

# Busia Makalets

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Kishinev

Moldova

Interviewer: Nathalia Fomina

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*Busia Litmanovna Makalets is a loud expansive lady. Despite being 85 years of age she is full of energy and coquetry. When we met, she wore trousers and a dark sweater. She has silver gray hair, which reflected the dark color of her sweater, and a long fair shawl emphasized the elegance of her slim figure. Busia Litmanovna has extraordinary eyes: one blue and one green. They look enormous behind her glasses. She lives in a two-bedroom apartment in a Khrushchevka [1](#) house, though it's furnished in such a way that the apartment looks spacious and cozy. The room where we had our conversation has soft beige wallpaper, there is a piano near the window, a table in the middle of the room, a few chairs, and a TV set in the corner. There is a cupboard and a bookcase by the wall. There are family pictures behind the glass. Busia Litmanovna tells me about her life with warmth and humor. She sings Jewish songs with perfect Yiddish intonation beautifully.*

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## **My family background**

My parents' families lived in Poland, in the town of Vladimirets [Lutsk district, Volyn province; according to the 1987 census there were 2074 residents, 1024 of them were Jews]. In 1918, after World War I, Vladimirets was annexed to Poland. I came from Bessarabia [2](#) to visit Vladimirets for the first time before I turned six years old. We visited my maternal great-grandmother Cipora, whose surname I don't remember. She was 105 years old. She couldn't see anything due to her old age. She was sitting on the bed in a dark room with her feet down, and there were chickens running around on the ground floor. When I approached her, she hugged me and stroked my hair repeating, 'Basia-Bunele, Basia-Bunele.' I was called Busia at home and had never heard my Jewish name of Basia-Bunia at home before, and it seemed to me that Grandmother Cipora was teasing me. I felt hurt and burst into tears. Grandmother Cipora must have lived with one of her children and they must have been poor, judging by their house and earth-floors.

My maternal grandfather, David Tetelbaum, died before I was born. He was a cattle dealer. My grandfather must have died in the 1900s, since my brother David, born in 1910, was named after him. We lived in the house of my grandmother Golda-Leya Tetelbaum for almost ten years, but I

have very dim memories of her. Of course my grandmother was very religious and observed all the Jewish traditions like all Jews in Vladimirets. I remember, when my older sister Tania sent a card with a photo of a woman wearing a swimming suit, my grandmother got very angry seeing this picture. She decided this was Tania and really told my mother off, saying that Tania was a frivolous woman. My grandmother had an ordinary house. I remember that when we moved in there from Bessarabia, my father modified the stove in the Bessarabian manner, fixing it with a metal rim on the edges.

I don't know how many children Grandmother Golda had. My mother's sister Tauba lived in Vladimirets. She had a store where she sold beer, I guess. She and my mother's younger sister Zelda were killed in the ghetto [in Vladimirets] during the war. This is all I can remember about her.

I remember Zelda well. She was a bright person. Zelda and her husband Yakov Bass, a pharmacist, lived in Rafalovka, a Jewish town near Vladimirets. Besides selling medications, the pharmacist also recommended treatment and was a popular figure in the town. Yakov was a very intelligent person. Zelda liked singing. She took part in amateur concerts and traveled with her group to Vladimirets, and then there were posters saying, 'Concert with Zelda Bass' in the town. These concerts were usually arranged in somebody's big shed and then all residents of Vladimirets attended them. There was no other entertainment in the town.

From what I remember, Zelda had three children: the sons Nathan and David and a daughter, Rivka. When the war began [3](#), Zelda and her children were kept in the ghetto in Vladimirets. As for Yakov, the locals convinced the Germans that they needed him, and the Germans left him alone. He came to Vladimirets to talk with his relatives, and the family decided that one of them had to stay free. I don't quite remember what happened next, but somehow Yakov joined a partisan unit and his children David and Rivka and Nathan's fiancée Fenia were with him there. From what I've been told, I remember that when they were escaping from the ghetto, Fenia kept a piece of matzah against her heart as a talisman that was supposed to save them.

Aunt Zelda and her older son Nathan were killed in the ghetto. Later Yakov married his deceased son's fiancée and moved to Italy and from there - to Eretz Israel, where he published a book about his adventures during the war and anti-Semitism in the partisan unit. He also enclosed Zelda's last letter in this book, I translated it from Yiddish: 'Our dearest, we shall not lose our faith in God till the last minute. I kiss you, our darlings, be strong. Whatever happens, may the Lord help you. Zelda', and a few words that Nathan wrote: 'Greetings, Papa, David, Rivka, Fenia. We die proud. Be happy. Nathan'.

My mother, Esther Tetelbaum, was born in Vladimirets in 1882. My mother was very beautiful. That is, I think so now, looking at her photograph, but as a child I didn't give it a thought. My mother must have been educated at home. She spoke fluent Yiddish, knew all the Jewish traditions and was a wonderful housewife. She was crazy about keeping the house ideally clean. My mother didn't tell me how she met my father, but I think they married for love: their families were neighbors in Vladimirets.

I can't say what my paternal grandfather, Gersh Volok, did for a living. I met him, when he was very old and lived with his son's family. He was a handsome Jew: with his beard, payes, wearing a black kitel. My grandfather's appearance struck me. While living in Bolgrad, before we moved to Vladimirets, I didn't meet such expressed Jews, and later I read about them in Sholem Aleichem [4](#)

books. We kept my grandfather's portrait for a long time at home and I'm so sorry it got lost. My paternal grandmother died so long ago. I don't even remember her name. There was an old woman living with my grandfather, but she wasn't my father's mother.

I loved my grandfather dearly. I came to see my grandfather on Yom Kippur, before the Kol Nidre prayer, a known prayer before the Day of Atonement, and my grandfather laid his hands on my head and blessed me. After my father died, I heard and learned the song that I always associate with him: 'Erev Yom Kippur, erev Kol Nidre, kind mayn zayt genetsht - before Yom Kippur, before Kol Nidre, may my child be blessed. Zayne bayde hande, zayne tzittern ... - His both hands, his trembling...'

My grandfather died, when I was about 15 years of age. This happened in 1934. We came to his funeral from Bolgrad. I felt like crying, but I held back my tears for the fear that the boys I knew would think I pretended. My grandfather was buried in accordance with the ritual, of course. I remember that he was wrapped in a takhrikhim and there was a cover on him. There was no coffin and he was carried on a stretcher. I don't remember how we sat shivah.

Of all of Gershl's children I only remember my father's brother, who lived with my grandfather. He was a Hasid [5](#) and was fanatically religious. I don't remember his name. He had a beautiful daughter and a handsome son, who studied in the yeshivah. We had too little in common and didn't communicate closely. They perished in the ghetto during the war.

My father, Litman Vokok, was born in Vladimirets, in the Russian Empire in 1878. He finished a yeshivah and taught Hebrew and traditions. He spoke fluent Russian. My parents got married in the early 1900s. My father was in the tsarist army for four years during World War I, but I don't know whether he took part in combat action. He returned home in 1918. At that time my parents lived in Cimislia in Bessarabia. By that time my parents had five children. My oldest brother Zelik was born in 1903 in Vladimirets, my second brother Boruch-Nathan was born in Cimislia in 1905, my older sister Tuba, whom we called Tania, was born in 1907, and the next two brothers Mikhail and David were born one after another [in 1909 and 1910, respectively].

## Growing up

I was born in Cimislia in 1919. Even before I was born my parents decided on giving me the name of one of my paternal ancestors: Basia-Bunia. However, my father didn't like this idea. When he went to the synagogue bringing vodka and honey cake, as was customary with Jews, he gave me the name of Busia. Our family moved to Bolgrad, when I was about a year old. My father taught Hebrew in a Jewish school called Tarbut [6](#) in Bessarabia. We, the children, spoke Hebrew at home. My mother understood Hebrew, but spoke Yiddish with us. I remember one summer my brothers Mikhail and David were arguing in Hebrew about which of them was going to pick a watermelon in the cellar. We had a blue box where my parents dropped money for the fund of Israel, this contribution was called Keren-Kayemet [7](#), which means that my parents were Zionists. My father loved Mama dearly and I remember my oldest brothers saying. 'Papa is in love with Mama.' I was three years old, when my brother Zelik went to the chalutzim camp, and then moved to Palestine in 1922 where he changed his name to Aviezer.

When I was about five years old, my 19-year-old brother Boruch-Nathan drowned in the river. I can still remember this horrible day in all details. It was Thursday, and on Thursday there was a brass

orchestra playing on the boulevard where we lived. People went for a walk on the boulevard. Before going out I cried, asking Mama to let me wear a new marquisette dress, but my mother said that since there was no holiday there was no reason for me to wear the dress. I ran out and my tears dried out, when I heard the music. All of a sudden a bunch of boys surrounded me. They were shouting, 'Your brother has drowned! Your brother has drowned!' I didn't understand what they meant and ran home. Mama was sitting in the yard having tea, holding a lump of sugar in her mouth. She asked me, 'What's up?' and I replied, 'The boys say that Boruch-Nathan had drowned.'

There were two exits from our yard: one to the boulevard and the other one to Magazinnaya Street leading to the river. When I said this, there was a roar of voices from the side of the river: 'Uh-uh...' that I could never forget. Mama fainted... Then my sister Tania's friend Esther took me to her place. I remember sitting on a windowsill in her house, crying. The dogs were barking. When my older brother living in Palestine heard that our brother had drowned, he changed his surname to Achinathan. 'Achi' is 'my brother' in Hebrew. Achinathan means 'my brother Nathan.' His name became Aviezer Achinathan. We corresponded with him before the war. He wrote that he worked in road construction and took part in the Haganah [defense organization].

That same year Tania finished a gymnasium in Bolgrad and moved to Aviezer in Palestine. My parents and I went to see our relatives in Vladimirets in Poland. Vladimirets belongs to Ukraine now, it is located near Sarny in Rovno region. The relatives started telling my parents, 'Why live in a foreign land in Bessarabia, come move to Vladimirets.' My parents left me with Grandmother and went to Bolgrad to pack our belongings and pick up Mikhail and David. So we moved to Vladimirets and stayed with Grandmother Golda-Leya.

Vladimirets was a typical Jewish town. For me it is the Kasrilovka of Sholem Aleichem [Kasrilovka is a fictitious name of a Jewish town in the works of Sholem Aleichem. Busia means to say that Jews in Vladimirets were as archaic as Jews in the tsarist Russia.] The population of Vladimirets was Polish, Russian and Jewish. The main street in Vladimirets was in the lowlands, and narrow streets started on both sides of it with houses on the slopes. Housewives threw buckets of waste water right into the streets. There were whitewashed houses with tiled roofs in the town. There were dirt roads with wooden walkways. There were two synagogues downtown and I remember that there was no peace between them. One synagogue stood for one rabbi and another one for a different one. There were even fights like there are in our parliament now.

My grandfather Gersh Volok's house was on a hill, across the street from our house, and the synagogue was down the street. One winter day I watched my grandfather and an acquaintance of his sitting on the snow to slide down the street. Grandfather Gersh rarely visited us. My brothers didn't wear hats, and when Grandfather Gersh came by, my brothers were running around turning everything upside down looking for their hats in panic. When my father asked Grandfather why he came to see us so rarely, my grandfather replied, 'Why would I come by? When I do come, they start looking for their hats and there's a lot of fuss. It's no good.'

My father owned a private cheder in Vladimirets, where he taught Hebrew, the Tannakh and everything there was to teach. My father also prepared boys for their bar mitzvah. According to Jewish rules boys become men at the age of 13, when they wear tefillin and read a section from the Torah at the synagogue. My father didn't go to the synagogue every day, but he fasted on Yom

Kippur, went to the synagogue on holidays and strictly observed traditions. I remember his words: 'Traditions have kept us as a nation. Traditions are most important.'

I went to school in Vladimirets. I attended a Polish school in the morning and after lunch I attended my father's classes in Hebrew. I picked up Polish soon and I knew Hebrew since I was born. I remember that my Polish school allowed me a day off on Saturday. Basically, the Poles were rather anti-Semitic, but I didn't feel it. We didn't have the Polish citizenship and my brothers Mikhail and David served in the Romanian army since Bessarabians were Romanian citizens. Later they studied in the Teacher's Training College in Rovno. In Vladimirets I joined the Zionist organization for young people, Hashomer Hatzair [8](#). We were dreaming of communism in Israel. So go to Israel and build communism there! Besides my preoccupation with Zionist ideas, I went out with boys and liked singing Jewish songs. I learned all Jewish songs I know in Vladimirets.

Our home was a Jewish home. My mother kept a kosher home and we strictly observed Sabbath. My mother cooked on Friday for Saturday. On Sabbath Mama lit candles and prayed over them.

We celebrated Pesach according to all the rules. There was a general clean-up before the holiday. Then my mother or father – I am not sure – swept out the chametz with a chicken feather. The whole family got together at the table on seder: Grandmother Golda-Leya, my mother and father, my brothers Mikhail and David and I. My father conducted the seder. I, being the youngest in the family, got up and said: 'Abah ehal otha arba kashot? Hakasha harishona: mah nishtanah halaylah hazeh, mikol halaylot? In Hebrew: Papa, I will ask you four questions. Question one: Why is this night different from all other nights?' My father reclined on a cushion and there was a piece of matzah hidden underneath. We were to find this matzah secretly, and the one who found it received a gift. I remember one present I got: a big ball with red dots. Why I remember this is because my brothers lost it, when playing with it. There were candles burning, and we were all waiting for Eliah the Mashiyah, Eliah Hanavi, to come in. I waited for him so much in my childhood, but of course, I always fell asleep!

On Rosh Hashanah apples and honey were served. It was always cold in Vladimirets on Sukkot for some reason, and though we installed a sukkah in the yard, we didn't have meals in it. The climate in Poland was colder than in Bessarabia.

I remember my father giving me Chanukkah gelt on Chanukkah. I knew a song: Chanukkah, Chanukkah, a yomtev a shayner, a lustiger und a fraylicher. Nicht noch azoyner... Which means: 'Chanukkah, Oh Chanukkah, a fine holiday, a happy and a joyful one. There is no such another one'... We played with the whipping top. Our chanukkiyah was different from what they have now: it had oil lights that were small round vessels with special Chanukkah oil and wicks in them. My mother added another light each night.

I put on my mother's coat, a mask and glued on some sort of a beard on Purim and went to give performances in the houses with other children. People gave us some change and we contributed to the fund of Keren Kayemet.

In 1930 my sister Tania visited Vladimirets from Palestine. She was very beautiful and wore different clothes from what women in Vladimirets wore: they had an open neck and short sleeves. She had an unhappy love affair in Palestine: her fiancé moved to America and my sister came to Vladimirets. She didn't take any interest in young people from Vladimirets, for a whole year she

grieved after her young man. However, she took an interest in the Jewish life in Vladimirets.

On some holiday a rebbe from Rovno visited Vladimirets. This was a great event: people got together at the synagogue and brought food with them: I think it was cholent. The rebe gave out this food with his hands, and people grabbed it from him to receive his blessing. One day Tania also went to the synagogue. My father, a respectable Jew in the town, told us later, 'Everything grew dark in my eyes! All of a sudden I saw my daughter wearing a sleeveless dress standing almost beside the rebbe'. Tania got so absorbed and eager to miss no details that she had quite forgotten that women weren't supposed to be with men at the synagogue and had to have their arms covered down to their elbows.

A year later Tania moved to France, where her friends from Bolgrad studied: Esther Fishman and Fira Yagolnizer. They had corresponded. In Paris she entered the Chemical Faculty of the University, where she communicated with French Communists and met her future husband. It was also an interesting story. Her friend Esther fell in love with Paul-Christian Megrain, but didn't dare to tell him about her feelings. My sister went to tell him the story. This matchmaking ended in Christian's proposal to Tania. She became his wife around 1932. Tania didn't tell our parents that her husband was French for quite a while. She only called him Paul in her letters, and our parents thought he was a French Jew. We were a patriarchal family, and my parents didn't approve of this marriage, of course.

At some point of time my parents felt rather uncomfortable with their material situation in Poland – this coincided with Golda-Leya's death – and decided to go back to Bolgrad in Bessarabia. My parents and I moved to Bolgrad in 1932, I think. We rented an apartment from Kuchiniaev, who was probably a Bulgarian. There were many Bulgarians in Bolgrad. There was a Christian church in the center of the town on the boulevard and there was a town garden nearby. A recurrent theme of my childhood: people strolled on the boulevard here as well, there was a stage and an orchestra playing on it on Thursday. There were many stores owned by Jews. I remember the owner of the fabric store named Gesermann. My father went to teach in the Tarbut in Bolgrad.

I didn't know a word in Russian or Romanian. The first word that I learned in Romanian was viata – 'life.' I was full of life and shouted: 'Viata!' and threw myself into the snow till I fell ill with pleurisy. All doctors in Bolgrad were taking care of me: I was Mademoiselle Volok, Mr. Volok's daughter, who was a teacher. They didn't charge me for respect for my father. I began to read popular books to pick up Romanian. This was a collection of books published in Romania. There were Stephan Zweig and Somerset Maugham in this collection.

I continued to study in a secondary school in Bolgrad since I didn't know Romanian to go to a gymnasium. Of course, the boys and girls of my age were excited about my coming to Bolgrad: a very tall girl that can sing well and has an unusual biography. I made many friends and got two lifetime friends: Sara Shlimovich and Nesia Fridman. There was no Hashomer Hatzair in Bolgrad, but there were two other organizations: Gordonia, named after Judah Gordon [Gordon, Judah Leib (1830-1892) Russian poet, essayist, and novelist, considered the leading poet of the Haskalah, the 18th and 19th-century movement for enlightenment among Central and Eastern European Jews. His use of Biblical and post-Biblical Hebrew resulted in a new and influential style of Hebrew-language poetry. His line 'Be a Jew in your tent and a man when leaving it' became a motto of Jewish enlighteners of the time], and the extreme right organization Betar – the organization of



revisionists [9](#) of Jabotinsky [10](#). We believed Betar members to be Jewish Fascists, and I joined the Gordonia. To be frank, I didn't quite understand all the ideological details. For me, the most important thing was a club where I could sing. Singing was my passion. I remember rowing with my brothers and my close friends Sara and Nesia and I was singing on this night with a full moon and there was a caravan of boats following us – people were listening to me singing.

My father guessed about my creative aspirations. He understood me and I enjoyed spending time with him, while my mother was a common Jewish woman. She took care of the household and always wanted me to become a good housewife. When she was cleaning and took all the pillows outside, I would take a book lying on top of the pillows and started reading. Can you imagine my mother's response to this? I also liked standing before an open window singing. My mother could interrupt me: 'Busia, go wash the dishes!' This got on my nerves and I thought she didn't understand me. I feel so sorry, when I think about it now.

Or another episode: I am cleaning a window at my mother's request, doing her a big favor, when my friends go by. They said: 'Busia, Arlazorov was killed!' [Arlazorov, Chaim Victor (1899-1933): one of the leaders of the Zionist workers' movement, member of the Board of the World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency since 1931. In 1933 he was actively involved in the organization of mass aliyah of Jews from Nazi Germany. In June 1933 he was killed during a walk in Tel Aviv. Many members of the workers' movement believed their political opponents, the followers of Jabotinsky to be guilty of the murder of Arlazorov, though the latter denied this bluntly.] Arlazorov was killed! And revisionists and Betar members were suspected. Of course, I gave up cleaning the window and rushed to the organization. I don't know why they suspected the revisionists. In the evening, and I remember this episode in all details, we, the Gordonists, stood by an open window of the locale – this was how this club of revisionists was called – and heard their leader say, 'Our friend Arlazorov'... And when we heard this 'Our friend Arlazorov,' we threw as many stones into the window, as we could find.

I finished my school and was to decide about my future studies. My father heard about the teachers' training workshop in Chernovtsy [today Ukraine] where they taught Hebrew. I went to Chernovtsy and entered this teachers' training workshop. I rented a room from a Jewish family: a widow and her two sons. I made friends with Kubi, the younger one. Kubi's family was not religious. They were leading a more secular way of life than our family. Anyway, I felt quite comfortable staying with them. Kubi helped me to study German and I started reading in German. I don't remember any anti-Semitism in Chernovtsy at that time, but it also needs to be mentioned that I was fond of Zionist ideas and socialized with Jews for the most part. I even knew a few underground Communists who had been in Doftan, the main political jail in Bucharest. There was one Gypsy in our organization. I knew about the following Romanian Fascists organizations: Iron Guard [11](#), Cuzists [12](#). When I was in Chernovtsy, the Iron Guard in Bucharest was defeated, and there were rumors about dead Iron Guard members in the streets of Kishinev [Chisinau in Moldovan]. My favorite subject in the workshop was music taught by a professor, a former teacher of Josef Schmidt, a famous singer in Romania. When the professor was introducing his students to an official inspecting the workshop, he said about me: 'As for this girl, she will earn her living with her voice.'

There were many cases of tuberculosis in Bolgrad and my parents were very concerned about my condition after I had pleurisy. They took a loan from a Jewish bank to buy me a trip to the Piatra

Neamt Mountains. When Tania was visiting us from Paris in 1935, I was to go to Brasov. Tania changed her plan to spend her vacation with her friends and took me to Brasov [today Romania]. I enjoyed the trip with my favorite sister. However, I was an eccentric and spoiled girl, a bad one, frankly speaking, and my Romanian was rather poor. We rented a room from a Romanian family, and almost at once I started a romance with Uce, a young Romanian guy. Tania was staying in the apartment and I went out with Uce. I could hardly understand what he was telling me, but I felt like telling him something sweet. I remembered the word 'bula' and said it, though I didn't remember the meaning. When Uce heard me saying this word, we turned home right away and he said a rather dry 'good bye.' I was upset and couldn't fall asleep for a long time, till my sister asked: 'What is it?' When she heard what happened she almost fell from her bed. She was fluent in Romanian. Bula was a 'bull' in Romanian and we laughed and laughed in our beds.

In 1940 the Soviets 'liberated' Moldavia [Moldova in Moldovan] [13](#) However, they truly freed us from the Fascists. Private stores in Bolgrad were closed and wealthier people were exiled. They closed the Tarbut and my father lost his job. However, he knew Russian and they sent him to teach Russian in a village. Submitting my certificate from the workshop I entered the Kishinev teachers' training college to study by correspondence.

### During the war

When the war began in 1941, we already knew how Germans treated Jews. We listened to the radio, and besides, I remembered Hitler's speeches at the time when Bessarabia belonged to Romania. My older brother Mikhail was mobilized to the labor army [14](#), David and I evacuated, like most young people did. Our parents refused to go with us. 'Who cares about old people? - my father said. - But you need to go'. We went to Odessa via Akkerman [today Belgorod-Dniestrovskiy]. I had never seen the sea before, and when we got off the boat, I decided to wash my feet. It never occurred to me that the depth there was a few meters and if David hadn't stopped me, somebody would have had to rescue me. We stayed in the railway station garden for two weeks. Then a Jewish woman from Odessa gave us shelter for a few days. I only remember that her name was Bunia. I also remember Bunia stating rather authoritatively: 'Stalin? But he is a Jew.'

Odessa was encircled and David went to the evacuation agency every day, trying to obtain a direction for evacuation. We were accommodated in the university hostel. There were bombings in July. Every morning we bought bread in a nearby store, but one morning this store was pulled down. Then my brother obtained permission for us to evacuate. We were to be taken to the harbor by military trucks. David and I boarded different trucks. On our way to the harbor another air raid began. We scattered around and I lost my brother. I spent that night in a house and in the morning I went to the harbor. Our ship happened to have left for Novorossiysk that night, but David was waiting for me at the harbor. We boarded another boat and got to Novorossiysk successfully.

From Novorossiysk we took a train to Kazakhstan, Balkhash. From there David went to the labor army. Having my documents about finishing the workshop and one year of the teachers' training college I went to the town education department and they sent me to teach German in a secondary school. I worked there for six months. I kept thinking about my parents: we heard on the radio about German atrocities against Jews. There were first gray streaks in my hair at that time. I could not forgive myself for letting Mama and Papa stay.



In 1942 my friends Sara and Nesia found me. They were in Buguruslan where our teachers' training college evacuated. I went to Buguruslan with them. On the way there my belongings were stolen. I lost all of my winter clothes. My friends shared their clothes with me. I can't remember what kind of a coat I had, but we had one pair of valenki boots [Russian winter boots made of felt] for the three of us and we took turns wearing them. We rented an apartment and Sara's sister Lyuba was also with us.

One day our landlady sent a messenger to the college to tell me that my brother was waiting for me. I rushed home. What happened was that the labor army dismissed all former Romanian citizens since Romania was an ally of the Germans. David had no clothes under his winter jacket. Sara, Nesia and I collected clothes for him in our college. David found a job in our college - he studied in the Teachers' Training College in Rovno, when we lived in Poland. David and Sara's future husband Yakov rented a room. We spent our time in college together. We didn't face any anti-Semitism in evacuation, but I remember one episode that seemed funny to me. Once Sara and I were walking home from college and some local boys shouted at Sara: 'Sarochka! Sarochka!' [the main characters in Russian anti-Semitic jokes were Abram and Sara]. I asked Sara: 'How come they know your name?' It never occurred to me that they were teasing her.

When Kishinev was liberated in 1944, we went there with our Teachers' Training College. On the first days of my stay there I bumped into our neighbor from Bolgrad, who told me that Mama and Papa were shot in 1941. I was a fifth-year student and we lived in a hostel. We often ran to the market to buy some food. In fall we liked 'most' - fresh grape juice. They made young wine from it and farmers were selling it in barrels.

### **After the war**

One day my friend Lora Schlein and I bumped into Petre Scherban, her acquaintance. He knew that Lora had a high soprano and I had a contralto. He said that the Republican Radio Committee was organizing the 'Moldova' choir. Lora and I went for the audition. I sang a Moldovan song; singing a Jewish song was out of the question considering the times. I got a job and entered the Vocal Department in the Conservatory. My teacher was Professor Dolev, who taught Ognivtsev, a Soviet singer, soloist of the Bolshoy Theater. I noticed a young man in the choir. He was wearing a military uniform and sang in the tenor group. I asked my friend Liya Barladian, 'Who is this guy whose eyes are burning like the eternal fire?' and she replied, 'He is a very gifted boy, very gifted! He studies at the Composer's Department of the Conservatory'. Well, this was my future husband Yevgeniy Makalets.

Yevgeniy was born in Comrat in 1921 and was the only child of his parents. Later his family moved to Kishinev. His father Ivan Makalets, a Moldovan, was a chanter in a church choir. His mother Anna Makalets, Russian, was a housewife. Yevgeniy finished a gymnasium in Kishinev. and was recruited to the Romanian army, when World War II began in 1939. He was a teterist [civilian]. The Bessarabians had to decide whether they were going to the front or wanted to be released from military service. Yevgeniy thought all night through and decided against going to the front. When Germany attacked the USSR, he was in evacuation in Central Asia and later served in the Soviet army. In 1945 he entered the Composers' Department of the Conservatory in Kishinev and also worked in our choir.

When I met Yevgeniy, I was renting a small room with a window in the ceiling. That was when I read a book about artists entitled 'The attic of dreams.' I often felt ill and sent notes to the choir: 'I'm not feeling well and won't come to the rehearsal.' Yevgeniy came to see me. He stole boiled beans from his mother to bring them to me. We were happy. One night he said, 'I'm leaving earlier tonight. It's my mother's birthday.' When he left, I felt sad. I boiled some water to wash my hair, when all of a sudden I heard: 'Attention! - this was quite in his manner - the order of the commander is to make your appearance at a birthday!' I hurriedly put on my only fancy blouse from an American parcel - I received it in the Radio Committee, and we went to visit his mother. She lived in a one-bedroom apartment in the semi-basement of the house. Yevgeniy's father had died. Her friends were sitting at the table. And she introduced me loudly: 'Meet my son's wife!' And her friends screamed: 'Zhenechka!' [affectionate of Yevgeniy] Jee, how horrible!

Shortly afterward we registered our marriage and my landlady allowed Yevgeniy to move into 'the attic of dreams.' I quit the conservatory and went to work as a music editor in the Radio Committee. Yevgeniy became a choir master of the 'Moldova' choir. After finishing the conservatory he became its artistic director. In the first years of our family life we changed apartments. We lived in a small kitchen. There was a door, but no windows. There were a few planks on the floor and the rest of it was ground. We also stayed with my mother-in-law for some time. We slept on a wooden couch in the kitchen. My mother-in-law gave us pillows. We were very poor. When my mother-in-law died, we rented a one-bedroom apartment where we had a sofa.

In 1949 our daughter was born. I named her Tatiana after my sister. I already knew that Tania was gone. Shortly after the war - I don't know for sure, when - her husband Christian Megrain visited Kishinev; he was an activist of the Communist party of France and was allowed to travel to the USSR. He told me about the wartime. When Paris was occupied in 1941, the Gestapo came for them one night. Christian and Tania grabbed their little daughter Monique and jumped out of the window. They were hiding in apartments of their Communist comrades for some time before they got to the unoccupied part of France. Tania died of a heart attack in 1942, when her daughter Monique was seven years old. She was buried there, but I don't remember in which town. I have a photo of her grave. Some time later Christian married a Polish Jewish woman. Her name was Frania. She was also a Communist and both of them arrived in the USSR. Frania knew Russian and was an interpreter for us. They became very close to my family and me, my brothers Mikhail and David, who also lived in Kishinev. I also went to Moscow visiting Christian and Frania, who often traveled to Moscow.

During the period of the Doctors' Plot [15](#) in 1953 I worked at the music editing office. I was to schedule the pianists, violinists and opera singers' concerts on the radio... My family name was Makalets, and only very few people knew I was a Jew. One of these days the leading singer in our opera theater came to the editing office - I'd rather not mention his name. He said, 'Have you heard, Busia Litmanovna, that they will fire all Jewish employees from the Radio committee. Now they'll see!' He was rather stunned, when he heard that I was a Jew. Fortunately, his words didn't come true. I kept my job. During the Soviet regime, people working for radio, TV, newspapers were always related to ideology and policy thereof. When my husband became an artistic director of the choir, he had to join the Party. He became a candidate to the Party, when some rascal reported on him that he was a former Romanian officer, though he had only been a soldier, and that his father was a priest, though he just managed the choir. A party meeting expelled him from candidateship

to the Party. He submitted a letter of resignation from the Radio committee. However, the times changed and he resumed his work.

Though the Khrushchev [16](#) and Brezhnev [17](#) periods were significantly different from the Stalin period, I remember, when Rostropovich [Rostropovich, Mstislav Leopoldovich (1927): one of the greatest cellists in the world of the 20th century] and Vishnevskaya [Vishnevskaya, Galina Pavlovna (1926): singer (soprano), soloist of the Bolshoy Theater (1952-1974), moved abroad in 1974] gave Solzhenitsyn [18](#) shelter at their dacha before he was sent into exile, they were immediately enrolled on the list of those, whose names couldn't be mentioned on the air. We received such lists regularly. At one time mentioning Dunayevskiy [Isaac Dunayevskiy (1900-1955): a popular Soviet composer, Jew] wasn't allowed due to some occurrence with his son. I remember, when Kiril Kondrashyn moved abroad, his name was forbidden, though most opera performances of the Bolshoy Theater were taped, when he conducted the orchestra. And there were many such cases. [Kondrashyn, Kirill Petrovich (1914-1981): conductor, Professor of Moscow conservatory. In 1943-1956 - conductor in the Bolshoy Theater, in 1960-1975 - chief conductor of the orchestra of the Moscow philharmonic. In 1978 he moved to the Netherlands. Since 1984 an international contest of young conductors named after Kondrashyn has taken place in Amsterdam.]

I liked my job as music editor. I liked working in the record library, listening and selecting recordings of music pieces to include them in radio concerts. I also made montages of opera performances and had over 200 of them. Before a performance there was to be a story about the composer, the author of the performance, and I selected an actor to read these stories. For ten years I conducted programs about Moldovan music on the radio. Every Friday the Union of composers of Moldova had auditions of new music pieces and I always got invitations there. I spoke to many Moldovan composers. Vasiliy Zagorskiy, who was chairman of the 'Union of Composers of Moldavia,' was my friend. He's passed away, and I miss talking to him, sharing my thoughts. I also knew Tamara Cheban, a popular Moldovan singer. We met in a studio, when the Moldova choir performed on the radio: Tamara was a soloist. When her part was over, she turned her face to the choir, making funny faces and we were not to laugh since it had to be quiet in the studio. Tamara was smart and cheerful. She was the only Moldovan Prima Donna and was known all over the Soviet Union. When she was awarded the title of People's Artist, she quit the Radio committee and went to work in the philharmonic.

In the early 1960s we finally received our first two-bedroom apartment with all comforts [running water, toilet]. The Radio committee built a house for its employees. I remember that that year my daughter Tania and I went to a resort in Truskavets in Lvov region [today Ukraine] for patients with liver problems. I had liver problems and the local water 'Naftusia' was good for me. My husband stayed at home waiting for an apartment. When we returned, he met us at the railway station and took us to the new apartment without saying a word about it. My older brother Aviezer visited us in this apartment.

We didn't correspond after the war [19](#), but when Israel was established in 1948, and the USSR acknowledged it officially, there were visitors coming from there. From them I heard that Aviezer was doing well. He had a wife and two daughters: Dahlia and Esther. He was a co-owner of a small cinema theater in Tel Aviv. I didn't mention at work that I had a brother in Israel and a niece in France, fearing to lose my job in the Radio committee. I was also concerned about my husband's position and was reluctant to invite Aviezer. In the early 1960s our close acquaintance arrived and

asked me in my husband's presence: 'Can Aviezer come to visit?' I was confused, my husband hit his fist on the table: 'Why! Of course, he must!' In summer 1963 my brother was to arrive in Odessa on a boat. I secretly told my boss that my brother was visiting me from Israel and he let me go and meet him. My brothers Mikhail and David went with me. We were standing on the pier. It was crowded with people meeting their relatives and I was confused, trying to find my brother, when I heard: 'Busele!' My brother recognized me from photographs.

We came to Kishinev, and I tried to keep quiet about his arrival. There were employees of the radio committee living in the house. My brother Aviezer was surprised: 'Sister, why do we talk so quietly?' I also told him then, 'Don't you dare to go to the synagogue!' Israelis used to go to the synagogue, telling people about the synagogue. Aviezer promised me to keep silent. Once he came from the synagogue and told me that there was a meeting with a group of Israelis arranged by the town authorities. They were telling them about the wonderful reconstruction of Kishinev. 'And here I couldn't hold it longer and said 'Do come to Jerusalem, if you want to see a miracle, look at all the construction there!' I almost fell from my chair – this was how he kept his word! Once he was helping me with dishwashing and said, 'Sister, I am not a composer like your husband, or a music editor like you. But my apartment is more beautiful than yours, if you'll excuse me.' When my brothers and I went to take him to Odessa, he wanted to buy souvenirs before leaving for Israel and was surprised to see no smiles on the vendors' faces. 'Sister, aren't they interested in selling things?' When we were sitting in the harbor I felt like boasting of something – I was a Soviet person, wasn't I? I pointed at the dressed up Odessites: 'Look how well they are dressed.' 'Sister, but you have a poor life!'

My husband and I were of different nationalities, but it never caused any conflicts. We were a close family. Yevgeniy was a nice person: intelligent, kind, very natural and easy-going. You know, the more educated a person is, the easier it is to communicate with him. We got along well, though I was far more expansive. Our work drew us closer together, and I was his first critic. Once, his choir singers came to invite me to a jubilee of their choir saying: 'But you are our first critic.'

Our daughter grew up in a wonderful warm atmosphere of love. Tatiana was a 'home child.' She didn't go to kindergarten or any pioneer camps [20](#). When Tatiana was little, we had a housemaid who lived with us, did the cooking and cleaning. Her name was Vera, she came from a village. I often came to work and they weren't at home. I remember once I found them near the cemetery: Vera had a date with a soldier, and the soldier was holding Tania. When we moved to the new apartment, my neighbor, who worked as a cleaning lady in the radio committee, helped me to clean my apartment. I did the cooking myself after work and often stayed in the kitchen till late. I was a good housewife and liked inviting guests.

My brothers Mikhail and David and their families lived in Kishinev. They were accountants: Mikhail worked in the housing agency and David worked in a canteen. David and his wife Olga and Mikhail and Charna and we got together on birthdays and Soviet holidays. My friends Sara and Nesia were also with us. When we got together, I sang Jewish songs. My husband loved listening to me and played the piano for me. He also recorded my singing. I still have these recordings and also, recordings of my husband's music and his songs with the lyrics written by Moldovan authors.

We were not wealthy – I was no good at saving money, but in summer we went to resorts on the Black Sea, in Gagry. For this I always had to borrow money from my acquaintances or my brother

David. We rented a room and lay in the sun and bathed in the sea. I was always so concerned that my husband was a year and a half younger than me. When we were in Gagry, I overheard his conversation with our landlady. I went up the stairs to the house and they were still downstairs. She asked him, 'How old are you?' And he added two years, I heard. He came into the house and I asked him, 'Listen, what nonsense did you tell her?' He embraced me and said, 'But you are such a fool' ... I went to recreation homes in Yessentuki and Truskavets. After my husband died, I went to Yalta in the Crimea with my daughter.

Tatiana was a nice and quiet girl. She went to a Russian school. There was no anti-Semitism there. She had Russian, Moldovan and Jewish friends - it made no difference. Sara's daughter Taya was her best friend. They grew up together like sisters. Tatiana fell ill in the tenth grade of school. There was an X-ray to be submitted to college with all other documents, and hers showed a dark patch in her lungs. The doctors suspected tuberculosis of her lungs. My husband and I were horrified. It's hard to tell what we lived through. Our acquaintances helped us to arrange for Tatiana to stay in the tuberculosis hospital for a check up. When we were to go there to get to know the results, I was sitting in my editing office exhausted and asked my husband to go there alone. When he left, I couldn't do any work. He returned. He had a habit of jokingly commanding in a military manner. He commanded: Attention! This was so different from how I felt that I recalled a Yiddish saying: 'A goy will be a goy', when he smiled: 'Tomorrow our daughter is going home!' 'How come she's coming home?!' - 'This was a shadow of her plait!' Tatiana had gorgeous thick hair like I did when I was young. Tatiana wore it in two plaits. She forgot about one plait, when the X-ray was done.

Tatiana didn't think of becoming a doctor after finishing school. She was terribly afraid of blood. When I was preparing a chicken in the kitchen, she ran away to the farthest room. Due to this incident with a wrong diagnosis Tatiana missed her entrance exams to college and went to work as an attendant in the surgery in a hospital. In the course of this year Tatiana decided to become a doctor. We hired teachers to prepare her for the entrance exams. She went to take exams to the Pediatric College in Leningrad, the only Pediatric College in the country. Tatiana passed her exams. She and a friend of hers rented a room. She studied very well. The Soviet regime did much harm and I have my claims to it, but there were positive things as well. For example, free higher education. Tatiana finished the college and got a job assignment [21](#) to Berezniki in Perm region [today Russia]. She worked in the ambulance for three years. Then she returned to Kishinev and went to work in that same hospital where she worked as an attendant.

I wasn't assimilated, but I didn't try to move to Israel either. We are not so active: my husband, Tatiana or myself. However, Israel is a dear word for me: the Promised Land - these are not mere words for me. I remember how we listened to the BBC during the Six-Day-War [22](#). Tatiana, who was a student, used to say, 'Mama, you keep quiet!' Because I was subjective. My husband said: We won't give Jerusalem to them [Arabs]!' My brother Mikhail moved to Israel in the 1970s. I remember how his son Grigoriy went to Moscow to obtain a permit for departure and even asked Sakharov [23](#) for help. I remember that we didn't go to the railway station to see Mikhail and his family off since we were afraid. My brother understood it. He knew it might cause problems at work. In the 1980s Grigoriy married an American Jewish woman and they moved to Philadelphia in the USA.



In 1972 my dear friend Sara died. Nesia and I looked after her in the hospital in her last days. Before she died, Sara said to her husband Yakov and Nesia, who was single: 'Stay together' and Nesia and Yakov got married four years later. Later they moved to Israel.

My husband and I lived together for 33 years. He died from his third heart attack in 1979. I was a pensioner [in the Soviet Union the pension age was 55], but I still worked. I worked for the radio for 30 years. My boss was the wife of Petru Zadnipro [1927-1976], a Moldovan poet. She was a terrible anti-Semite. She didn't promote me to senior editor, though de facto I was a senior editor. When she became a widow, she used to come to me at work. I am not a rancorous person. We became friends and even used to have a drink together. I joked: 'Besides being a zhydovka, [abusive term for Jewish women], I became a drunkard.'

Tatiana didn't get married for a long time. She grew up in this kind of family and had high standards. She refused all her admirers. Once she went to do an inspection in a district hospital where she met her future husband Vladimir Kasymov. He fell in love with her and waited for her consent for eight years. I liked him a lot and wanted Tatiana to marry him. She gave her consent in 1990. In 1991 her son was born and she named him Yevgeniy after her father. After their son was born they went to the registry office to register their marriage. I was waiting outside with Zhenechka [affectionate for Yevgeniy] in his pram. When they registered their marriage, Vladimir asked the master of ceremony, 'Would you like to see our son?' and she replied, 'I would'. She came to look at the baby.

Tatiana and Vladimir rented an apartment before they moved into Sara Shlimovich's daughter Taya's apartment, after she moved to Israel with her family. Taya left her apartment and everything in it to Tatiana. My brother Mikhail and relatives in Israel partially compensated Taya for this apartment. My brothers always tried to help, whenever they could. David died in 1999 in Kishinev, and Mikhail died in Philadelphia in 2002.

During perestroika [24](#) Christian and Frania visited Kishinev and made me a surprise, bringing my niece Monique with them. I told Monique about her mother and Monique got attached to me and Tatiana. I also love her dearly. She visited us three times. Monique studies Russian to be able to talk to us. When I talk with her on the phone, I really get exhausted. Unfortunately, I lost contact with Aviezer's daughters and grandchildren. They don't know Russian or Yiddish, and I almost forgot Hebrew and it's hard to communicate.

I knew little about the revival of Jewish life in Kishinev in the 1990s. I didn't even know about Hesed [25](#). However, they found me and put me on the lists of Hesed. I became an active member of the community, particularly since I knew Hebrew and can sing Jewish songs. I attend the warm house where I told my aunt Zelda's story and sang Jewish songs. However, lately I've felt ill twice due to the spasm of vessels. I don't leave home alone. A few times a month they send a car to take me to the warm house. I pay for the apartment and utility fees from my pension. I refused the food packages since it is hard for me to cook. I am 85 years old. Hesed delivers dinners for me at home twice a week. I have these trousers and slippers from Hesed. My posh quilt blanket is also from Hesed. I mean to say my well-being is Hesed.

My grandson Yevgeniy knows that on his mother's side he is a Jew. He studies in a Moldovan school by the German system of Waldorf. [The aim of Waldorf schooling is to educate the whole child, "head, heart and hands."] He is a talented boy. He knows Moldovan and German. He's been in a



Jewish camp twice. I asked him, 'How are the Jewish children? – and he replied, 'Grandma, there are many Jewish boys like me there.'

## Glossary

### **1 Khrushchovka**

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

### **2 Bessarabia**

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

### **3 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.

### **4 Sholem Aleichem (pen name of Shalom Rabinovich (1859-1916))**

Yiddish author and humorist, a prolific writer of novels, stories, feuilletons, critical reviews, and poem in Yiddish, Hebrew and Russian. He also contributed regularly to Yiddish dailies and weeklies. In his writings he described the life of Jews in Russia, creating a gallery of bright characters. His creative work is an alloy of humor and lyricism, accurate psychological and details of everyday life. He founded a literary Yiddish annual called Di Yidishe Folksbibliotek (The Popular Jewish Library), with which he wanted to raise the despised Yiddish literature from its mean status and at the same time to fight authors of trash literature, who dragged Yiddish literature to the lowest popular level. The first volume was a turning point in the history of modern Yiddish literature. Sholem Aleichem died in New York in 1916. His popularity increased beyond the Yiddish-speaking public after his death. Some of his writings have been translated into most European languages and his plays and dramatic versions of his stories have been performed in many countries. The dramatic version of Tevye the Dairyman became an international hit as a musical (Fiddler on the Roof) in the 1960s.

## **5 Hasid**

The follower of the Hasidic movement, a Jewish mystic movement founded in the 18th century that reacted against Talmudic learning and maintained that God's presence was in all of one's surroundings and that one should serve God in one's every deed and word. The movement provided spiritual hope and uplifted the common people. There were large branches of Hasidic movements and schools throughout Eastern Europe before World War II, each following the teachings of famous scholars and thinkers. Most had their own customs, rituals and life styles. Today there are substantial Hasidic communities in New York, London, Israel and Antwerp.

## **6 Tarbut schools**

Elementary, secondary and technical schools maintained by the Hebrew educational and cultural organization called Tarbut. Most Eastern European countries had such schools between the two world wars but there were especially many in Poland. The language of instruction was Hebrew and the education was Zionist oriented.

## **7 Keren Kayemet Leisrael (K**

K.L.): Jewish National Fund (JNF) founded in 1901 at the Fifth Zionist Congress in Basel. From its inception, the JNF was charged with the task of fundraising in Jewish communities for the purpose of purchasing land in the Land of Israel to create a homeland for the Jewish people. After 1948 the fund was used to improve and afforest the territories gained. Every Jewish family that wished to help the cause had a JNF money box, called the 'blue box'. They threw in at least one lei each day, while on Sabbath and high holidays they threw in as many lei as candles they lit for that holiday. This is how they partly used to collect the necessary funds. Now these boxes are known worldwide as a symbol of Zionism.

## **8 Hashomer Hatzair in Poland**

From 1918 Hashomer Hatzair operated throughout Poland, with its headquarters in Warsaw. It emphasized the ideological and vocational training of future settlers in Palestine and personal development in groups. Its main aim was the creation of a socialist Jewish state in Palestine. Initially it was under the influence of the Zionist Organization in Poland, of which it was an autonomous part. In the mid-1920s it broke away and joined the newly established World Scouting Union, Hashomer Hatzair. In 1931 it had 22,000 members in Poland organized in 262 'nests' (Heb. 'ken'). During the occupation it conducted clandestine operations in most ghettos. One of its members was Mordechaj Anielewicz, who led the rising in the Warsaw ghetto. After the war it operated legally in Poland as a party, part of the He Halutz. It was disbanded by the communist authorities in 1949.

## **9 Revisionist Zionism**

The movement founded in 1925 and led by Vladimir Jabotinsky advocated the revision of the principles of Political Zionism developed by Theodor Herzl, the father of Zionism. The main goals of the Revisionists was to put pressure on Great Britain for a Jewish statehood on both banks of the

Jordan River, a Jewish majority in Palestine, the reestablishment of the Jewish regiments, and military training for the youth. The Revisionist Zionists formed the core of what became the Herut (Freedom) Party after the Israeli independence. This party subsequently became the central component of the Likud Party, the largest right-wing Israeli party since the 1970s.

## **10 Jabotinsky, Vladimir (1880-1940)**

Founder and leader of the Revisionist Zionist movement; soldier, orator and a prolific author writing in Hebrew, Russian, and English. During World War I he established and served as an officer in the Jewish Legion, which fought in the British army for the liberation of the Land of Israel from Turkish rule. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Keren Hayesod, the financial arm of the World Zionist Organization, founded in London in 1920, and was later elected to the Zionist Executive. He resigned in 1923 in protest over Chaim Weizmann's pro-British policy and founded the Revisionist Zionist movement and the Betar youth movement two years later. Jabotinsky also founded the ETZEL (National Military Organization) during the 1936-39 Arab rebellion in Palestine.

## **11 Iron Guard**

Extreme right wing political organization in Romania between 1930-1941, led by C. Z. Codreanu. The Iron Guard propagated nationalist, Christian-mystical and anti-Semitic views. It was banned for its terrorist activities (e.g. the murder of Romanian prime minister I. Gh. Duca) in 1933. In 1935 it was re-established as a party named 'Everything for the Fatherland', but it was banned again in 1938. It was part of the government in the first period of the Antonescu regime, but it was then banned and dissolved as a result of the unsuccessful coup d'état of January 1941. Its leaders escaped abroad to the Third Reich.

## **12 Cuzist**

Member of the Romanian Fascist organization named after Alexandru C. Cuza, one of the most fervent fascist leaders in Romania, who was known for his ruthless chauvinism and anti-Semitism. In 1919 Cuza founded the LANC, which became the National Christian Party in 1935 with an anti-Semitic program.

## **13 Annexation of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union**

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

## **14 Labor army**

it was made up of men of call-up age not trusted to carry firearms by the Soviet authorities. Such people were those living on the territories annexed by the USSR in 1940 (Eastern Poland, the Baltic States, parts of Karelia, Bessarabia and northern Bukovina) as well as ethnic Germans living in the Soviet Union proper. The labor army was employed for carrying out tough work, in the woods or in

mines. During the first winter of the war, 30 percent of those drafted into the labor army died of starvation and hard work. The number of people in the labor army decreased sharply when the larger part of its contingent was transferred to the national Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian Corps, created at the beginning of 1942. The remaining labor detachments were maintained up until the end of the war.

### **15 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.

### **16 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.

### **17 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.

### **18 Solzhenitsyn, Alexander (1918-)**

Russian novelist and publicist. He spent eight years in prisons and labor camps, and three more years in enforced exile. After the publication of a collection of his short stories in 1963, he was denied further official publication of his work, and so he circulated them clandestinely, in samizdat publications, and published them abroad. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1970 and was exiled from the Soviet Union in 1974 after publishing his famous book, *The Gulag*

Archipelago, in which he describes Soviet labor camps.

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

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

### **20 All-Union pioneer organization**

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

### **21 Mandatory job assignment in the USSR**

Graduates of higher educational institutions had to complete a mandatory two-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.

### **22 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.

### **23 Sakharov, Andrey Dimitrievich (1921-1989)**

Soviet nuclear physicist, academician and human rights advocate; the first Soviet citizen to receive the Nobel Peace Prize (1975). He was part of the team constructing the Soviet hydrogen bomb and received the prize 'Hero of the Socialist Labor' three times. In the 1960s and 70s he grew to be the leader of human rights fights in the Soviet Union. In 1980 he was expelled and sent to Gorkiy from where he was allowed to return to Moscow in 1986, after Gorbachev's rise to power. He remained a leading spokesman for human rights and political and economic reform until his death in 1989.

### **24 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.

## **25 Hesed**

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