Annexation of Eastern Poland**

According to a secret clause in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact defining Soviet and German territorial spheres of influence in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union occupied Eastern Poland in September 1939. In early November the newly annexed lands were divided up between the Ukrainian and the Belarusian Soviet Republics.

### **32 Soviet-Finnish War (1939-40)**

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

### **33 Zhukov, Georgy (1896-1974)**

Soviet Commander, Marshal of the Soviet Union, Hero of the Soviet Union. Georgy Zhukov was the most important Soviet military commander during World War II.

### **34 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.

### **34 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.

### **35 Kursk battle**

The greatest tank battle in the history of World War II, which began on 5th July 1943 and ended eight days later. The biggest tank fight, involving almost 1,200 tanks and mobile cannon units on both sides, took place in Prokhorovka on 12th July and ended with the defeat of the German tank unit.

### **36 Birobidzhan**

Formed in 1928 to give Soviet Jews a home territory and to increase settlement along the vulnerable borders of the Soviet Far East, the area was raised to the status of an autonomous region in 1934. Influenced by an effective propaganda campaign, and starvation in the east, 41,000 Soviet Jews relocated to the area between the late 1920s and early 1930s. But, by 1938 28,000 of them had fled the regions harsh conditions, There were Jewish schools and synagogues up until the 1940s, when there was a resurgence of religious repression after World War II. The Soviet government wanted the forced deportation of all Jews to Birobidzhan to be completed by the middle of the 1950s. But in 1953 Stalin died and the deportation was cancelled. Despite some remaining Yiddish influences - including a Yiddish newspaper - Jewish cultural activity in the region has declined enormously since Stalin's anti-cosmopolitanism campaigns and since the liberalization of Jewish emigration in the 1970s. Jews now make up less than 2% of the region's population.

### **37 Army of General Svoboda**

During World War II General Ludvik Svoboda (1895-1979) commanded Czechoslovak troops under Soviet military leadership, which took part in liberating Eastern Slovakia. After the war Svoboda became minister of defence (1945-1950) and then President of Czechoslovakia (1968-1975).

### **38 Benes, Eduard (1884-1948)**

Czechoslovak politician and president from 1935-38 and 1946-48. He was a follower of T. G. Masaryk, the first president of Czechoslovakia, and the idea of Czechoslovakism, and later Masaryk's right-hand man. After World War I he represented Czechoslovakia at the Paris Peace Conference. He was Foreign Minister (1918-1935) and Prime Minister (1921-1922) of the new Czechoslovak state and became president after Masaryk retired in 1935. The Czechoslovak alliance with France and the creation of the Little Entente (Czechoslovak, Romanian and Yugoslav alliance against Hungarian revisionism and the restoration of the Habsburgs) were essentially his work. After the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia by the Munich Pact (1938) he resigned and went into exile. Returning to Prague in 1945, he was confirmed in office and was reelected president in 1946. After the communist coup in February 1948 he resigned in June on the grounds of illness, refusing to sign the new constitution.

### **39 Order of the Great Patriotic War**

1st Class: established 20th May 1942, awarded to officers and enlisted men of the armed forces

and security troops and to partisans, irrespective of rank, for skillful command of their units in action. 2nd Class: established 20th May 1942, awarded to officers and enlisted men of the armed forces and security troops and to partisans, irrespective of rank, for lesser personal valor in action.

#### **40 Order of the Red Star**

Established in 1930, it was awarded for achievements in the defense of the motherland, the promotion of military science and the development of military equipments, and for courage in battle. The Order of the Red Star has been awarded over 4,000,000 times.

#### **41 Medal for Victory over Germany**

Established by Decree of the Presidium of Supreme Soviet of the USSR to commemorate the glorious victory; 15 million awards.

#### **42 Collective farm (in Russian kolkhoz)**

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

#### **43 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.

#### **44 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.

#### **45 Order of Red Labor Banner**

established on 7th September 1928 to award individuals, enterprises, institutions and teams for the exceptional merits in the field of production, state or social activity in the USSR.

#### **46 Order of Lenin**

Established in 1930, the Order of Lenin is the highest Soviet award. It was awarded for outstanding services in the revolutionary movement, labor activity, defense of the Homeland, and strengthening peace between peoples. It has been awarded over 400,000 times.

#### **47 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'.

#### **48 Izvestiya**

major daily newspaper in the Soviet Union, issued since 1917 and at peak its circulation exceeded eight million copies. It was mandatory for members of the communist party to subscribe to it. All articles published in the Izvestiya were censored by the party and were considered indisputably true.

#### **49 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.

#### **50 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.

#### **51 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.

## **52 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.

## **53 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.

## **54 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.

## **55 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.

## **56 October Revolution Day**

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

## **57 Soviet Army Day**

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

## **58 Brezhnev, Leonid, Ilyich (1906-82) Soviet leader**

He joined the Communist Party in 1931 and rose steadily in its hierarchy, becoming a secretary of the party's central committee in 1952. In 1957, as protégé of Khrushchev, he became a member of the presidium (later politburo) of the central committee. He was chairman of the presidium of the Supreme Soviet, or titular head of state. Following Khrushchev's fall from power in 1964, which Brezhnev helped to engineer, he was named first secretary of the Communist Party. Although

sharing power with Kosygin, Brezhnev emerged as the chief figure in Soviet politics. In 1968, in support of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, he enunciated the 'Brezhnev doctrine,' asserting that the USSR could intervene in the domestic affairs of any Soviet bloc nation if communist rule was threatened. While maintaining a tight rein in Eastern Europe, he favored closer relations with the Western powers, and he helped bring about a détente with the United States. In 1977 he assumed the presidency of the USSR. Under Gorbachev, Brezhnev's regime was criticized for its corruption and failed economic policies.

### **59 Gorbachev, Mikhail (1931- )**

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

### **60 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.

### **61 Iron Curtain**

A term popularized by Sir Winston Churchill in a speech in 1946. He used it to designate the Soviet Union's consolidation of its grip over Eastern Europe. The phrase denoted the separation of East and West during the Cold War, which placed the totalitarian states of the Soviet bloc behind an 'Iron Curtain'. The fall of the Iron Curtain corresponds to the period of perestroika in the former Soviet Union, the reunification of Germany, and the democratization of Eastern Europe beginning in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

### **62 Moscow Council of the Jewish War Veterans**

founded in 1988 by the Moscow municipal Jewish community. The main purpose of the organization is mutual assistance as well as unification of front-line Jews, collection and publishing of recollections about the war, and arranging meetings with the public and youth.

### **63 Spinoza, Baruch (1632-1677)**

Dutch philosopher of Portuguese-Jewish origin. An independent thinker, he declined offers of academic posts and pursued his individual philosophical inquiry instead. He read the mathematical and philosophical works of Descartes but unlike Descartes did not see a separation between God, mind and matter. Ethics, considered Spinoza's major work, was published in 1677.