

# Ida Voliovich

Ida Voliovich

Kishinev

Moldova

Interviewer: Zhanna Litinskaya

Date of interview: July 2004

*Ida Voliovich readily gave her consent to meet me for this interview. She lives in a two-bedroom apartment on the top floor of a nine-storied building in a new district of Kishinev [Chisinau in Moldovan]. Ida has recently renovated her apartment. She has new furniture and appliances: a Japanese TV set and modern kitchen appliances. There are pictures on the walls and stuffed animals all around: Ida's husband was a passionate hunter. Ida looks young for her age, though she is already 84. However, she has a nice dressing gown on, her hair is neatly done and her nails manicured and polished. Ida gives me a warm welcome and offers me a cup of coffee. Ida speaks very distinctly and adds clear comparisons and descriptions to her story. It was almost midnight when we called it a day.*

*We called Ida Voliovich again in November to ask her a few questions to add to her story, but unfortunately her son told us that Ida had passed away on 24th October 2004.*

[My family background](#)

[Growing up](#)

[During the war](#)

[After the war](#)

[Glossary](#)

## My family background

My name is Ida Voliovich. Voliovich is my maiden name that I never changed; being the only bearer of this rare Jewish surname left, I decided to preserve the memory of my father. In 1903 a tragedy happened in my father's family: My grandfather Kelman Voliovich was born in the 1830-1840s in the Bessarabian [1](#) town of Orgeyev [Orhei in Moldovan] and spent his youth there. Later he and my grandmother Hina, a few years younger than him, moved to Kishinev, where Kelman became a grain dealer, a wealthy and respected man. My grandfather owned a big three-storied house in the center of the town, on Gostinaya Street [today Schmidtoskaya Street]. Grandmother Hina took care of the children and the household. She had housemaids to help her around. They were a religious family. My grandfather had a seat in the synagogue of butchers [there were 65 synagogues and prayer houses in Kishinev before 1940. There were bigger synagogues for all and smaller synagogues: a synagogue of tailors, leather tanners, butchers, etc. maintained by guild unions], a big and beautiful one, on Izmailskaya Street. My grandfather got along well with his Jewish and Moldovan neighbors, never refusing to lend them money or give advice.

Therefore, when on the Pesach day in 1903 [2](#) his neighbor and his Ukrainian friend, who had arrived from Nikolaev the day before, came into his yard, Kelman went towards them, to greet his guests. And his daughters Ita and Hava, young beautiful girls with long black hair, came out with him. However, their neighbors, who were intoxicated by alcohol, didn't come there with good intentions – they knew that Jews were being beaten and robbed in the town and wanted to take advantage of Kelman's wealth. When they saw the girls, they went for them. Grandfather stood up for his daughters. The 'good neighbors' beat him mercilessly, and the man from Nikolaev, whose name was Pyotr Kaverin, struck my grandfather on his head with an iron bar. Grandfather Kelman was taken to the Jewish hospital where all victims of this 'Bloody Easter' were taken. He died the following day. The bandits raped the girls and beat Ita brutally – she was ill for a while afterward.

For a long time after that there were feathers and down from the torn pillows flying around. There was blood on the walls of houses in Kishinev, where public representatives, including Nahman Bialik [3](#), a Jewish poet, and Vladimir Korolenko [4](#), a great Russian writer and humanist, arrived after this brutal pogrom. There is still no truthful information about who had provoked this pogrom. However, it is well known that the tsarist regime benefited from the situation [Editor's note: The majority of the population of tsarist Russia lived in miserable poverty. There were revolts and uprisings against the existing regime and the government didn't mind that people's anger turned against Jews, who were always believed to be to blame for the hardships of people's life. Therefore, the authorities supported the pogrom makers by silent observation from aside and imposed no sanctions on them]. The murderers of my grandfather got away with what they had done. My uncle Simkha Voliovich sued them, but the trial issued the 'not guilty' verdict, based on false testimony of bribed witnesses, and the murderer Kaverin went back to Nikolaev, where I guess he lived a long life afterward. It was not before the mid-1990s that I discovered the opinion of one jury member in the archive, who gave a detailed description of how false the testimony was and expressed his disagreement with the verdict, but this didn't affect the final decision.

This terrible disaster shook the family. Grandmother Hina died shortly after the pogrom. The sisters Ita and Hava recovered physically, but their moral condition was terrible. They never got married. The whole town was aware that the girls had been raped and there were no young men, suitable from the point of their social standing, willing to marry them. They also rejected those young men, who had a lower status than their family. This was a family tragedy. According to Jewish traditions older sisters were to be the first to get married and since they never did, the rest of the children couldn't get married either.

There were seven children in the family. They were not religious any longer in their adulthood, I must say. They were educated and secular people. David Voliovich, the oldest son, born in the 1860s, moved to America in the 1910s. This is all the information we had about David. He never wrote a single letter, and I don't even know whether he ever reached America.

The brothers Srul, Simkha and Lazar remained unmarried. Srul, born in the 1870s, finished a cheder. He assisted his father in the grain trade and took over the family business after Kelman died. Srul was a sickly person. He died in the mid-1930s.

Grandfather Kelman came from a small town, Orgeyev, from a poor family. I can't be sure, but I don't think he studied elsewhere besides a cheder. I would think he was a smart person and kept learning to become a successful and respectable man. He wanted his children to get education and

took every effort to implement this dream of his. Simkha and Lazar got a good education abroad. Simkha was a pharmacist. A few years after the tragedy, Simkha moved to Belgium. He lived and worked in Brussels. Simkha often wrote to us and sent us parcels. During World War II my uncle participated in the Belgian resistance movement and perished.

Lazar Voliovich, born in 1886, finished the Geneva Medical College, returned to his parents' home in Kishinev and opened a private office. During World War I Lazar was a doctor in a regiment. In 1940, when the Soviet power was established in Kishinev, he was summoned to the NKVD [5](#) office. He was accused of having been a colonel of the tsarist army, but Lazar replied with his common humor that a doctor in a regiment wasn't quite the same as a colonel. Lazar was a popular children's doctor in Kishinev and they left him alone.

The old residents in Kishinev still have grateful memories about my uncle: Lazar helped them and their children, where other doctors were helpless. There were always people crowding before the door to his office. He earned well and was a rather wealthy man. Lazar also worked for free in the Jewish hospital and was a consultant in the hospital of the Jewish Health Care Society established by the Joint [6](#) in Kishinev in the 1920s. Lazar lived with his sisters Ita and Hava, supporting and assisting them. During the Great Patriotic War [7](#) he and his sisters evacuated to Central Asia near Bukhara, and after the war they returned home. Hava died in the early 1950s, Ita died in 1960, and Doctor Lazar Voliovich died a few years later. They were buried in the town cemetery in Kishinev.

My father Moishe, born in 1883, assisted his father in the grain trade. He studied in cheder like his brothers. Moishe was raised to respect Jewish traditions like his brothers and sisters. So his brothers and sisters were shocked when he got married after the pogrom, ignoring the tradition. He was head over heels in love with my mother, whom he had known before the pogrom.

My mother's family was also wealthy. Grandfather Itl Kniazher, born in Kishinev in the 1850s, owned a butcher's shop, the first one in the butchers' line at the biggest market in Kishinev on Armianskaya Street. My grandfather had an employee to cut meat, and my grandmother Nesia was also there helping my grandfather. She was a cashier since she wouldn't have entrusted counting money to anybody else. My grandmother was a beauty, when she was young. She married my fifteen-year-old grandfather, when she was just thirteen. She was still young and strong, when their children grew up. She had a stern and strong character, more masculine than my grandfather's. My grandfather Itl had died before I was born.

The Kniazher family lived in a big apartment of a two-storied building on Podolskaya Street. The synagogue of butchers was located on Izmailskaya Street, where Grandfather Kelman went, not far from where Itl lived, so my father may have met my mother at the synagogue. [Editor's note: Men and women are seated separately in synagogues. She may have seen him there, however, the meeting couldn't have taken place inside the building.] My grandfather and grandmother went to the synagogue and observed Jewish traditions, followed the kashrut and celebrated Saturday [Sabbath]. However, business came first with my grandfather, so the family didn't consider it a sin to sell meat to their customers on Saturday. Grandmother Nesia died in the early 1930s.

There was one son and a few daughters in the family. Ruvim, the oldest, born in 1870, took over my grandfather Itl's store after he died. Ruvim died in the late 1930s. His older son Monia, who had been ill since childhood, also died in about this same period. His wife Leya, their daughter Nina and son Israel evacuated during the Great Patriotic War and after the war they returned to Kishinev.

Nina died shortly after the war. Israel lives in Israel. He has a wonderful family, and we keep in touch.

The daughters were beauties. Ita, the oldest one, born in the early 1870s, a very beautiful girl, married a much older wealthy Jew at the age of 14 or 15. Her husband took her to Moscow where Ita had a son. This is all I know about Ita or her son, except that she died at the age of 28, long before I was born.

Riva, the next daughter, also married a wealthy Jewish man. His surname was Tsymsher. They moved to Moscow before the Revolution of 1917 [8](#). Riva died before the Great Patriotic War, and her two sons, whose names I don't remember, returned from the front and lived in Moscow.

Polia married a wealthy Jewish doctor. I don't remember his name. They moved to the Soviet Union in the 1920s, when Bessarabia was still under the Romanian rule [9](#). I don't know any details, though I know that many families were moving to Russia at that time by bribing frontier men. Polia and her son Joseph lived in Moscow. I visited them there in the 1950s. They were rather wealthy. Joseph was involved in commerce and Polia had all kinds of delicacies on her table. My son couldn't tear himself from the food. Polia died in the late 1950s. Joseph has also passed away. His son Edward lives in Israel.

Betia was the only one of them to get university education: she finished a Dental College in Moscow. She worked in Moscow till she turned 80. Her family name was Orik. I have had no contacts with her son Boris: he was also involved in commerce like Joseph.

Tsypa, the next sister, was the ugliest of all the sisters. She married Samuel Rozenzweig from Kishinev, and they moved to the lovely Romanian town of Braila on the Danube where she lived till 1940. [Braila is a major Danubian port in Romania.] Samuel owned a big store and they were very wealthy. Their daughter Ida, named after Grandfather Itl, finished a gymnasium [Editor's note: probably 'gymnasium' refers to the former school system used to be called 'lyceum.' in 1939 and studied at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of Bucharest University.

In 1940 the Rozenzweig family moved to Kishinev, immediately after the Soviet power was established [10](#). They had hopes for a better and more just life. [Editor's note: Most probably they fled from the large-scale pogroms in Romania, lead by the pseudo-Fascist organization of the Iron Guard.] Of course, they regretted it almost at once, but they couldn't go back. Ida moved to her uncle in Odessa to continue her studies. Tsypa refused to evacuate. She and her husband perished in the Kishinev ghetto [11](#). My cousin Ida evacuated to Alma-Ata [today Kazakhstan] where she graduated from university and moved to Moscow to her aunt Betia. In Moscow Ida married a Jewish man from Bessarabia, who worked in the editor's office of a magazine. Ida became a Romanian and French teacher and wrote a few textbooks. She died in the mid-1990s. Her son Alexandr lives in Canada.

Sonia, the youngest and the most beautiful of all sisters, married Isaac Bein, a pianist, who became a wonderful conductor and worked in the opera in Bucharest until 1940. They moved to Kishinev in 1940, after the Soviet power was established. He conducted our symphonic orchestra before the Great Patriotic War. He evacuated to Central Asia with the Philharmonic. From there he moved to Moscow where Isaac became the conductor of the orchestras of two popular theaters: Stanislavskiy and Nemirovich-Danchenko Theaters [12](#). At the age of 90 he established an opera team in the

huge machine-building plant named after Likhachev, the Likhachev plant [13](#). Sonia and her family lived in a small room in a communal apartment [14](#). Sonia was very kind and happy about anything they had in life. She died an instant death from a heart attack in the early 1980s. In 1989 Sonia's daughter Mariam died. Isaac died in the 1990s.

My mother, Leya Kniazher, was the same age as my father. She studied in a Russian gymnasium in Kishinev, but she never finished it for some reason that I don't know. She knew Russian, though at home the family spoke Yiddish. Mama had a wonderful voice, which was common in the Kniazher family. She sang Jewish songs beautifully. They still sound in my heart, though I can't repeat any due to my lack of musical talents. Mama was helping her mother about the house before she met my father. She and my father were bound with real deep love, 'until the coffin,' as was commonly said at the time. Fortunately, the Kniazher family didn't suffer from the pogrom.

I don't know how soon after my grandfather Kelman Voliovich died my parents got married, but in 1904 they were already married. They never told me anything about their wedding. By the way, I heard about the family tragedy and my grandfather's death from my uncle Lazar, when I was already a grown up. I discovered the details in the archives in Kishinev in the 1990s. My parents probably wanted to keep the cruel story secret from me. Considering that the Kniazher family was also very religious, my parents must have had a traditional wedding with a chuppah at the synagogue of butchers. However, no relatives on my father's side attended the wedding: his brothers and sisters repudiated him for ignoring the tradition. He studied the profession of a stockjobber and this became the job of his lifetime. Stockjobbers worked and stayed at a café on Alexandrovskaya Street, which was actually their office, where they made all their deals.

After the wedding my parents settled in a small apartment that my mother's parents rented for them. They were rather poor, I'd say. A stockjobber's life depended on many factors: crops, weather, price rates, political situation, etc. The life of our family was like a boat shaken by the waves. In some years my father earned all right, bought my mother expensive clothes and hired housemaids, and at other times Mama had to pawn our silver crockery for Pesach.

My mama's first child died in infancy and so did the second one. The third son, born in 1907 and named Kelman after my grandfather, reconciled my father's relations with his family. This was when my father's sisters and brothers opened the doors of their house to my parents. However, they didn't let my father join in the family business or have a part of what they had inherited from their parents.

After Kelman, my mother had a few miscarriages. Then in 1920, 13 years after my brother was born, I came into this world. I was named after my deceased grandfather Itl; the name of Ida sounds a lot like Itl. I remember my wonderful childhood. I remember our apartment on Alexandrovskaya Street [Lenin Street during the Soviet period and Stefan cel Mare at present], number 51a. I remember this particularly well since there was a lovely confectionary at number 51, on the corner of Izmailoskaya Street. We often went there, and its owner, a handsome Russian man with a big beard, attended to us. There were Jewish, Russian, Greek and Armenian store owners in Kishinev.

The owner of our house was Danovich, a Jewish man, a big manufacturer. He owned a down and feather manufacture, and there was a feather storage facility in our yard. Our small apartment was far to the back of the yard. There were two rooms and a kitchen in our apartment. There was a

common toilet in the yard. There were Jewish and Moldovan families in our house. The children played in the yard, going home just for a meal. There was no national segregation from what I can remember. There was a croquet site in our yard.

## Growing up

My friend was Mira Argiyevskaya, the daughter of our Moldovan neighbors. Her father was a barber. The boys Misha and Andryusha, the sons of our Ukrainian neighbor Kozhukhar, were also friends with us. My most loved friend Tzylia Blinder, a Jewish girl, lived in an apartment in the back of the yard. Her father owned a shoe shop where he had about ten employees working for him. The Khodorovskiye brother and sister, living in the house next to ours, became my lifelong friends. Danovich was a wealthy man and his daughters were older. We only followed them as they walked by, wearing fashionable gowns.

My parents loved me dearly and my father just adored me. My brother Kelman, or Koma, as we called him at home, studied in Chernovtsy [today Ukraine]. My brother entered the Medical Faculty there, but after he visited the dissection room for the first time, he realized medicine wasn't for him and switched to the Law Faculty. My parents also got along well with our neighbors. My father was an extraordinarily kind man and many people even took advantage of this feature of his. When he was carrying two chickens home before Sabbath, a poor man would approach him saying, 'Moishe, you have two chickens and I have none,' and my father didn't hesitate to give him one chicken. My mother was also very kind. There was always a poor man joining us for Sabbath. We also followed the kashrut. Mama strictly followed kosher rules and never entrusted cooking to anyone else. At the same time my parents were modern people. Mama didn't cover her hair. My father only wore a kippah to go to the synagogue. He also had his tallit and tefillin to take with him.

I liked Jewish holidays very much. Pesach was my favorite. Mama started scrubbing, cleaning and washing long before the holiday. She took expensive Pesach crockery and cutlery from a box, and at the times when my father didn't earn well and Mama had pawned the crockery, she koshered our everyday crockery by boiling it in a tub. We always had guests at the table: they were Jewish soldiers from the town garrison. This was a custom with Jewish families. This allowed following the tradition [You are supposed to have guests at the table at Pesach] and also, the soldiers had a chance to celebrate the holiday. Since my brother was in Chernovtsy, I asked my father the four traditional questions and then looked for the afikoman to get a gift for finding it. We left a glass of wine for Elijah ha-nevi, and I couldn't fall asleep, when I was small, fearing that the door would open at any moment to let the Prophet in.

I also liked Purim. I liked hamantashen: little pies with poppy seeds that my mother baked, but I liked fluden even more; waffles with layers of honey and nuts. On this holiday the rules required giving treats to the poor. There was a poor shoemaker Shir with his two daughters living across the street from us. They had no mother. Mama always sent me to them with a tray full of delicacies and I enjoyed doing this chore. I remember getting to their house across the snowdrifts one winter, when there was a lot of snow in Kishinev. When I studied in the gymnasium, we, the girls, used to arrange Purimspiel performances at somebody's home.

There were beautiful holidays in fall – Rosh Hashanah, when we had delicious fruit, apples and honey. I also remember Yom Kippur. My father bought a hen and I went to the synagogue, where the rabbi conducted the kapores ritual, turning a hen over my head. Then I took the hen to the



shochet, watching him hanging it on a hook to have the blood drip out of it. My parents always fasted on Yom Kippur. I remember the nice holiday of Sukkot. We didn't have a sukkah, but before the holiday an attendant from the synagogue dropped branches onto the floor in our apartment. My father brought lemons [the interviewee probably means etrog], figs and some strange looking beans. We also visited our neighbors Khodorkovskiye in their sukkah. I had all these holidays in my childhood, but later I switched to other interests.

At the age of about six I was sent to the Jewish elementary school near the synagogue on Izmailovskaya Street. When I fell ill with measles, I had to stay home for some time, but I never went back to the Jewish school. I was a very independent girl and I was full of energy. Mira Argiyevskaya, who was two years older than me, studied in a special applied science school at the Pedagogical School. This school was established in 1919, when many Romanian intellectuals moved to Bessarabia to organize Romanian schools, vocational schools and colleges to improve the educational system. [The reason for this was to introduce the Romanian language in public as well as higher education in the previous Russian province].

The secondary school at the Pedagogical College was absolutely similar to Romanian rural schools. Students of the Pedagogical College were trained in this school as well. Florika Nizu, the headmistress of this school, was one of the developers of the educational system in Bessarabia. There was grade one and grade three in one classroom [there are usually no more than ten children of the same age in a village, and for this reason children of several grades studied together in one classroom, due to lack of facilities and teachers]. Besides, girls and boys studied together, while in Kishinev there were separate schools for boys and for girls. Florika Nizu interviewed me and approved my admission. They didn't even ask my nationality. They treated me well at school. The pupil's success was what mattered rather than his or her nationality. There were Moldovan, Russian and Jewish children at school. Quite a few known people finished this school. Thus, Mira's classmate was Lusia Shliahov, who became a well-known physicist in Israel and the USA. All nationalities were respected at school.

When I turned eleven, I started earning money. Uncle Ruvim's neighbors asked me to give private classes to their daughter, who was rather stupid. I prepared her for the first grade. In 1931 I finished elementary school. I tried to enter the state gymnasium where education was free, though they gave preference to Moldovan girls from rural areas to have them work in their villages later. It's not that they didn't admit Jews, but I'd rather say, they wanted to get bribes from them. So it happened that I failed to enter this gymnasium, despite my excellent marks from the elementary school. Florika Nizu helped me again. Her husband was the director of the French gymnasium and he helped me to enter it.

This gymnasium for girls was of shared private and state ownership and they charged a minimal educational fee in it. We studied French and many subjects were taught in French too. Our classroom tutors only addressed us in French. I still have a very good command of French. There were many Jewish girls in this gymnasium. When Christian girls were having their religion class, Jewish girls went to the Jewish history class. Our teacher was Yakov Miaskovskiy. I made new friends at the gymnasium. My favorite teacher of Mathematics, Nadezhda Kristoforovna, who was Greek, became my closest friend. I finished the fourth grade of the gymnasium in 1935.

By this time we'd moved house. My brother Kelman finished the Law Faculty, had two years of practice with one of the best lawyers of the town of Soroca, returned to Kishinev and decided to open a law office in town. My father either earned or borrowed money for him from Uncle Lazar, and shortly afterward we moved to a big four-room apartment on Benderskaya Street, across the street from the market. This was a big beautiful house with a front-door entrance. There was a dining room, a bedroom, my brother's office and his bedroom in the apartment. I slept in the living room.

On the evening of 5th March 1935 my father rang the doorbell and I opened the door. He got into the room and complained of feeling ill. I ran to notify Uncle Lazar, who lived nearby, but when we rushed back, my father was already dead. We sat seven days of mourning after he died [shivah]. I remember that we made cuts on our collars. I cried, but one has to stop crying one day. I decided to read instead – the rules allowed it. I read 'The Insulted and Injured' by Dostoevsky [15](#).

When my father died, I realized that I had to get a good education – I was responsible for my mother. I decided to enter the Romanian gymnasium, the so-called Liceul 'Principesa Natalia Dadiani' ['Princess Natalia Dadiani's Lyceum']. Princess Dadiani was a Russian lady from Bendery, a Moldovan town. She became a Princess after marrying a Georgian Prince. Before getting married she was a teacher of biology in the gymnasium, but when she became rich, she decided to open a state-run Russian gymnasium. She invited well-known architects to build this gymnasium, which houses the Museum of Arts nowadays. Princess Dadiani died at the age of 38 in 1903, but the gymnasium named after her prospered. It was a Russian gymnasium before it became a Romanian gymnasium in 1919. The Russian teachers, who had a command of the Romanian language continued to work. The director was Raisa Galina, a Russian lady.

I passed exams for the fourth grade and was admitted to the fourth grade of the gymnasium. I submitted the so-called 'certificate of poverty,' confirming that I was an orphan, to obtain exemption from educational fees. Jewish girls constituted almost half of the class and I made lifelong friends there. In those years Bessarabia was rapidly switching to the Romanian language in all spheres of life. My mother tongue was Russian and I communicated with other girls in Russian. However, I also understood Yiddish, since my mama and father spoke their native language to one another at times. I also knew Romanian. There were notes 'Speak Romanian' in public places, state offices, big stores and markets or in the streets.

We wore uniforms: black robes with collars and the letters LPD – Princess Dadiani Lyceum and our numbers embroidered on them. Once, my friend Zina Kogan and I spoke Russian, when we came out of the gymnasium. A teacher of the gymnasium for boys and secretary of the scout organization was passing by. He didn't say anything to us, but on the following day our headmistress Raisa Galina invited us to her office and told us off slightly for speaking Russian. She apologized and suspended us from the gymnasium for a week. We were happy – we had a whole week for doing nothing and reading our favorite books. We read a lot of books by Russian and foreign writers. There was a library of salesclerks nearby and it had a nice collection of books. [Probably, as for the above mentioned synagogues, this library was also maintained by a guild.]

Mama often felt ill after my father died. She became secluded and stayed at home, saying little. My brother Kelman got married: This was a real marriage of convenience. He married Dora Fridman, a wealthy, but stupid and ugly woman. He also had a mistress. My brother named his son Mikhail



after our father. My brother supported us, but he couldn't give us more money, having to ask his wife each time. I started giving private lessons. There were two stupid Moldovan girls in my class – one was a daughter of a bishop, and the other one – a daughter of a merchant. The girls' parents paid me 500 Lei for my doing their homework with them [at that time the average wage of a worker in Romania constituted 1500-2000 Lei per month, this was sufficient to have a good life. To go to the cinema cost 18 Lei, a kilo of bread about 10 Lei and a tram ticket cost 3 Lei]. This was sufficient for my mother and me. I also gave lessons to other girls.

I made a number of friends in the French gymnasium. There were Jewish, Russian, Moldovan friends: Chara Shapiro, Marah Itkis, Yakov Sorokin, an excellent violinist, the Ukrainian Nikolay Sadnyuk and the Moldovan Anatoliy Bezhan. We had common interests. Rahmil Portnoy, a wonderful, smart and well-educated person, a lawyer and philologist, who lived in our town, tried to give his knowledge to young people and interest them in literature and culture. He established a club that we attended twice a week to study literature. He read to us in Yiddish, since we couldn't read Yiddish – Sholem Aleichem [16](#), and other Jewish writers. He analyzed the works of Russian and foreign men of letters too. I called him 'Behelfer,' a teacher in the best meaning of this word in Yiddish.

Fascism spread in Romania in the late 1930s, Fascist parties appeared – the Cuzists [17](#), and the Legionary Movement [18](#), propagating racial hatred. A bunch of my friends got gradually involved in anti-Fascist activities. We joined an underground Komsomol [19](#) organization [Editor's note: There was no Komsomol organization in Bessarabia before the Soviet power was established in 1940, perhaps this was the organization of supporters of the Komsomol, since members identified themselves as Komsomol activists], supporting the MOPR [International Organization for Aid to Revolutionary Fighters] [20](#). Our major goal was political education. We read the classical works of Marxism-Leninism: proletariat and Soviet writers that agents from Moscow supplied. We were also responsible for distribution of flyers propagating Communist ideas and describing successes of the USSR. Besides, we collected money for political prisoners kept in Romanian jails. I asked my wealthier friends to make contributions and they asked their parents to give them money. These contributions were sent to prison to pay for provision of hot meals for prisoners. We were fond of Socialist ideas, believed in Communism and in our bright future. We didn't know about the arrests and persecutions in the Soviet Union [Great Terror] [21](#), and believed that the socialist society was perfect.

My mother and I grew further and further apart from each other. She was still grieving over the loss of my father and didn't notice that I had new friends and different interests. I didn't care about Jewish traditions any longer, while my mother demanded that I observe them. However, my mother with her attachment to traditions unwittingly saved me from being arrested. One day in spring 1938 we appointed a mass meeting out of town. My friends observed strict conspiracy, but there was a provocateur among us. All those who went to the meeting were arrested, but I wasn't there. This day was Friday and my mother insisted that I washed my hair, dressed up and celebrated Sabbath with her. I begged Mama to let me go, but she didn't give up. Her mother's heart must have had a premonition.

Chara's mother didn't allow Chara to go there either. My friends Tsylia Blinder, Mara Itkis, Yakov Sorokin and Anatoliy Bezhan were arrested. They were sentenced to one year in the colony for the under-aged. Besides, they were expelled from the gymnasium without the right to return there

after serving their sentence. My friends didn't betray me and I wasn't even summoned to interrogations. I was afraid that my friends might suspect that I was the provocateur, but fortunately, this never occurred to them. One year later they were released and we were reunited. This was a wonderful time: we were young, full of hopes, attractive and in love. I was seeing a Jewish guy – Yakov Grossman. We spent our vacations in a big company of friends. We traveled to spend time in Budacu de Sus [Transylvania, Western Romania], and had a great time there.

I finished the gymnasium in 1939 and was awarded the Bachelor's degree. [This degree is not the equivalent of BA in the United States, it's a high school graduation certificate.] I passed a very important exam in front of a commission from Romania. Its chairman was Domnul ['Sir' in Romanian] Votetz, professor from the Iasi University [Iasi University named after A. Kuza, Romania, was founded in 1860. The Iasi University was an important educational center. Its scientific and educational achievements were highly valued and acknowledged in Romania.] My first teacher of Mathematics, Nadezhda Kristoforovna, came to support me there. Natasha, a Moldovan girl, and I were given the highest grades: 8.3 out of 10. I decided to enter the Medical Faculty since doctors were well-paid. However, I needed money to continue my studies. Chara convinced me to talk to my uncle Lazar and ask him for the money. She even went to see him with me. Lazar congratulated me on my graduation from the gymnasium, and said that since I was an orphan, I had to forget about university education, but get a profession as soon as possible to start earning money. Chara shamed my uncle and said that I was the best student in town and just had to go on. She asked Lazar to lend me 1000 Lei. Lazar took some time before he agreed.

Chara, I and Tyusha Nathanzon, my other nice friend, went to Iasi to take exams to the Medical Faculty. The five percent admission quota [22](#) for Jews in higher educational institutions had been cancelled a few years before. So, the commission reviewed our documents, and agreed to admit us, but under the condition that we had to buy a corpse to work with in the dissection room, since Jewish students were not allowed to dissect corpses of Christians. This was the first time that I faced the state anti-Semitism. We were at a complete loss. Besides having to look for a corpse in a poor family that would wish to improve their situation, we also needed 30 thousand Lei. [Editor's note: According to Jewish tradition, autopsy in general is discouraged as a desecration of the body. It is permitted only in certain cases. It must have been problematic to find a Jewish corpse, the only possibility were the secular and the poor.] I tried to convince Chara and Tyusha to switch to the Faculty of Biology. We were passing a long corridor, when I saw Domnul Votetz, the chairman of my commission in the gymnasium, walking toward us. He remembered me and started telling me to go to the university. He even spoke for me there and I was awarded a 1500 Lei state stipend. So I became a student. Chara and the others could afford to pay for their education.

This was the brightest year of my life. Chara and I rented an apartment. Once a month our mothers sent us a parcel with sales agents: Madam Shapiro bought food products and my mother took over sending us parcels. There was also a cheap canteen in the university, where students worked as cooks, which made the meals rather inexpensive. In Iasi we continued our underground Komsomol activities, distributing flyers and Communist self-education. I even copied the history of the Communist party of Russia in Russian in my own handwriting and distributed it among my friends. I fell in love with the secretary of the district underground Komsomol committee, Velvl Pressman, whose underground nickname was Volk [Wolf, in Russian]. We spent all our free time together.

## During the war

On 26th June 1940 we were walking together and Velvl went to a secret address for a few minutes. He wasn't like himself, when he came out of there. He said the USSR had declared an ultimatum to Romania and is preparing to come to Bessarabia. I decided to go back home immediately. Chara and other friends were already in Kishinev. The following day my loved one saw me off to the station and we said our good byes. It didn't even occur to me that I should have stayed with him. I was eager to go back to Kishinev to greet the Soviet Army. The train made many stops on the way. Then the train stopped at some station and passengers had to get off and walk about 20 kilometers to Kishinev.

On 28th June, when I reached home, the Soviet Army came to Kishinev and the Soviet power was established peacefully. On the 29th I went to the Komsomol Central Committee, introduced myself and told them about our underground activities. I adapted to the new Soviet way of life promptly: I got involved in the district committee, met and made friends with its secretary Alexei Fesenko and his wife Frida, a Jew. We were intoxicated with the expectation of changes. They followed, but they turned out to be different from what we had expected. Literally on the third day all the food products disappeared from the stores: they were sold out to the residents of Ukraine from Pridniestroviye [Transnistria], the nearest area along the Dniestr River, pouring into the wealthy Bessarabia [those people came from Soviet areas where stores were empty]. Then arrests began: they arrested everybody related to the Zionist movement, manufacturers and traders.

Things were absurd at times. They arrested Tsylia Blinder's father, a 'manufacturer' who owned a little shoe shop. He, his wife, Tsylia and her brother were deported to Kyrgyzstan. Even the fact that Tsylia had been arrested previously for her underground activities didn't help them. Tsylia returned to Kishinev after the war. She died in the early 1950s. Actually the new authorities treated us, underground activists, with suspicion. Chara got married that summer. She and her husband Mikhail Grossman went to work in a village.

My new Komsomol friends convinced me to go to study at the History Faculty of the Pedagogical College. I finished the first year. I was still to take a few exams, when Chara's husband arrived at a medical conference. He invited me to the banquet dedicated to the closing of the conference. We had a great time in nice company. We had fun and laughed a lot. Mikhail took me home way after midnight. I slept a few hours and woke up from the roar of bombs: they were falling on Kishinev. This was the early morning of 22nd June 1941, the beginning of the war.

Girls from our course were sent to a medical nurse course. We were given white robes and we forgot about our summer exams. The college was preparing for evacuation and we were told to bring our luggage to the building. Once I went to my college after our class in surgery. I was missing it a lot. I met our teachers, who were going to Tiraspol, and went to the railway station with them. I went in a carriage with them, and we kept talking. It was some time later that I noticed that the train was moving. So it happened I came to Tiraspol, with no clothes, just with my bag with the robe in it with me. Mama didn't know where I was. I went to the Tiraspol district Komsomol committee that sent me to Kishinev with a secretary. Mama laughed and cried, when she saw me. She had already buried me in her thoughts. This happened in late June.

It was quiet in the town until 10th July. We seemed to be able to escape the ordeal of the war. Our relatives and many friends had gradually evacuated. Only Tsypa was staying. Frida's husband Alexei Fesenko, who had already evacuated his wife, talked to me about urgent evacuation. He

didn't tell me openly that they were going to blast the town that night, but he told me and Mama to come to the building of the cinema that night – this was Friday – from where we were to depart. Mama started again, 'Let's wash ourselves, nothing will happen till morning anyway!' So we stayed.

Early in the morning I heard explosions – many buildings were blasted. Mama and I grabbed our documents and left the house. Mama only made me put on my coat that my uncle had sent from Belgium. She also had her coat on. This was all we had. On our way we came by aunt Tsypa, trying to convince her to join us. She refused, saying that I had to evacuate being a Komsomol member, while they were fed up with the Soviet power and were going to wait for the Romanians. My brother Kelman was in the army. His wife Dora and her child also stayed. She and my nephew Mikhail as well as Dora Fridman's father perished in the Kishinev ghetto in 1941.

Mama and I went to the railway station. On the way a Red Army military truck picked us up and we drove to Tiraspol. We went to my college, where my friends also got together. Chara had already evacuated. She was in the sixth month of pregnancy. We boarded a train for cattle transportation. At stations we were provided some meals. After the Debaltsevo station in Ukraine I had kidney colic and had awful pains. Mama, Tyusha and I got off the train at the nearest stop. Haya and Nyusia also got off with us. I got some medical aid at the medical office at the station and the pain subsided.

The chief of the station helped us to get on a train to Kuibyshev where my college had evacuated. It was a passenger train and we seemed to get into paradise from hell. It took us five days to get to Kuibyshev. Mama stayed at the railway station and we went to our college. We were told that Kuibyshev was a military strategic town, closed for residents of the newly-annexed areas. We were sent to Kinel station, where we were given some food and sent to a kolkhoz [23](#) in Bashkiria [today Russia, about 3000 km from Kishinev]. The kolkhoz accommodated us in a spacious room. Mama stayed at home and Tyusha, Haya and I went to work at the threshing machine, feeding it sheaves.

August was ending and Tyusha, the smart girl, mentioned: 'Girls, are we going to continue our studies?' We switched to working at the elevator, where we were paid money and grain for work. Tyusha went to Birska, the nearest town, where she found a college. Mama, I, Tyusha, Haya and Nyusia took a bag of grain each, and moved to Birska up the Belaya River. And we got lucky again: we met Nathalia Agasina, the instructional pro-rector of the Kishinev College, in the corridor. She was happy to see us and invited us to stay with her for a few days. We were admitted to the college and accommodated in the dormitory. Mama was employed as a janitor. We washed ourselves and did our hair – life was going on. When the first semester was over, Agasina told us that the Kishinev Pedagogical College was being reorganized in Buguruslan [today Russia] and it invited its former students. In summer 1942 we arrived in Buguruslan. There were other students from Kishinev, Leningrad and other towns there.

My brother found me soon. He was demobilized from the army like many other Bessarabians, whom the Soviet military didn't trust. Kelman arrived in the town of Kagan near Bukhara [today Uzbekistan] where my uncle Lazar and aunts Ita and Hava were staying. Kelman convinced me to have Mama join him there. He wrote he would support her. During the summer vacations I moved Mama there, but I still can't forgive myself for having done this. My brother and uncle were away from Kagan on some business and Mama stayed with the aunts. Some time later my brother wrote to me that they had sent Mama to an elderly people's home. In early 1944 Mama died. Shortly

afterward my brother Kelman died from enteric fever. Before he died he wrote that Bessarabia would be liberated soon and then we would see each other again.

I have warm memories about my students' years. Despite the hardships we were friends, and coped with whatever we had to go through, together. We rented an apartment and bought winter clothes. Somebody gave me a coat and I bought valenki [warm Russian felt boots] in Birsik. Tyusha found her father, who supported us with money. I knitted sweaters for officers' wives and they paid me for the work. Tyusha read lectures. In the evening we got together, recited poems and sang Soviet and Jewish songs. There were 16 students from Bessarabia and we were friends. We celebrated the liberation of Odessa in 1943: there were students from Odessa at our course. In 1944 there was the first graduation and we even had a prom.

The Soviet army liberated Kishinev on 24th August 1944. In September we boarded a train and arrived in our hometown on 30th September. The town was quiet and ruined. There were other people living in our apartment. I had lost my mother and brother to the war. However, I was quite optimistic. I went to see Frida and Alexei Fesenko. They were happy to see me and invited me to stay with them. Alexei offered me a job. I went to work as a history teacher at the conservatory and music school.

### After the war

I stayed with Frida for ten days. One day I opened the door and saw Nikolay Novosadyuk, my pre-war friend. He was tall, handsome, wore leather trousers – I liked him at once. After seeing each other a few times we realized we were in love. Nikolay was Ukrainian. I think he came from a rather common Ukrainian family. Nikolay finished an agricultural college and worked as a zoo technician [responsible for the implementation of new technical innovations in cattle breeding, health care, vaccination], in a kolkhoz before the Great Patriotic War. When the Great Patriotic War began, he evacuated the cattle and transferred it to the authorities in Rostov [today Russia]. He was wounded during a bombing and taken to hospital. After the hospital he was acknowledged to be unfit for military service. He moved to Georgia, where he worked as a zoo technician.

Nikolay said he wrote to the information center in Buguruslan looking for me, but funnily enough, they replied they had no information about me, though I was in town. Nikolay kept looking for me in Kishinev. His neighbor, an NKVD officer, found me. Nikolay introduced me to his mother. His mother Frania Petrovna, a common Ukrainian woman, gave me a warm welcome. Nikolay and I registered our marriage in November 1944, and that evening Frania Petrovna arranged a wedding party. My dowry was an aluminum spoon and a plate and a pair of fancy shoes that I had bought on my miserable savings in Buguruslan. Frida and Alexei gave me a pillow. Nikolay and his mother lived in two rooms in a private house. They kept hens, ducks, a vegetable garden, a dog, a cat, and finally I felt at home.

My husband worked in a kolkhoz about 50 kilometers from Kishinev and he left shortly after our wedding, while I stayed to live with my mother-in-law. I went to see Nikolay on the New Year. We spent a few wonderful days and nights together and I conceived our first baby. In 1945 our son Vladislav was born. After his birth, I started work as a history teacher in the higher party school [24](#) of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Moldovan Communist Party. The ideology secretary of the Central Committee of the Party, my good acquaintance, whom I met in Buguruslan, helped me to get this job. It's amazing, though, that they employed a non-partisan Jewish woman.



This job was a great support to us. In 1946-1947, during the famine, when my mother-in-law went to stand in lines at five o'clock in the morning to get bread for our bread cards [25](#), I brought home rationed Party food packages including red and black caviar, ham, etc., besides common food products.

At this party school I had a nice group of future Moldovan Soviet Party officials and writers, whom I taught the history of the CPSU in Moldovan. A year later the Moldovan department was closed. I worked the following two years in a Russian secondary school near our house and then switched to a Moldovan school, where I was deputy director for teaching work. In 1951 my second son Yuri was born. Nikolay was working in forestry in Western Ukraine. Some Bandera [26](#) partisans robbed the storage, but the court accused Nikolay. I hired an attorney for my husband, but he failed to have my husband discharged. He was sentenced to ten years in a high security camp. This happened in 1952. I had to take care of the two children and my mother-in-law. I found an additional job in a pedagogical school out of town and my mother-in-law rented out one room: we needed money.

However, trouble never comes alone. In 1954, after Stalin's death – by the way my husband told me how happy the prisoners were about Stalin's death after he was released – during summer vacations I was summoned to the public education department. Its head, Makarov, a Russian man, told me that though he knew me as a good employee they wanted to have the national staff working for them – that such was the requirement of the time – and offered me a job in an evening school. This was the second time that I faced state-level anti-Semitism in my life, but the first time it happened in the Fascist Romania, while this second time it occurred in the country claiming that it followed the Communist principles of equality. I refused, telling him that I had been sent to strengthen the Moldovan school as a national employee.

I was furious. I went to see Chara, who lived nearby, and instantaneously wrote a letter addressed to Beriia [27](#) in Moscow. I addressed him as an ideologist in national issues, requesting him to review my case. I sent this letter to my cousin, requesting her to take it to the Ministry of Home Affairs. A few days later I heard about Beriia's arrest and was horrified that now they would arrest me. A few weeks later I received letters from Moscow and from Kishinev. They stated that the officials had no right to fire me. When I returned to work after the summer vacations the director of my school apologized. I worked at this school till I retired. Now I am chairman of the council of veterans.

Nikolay was released following an amnesty. [Prisoners were granted freedom before term for appropriate work performance, proper conduct, at the discretion of their chief wardens, upon review of their relatives' requests or for other reasons]. He was kept in the camp near Kotlas, where he was chief of the cultural department. He was treated fairly well. In 1955 I went to see my husband. When I arrived there, the prisoners had made a little hut by the gate of the camp for us to stay there, while I was visiting. It was a surprise for me.

In 1956 Nikolay was released. He started work at an artificial leather factory, where he worked until his last day. Nikolay earned well and we were doing all right. We had no car or dacha, though, but in summer we often went to the seashore with the children or rented a dacha [28](#). Nikolay was fond of hunting. He often went hunting with his friends and brought home trophies. We had many friends – they were mainly those whom we had known since our young years. We celebrated Soviet holidays together and went to parades. In the evening we went to theaters and followed whatever



new publications were available. We were living a full life.

My sons Vladislav and Yuri chose their father's nationality. [In the USSR the ethnic identity was indicated in citizens' passports. The situation in the Soviet Union was such that Jews had problems with entering higher educational institutions, finding jobs, traveling to foreign countries [29](#). It was a natural decision if they wanted to enter colleges. However, they identify themselves as Jews.

Vladislav has written poems and articles since his childhood. He decided to dedicate himself to journalism. When he was in the army, he had publications in the army newspaper. Vladislav graduated from the Spanish department of the Faculty of Foreign languages of Moscow University [M. V. Lomonosov Moscow State University, the best University in the Soviet Union, also well known abroad for its high level of education and research]. He has worked as a journalist in newspapers and magazines and now he works for the television. Vladislav lives in a civil marriage with Margarita Zvit, a popular TV presenter. She is a Crimean Jew. He has no children of his own. He is raising his wife's daughter from her first marriage.

Yuri finished the Viticulture Faculty of the Agricultural College in Kishinev. After finishing it, he finished a postgraduate course and defended a candidateship dissertation [30](#). Yuri's wife is Ukrainian. Their daughter Liya, named after my mother, finished the Faculty of Italian in Leningrad. She works as a tour guide and interpreter in Rome. I've visited Romania and met with my first love – Velvl Pressman. His wife and I became friends. We often call and write each other.

We've always taken a great interest in Israel. Firstly, my husband and I never failed to understand that Jews needed a state of their own and secondly, because gradually our friends happened to have moved there. Emigration had never been an issue for us: Nikolay loved Bessarabia, his own country. My husband died in 1992. It was a terrible loss for me. I couldn't adjust to the thought that he is no longer here. Yuri took my documents to Moscow to arrange a trip to Israel for me. I went to visit my dear friend Chara. I've been to Israel five times, visiting my friends and relatives. I love Israel, but Moldova is my homeland. I also loved the huge Soviet Union. I felt at home in Moscow and in Leningrad. However, now I know that the independence of Moldova is a fact of life and it can't be ignored. If my children feel all right, I do, too. Yuri works for an American company where he earns well. Vladislav also has a good job. My sons care for me well.

I didn't observe Jewish traditions after the war. Nowadays many of my compatriots and I are rediscovering our Jewish roots. I am a client and a volunteer for Hesed [31](#), I often read lectures in the daytime center. I took much interest in the history of my kin and I've spent a great deal of time in the archives, looking for information about my relatives. I've written a few articles about my ancestors for Jewish newspapers and digests, but my biggest pride is that I've immortalized the name of Princess Dadiani. When the school where I'd worked was turned to a lyceum, I insisted that they gave it the name of Princess Dadiani. The school headmistress, my former student, and I went to the monument of Princess Dadiani in the cemetery. I told her much about the Princess and we managed to get the lyceum named after her. By the way, the then President of independent Moldova, Petru Lucinski, attended the opening ceremony of the Princess Dadiani Lyceum.

## Glossary:

## **1 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.

## **2 Kishinev pogrom of 1903**

On 6-7th April, during the Christian Orthodox Easter, there was severe pogrom in Kishinev (today Chisinau, Moldova) and its suburbs, in which about 50 Jews were killed and hundreds injured. Jewish shops were destroyed and many people left homeless. The pogrom became a watershed in the history of the Jews of the Pale of Settlement and the Zionist movement, not only because of its scale, but also due to the reaction of the authorities, who either could not or did not want to stop the pogromists. The pogrom reverberated in the Jewish world and spurred on many future Zionists to join the movement.

## **3 Bialik, Chaim Nachman**

(1873-1934): One of the greatest Hebrew poets. He was also an essayist, writer, translator and editor. Born in Rady, Volhynia, Ukraine, he received a traditional education in cheder and yeshivah. His first collection of poetry appeared in 1901 in Warsaw. He established a Hebrew publishing house in Odessa, where he lived but after the Revolution of 1917 Bialik's activity for Hebrew culture was viewed by the communist authorities with suspicion and the publishing house was closed. In 1921 Bialik emigrated to Germany and in 1924 to Palestine where he became a celebrated literary figure. Bialik's poems occupy an important place in modern Israeli culture and education.

## **4 Korolenko, Vladimir (1853-1921)**

Russian writer and publicist, honorary member of the Petersburg and Russian Academies. His stories and novels are full of democratic and humane ideas; he criticized the revolutionary terror that seized the country after 1917.

## **5 NKVD**

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

## **6 Joint (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee)**

The Joint was formed in 1914 with the fusion of three American Jewish committees of assistance, which were alarmed by the suffering of Jews during World War I. In late 1944, the Joint entered Europe's liberated areas and organized a massive relief operation. It provided food for Jewish

survivors all over Europe, it supplied clothing, books and school supplies for children. It supported cultural amenities and brought religious supplies for the Jewish communities. The Joint also operated DP camps, in which it organized retraining programs to help people learn trades that would enable them to earn a living, while its cultural and religious activities helped re-establish Jewish life. The Joint was also closely involved in helping Jews to emigrate from Europe and from Muslim countries. The Joint was expelled from East Central Europe for decades during the Cold War and it has only come back to many of these countries after the fall of communism. Today the Joint provides social welfare programs for elderly Holocaust survivors and encourages Jewish renewal and communal development.

## **7 Great Patriotic War**

On 22nd June 1941 at five o'clock in the morning Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union without declaring war. This was the beginning of the so-called Great Patriotic War. The German blitzkrieg, known as Operation Barbarossa, nearly succeeded in breaking the Soviet Union in the months that followed. Caught unprepared, the Soviet forces lost whole armies and vast quantities of equipment to the German onslaught in the first weeks of the war. By November 1941 the German army had seized the Ukrainian Republic, besieged Leningrad, the Soviet Union's second largest city, and threatened Moscow itself. The war ended for the Soviet Union on 9th May 1945.

## **8 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.

## **9 Annexation of Bessarabia to Romania**

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

## **10 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.

## **11 The Kishinev Ghetto**

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

## **12 Moscow Academic Musical Theater**

Leading musical theater in Russia. It has a talented staff and an extensive repertoire: its classical and ultra modern performances are of great success. It was named after Konstantin Stanislavsky and Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, two brilliant reformers of scenic art. The theater emerged in 1941 based on the consolidation of two opera branches. The Stanislavsky group, was founded in late 1918 as the Opera studio of the Bolshoi Theater. The Nemirovich-Danchenko group, was established in 1919, as the Music studio of the Moscow Art Theater.

## **13 Likhachev plant**

The oldest and the biggest Russian vehicle manufacturing enterprise founded on 2nd August 1916, best known for its 'Zil' brand. The 'Zil' trucks were widely used in the Soviet Union and Soviet occupied countries after the 1970s as well as in the Soviet Army. The enterprise also manufactures limousine vehicles buses and refrigerators. It has over 20000 employees and manufactures 209-210,000 vehicles per year. It has produced 8 million trucks, 39,000 buses and 11,500 cars in total.

## **14 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.

## **15 Dostoevsky, Fyodor (1821-1881)**

Russian novelist, journalist and short-story writer whose psychological penetration into the human soul had a profound influence on the 20th century novel. His novels anticipated many of the ideas of Nietzsche and Freud. Dostoevsky's novels contain many autobiographical elements, but ultimately they deal with moral and philosophical issues. He presented interacting characters with contrasting views or ideas about freedom of choice, socialism, atheisms, good and evil, happiness and so forth.

#### **16 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.

#### **17 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.

#### **18 Legion of the Archangel Michael (also known as the Legionary Movement)**

Movement founded in 1927 by C. Z. Codreanu. This extremist, nationalist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic movement aimed at excluding those whose views on political and racial matters were different from theirs. The Legion was organized in so-called nests, and it practiced mystical rituals, which were regarded as the way to a national spiritual regeneration by the members of the movement. These rituals were based on Romanian folklore and historical traditions. The Legionaries founded the Iron Guard as a terror organization, which carried out terrorist activities and political murders. The political twin of the Legionary Movement was the *Totul pentru Tara* (Everything for the Fatherland) that represented the movement in parliamentary elections. The followers of the Legionary Movement were recruited from young intellectuals, students, Orthodox clericals, peasants. The movement was banned by King Carol II in 1938.

#### **19 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.

## **20 MOPR (International Organization for Aid to Revolutionary Fighters)**

Founded in 1922, and based on the decision of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, the organization aimed to protect workers from the terrorist attacks of the Whites and help the victims of terrorism. It offered material, legal and intellectual support to political convicts, political emigrants and their families. By 1932 it had a membership of about 14 million people.

## **21 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.

## **22 Five percent quota**

In tsarist Russia the number of Jews in higher educational institutions could not exceed five percent of the total number of students.

## **23 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.

## **24 Party Schools**

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

## **25 Card system**

The food card system aimed at distribution of food and industrial products was introduced in the USSR in 1929 due to extreme deficit of consumer goods and food. This system was cancelled in



1931. In 1941, at the beginning of WWII, food cards were reintroduced to keep records, distribute and regulate food supplies to the population. The card system covered the main food products: bread, meat products, oil, sugar, salt, cereals, etc. The rations of products were oriented at social groups of population and the type of work they did. Workers of heavy industry and defense enterprises received the daily ration of bread - 800 g (miners - 1 kg) per person, workers of other industries - 600 g. Non-manual workers received 500 or 400 g based on significance of their enterprise and children - 400 g. However, the card system only covered industrial workers and town residents while villagers never had any provisions of this kind. The card system was cancelled in the USSR in 1947.

## **26 Bandera, Stepan (1919-1959)**

Politician and ideologue of the Ukrainian nationalist movement, who fought for the Ukrainian cause against both Poland and the Soviet Union. He attained high positions in the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN): he was chief of propaganda (1931) and, later, head of the national executive in Galicia (1933). He was hoping to establish an independent Ukrainian state with Nazi backing. After Germany attacked the Soviet Union, the OUN announced the establishment of an independent government of Ukraine in Lvov on 30th June 1941. About one week later the Germans disbanded this government and arrested the members. Bandera was taken to Sachsenhausen prison where he remained until the end of the war. He was assassinated by a Soviet agent in Munich in 1959.

## **27 Beriia, L**

P. (1899-1953): Communist politician, one of the main organizers of the mass arrests and political persecution between the 1930s and the early 1950s. Minister of Internal Affairs, 1938-1953. In 1953 he was expelled from the Communist Party and sentenced to death by the Supreme Court of the USSR.

## **28 Dacha**

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

## **29 Item 5**

This was the ethnic origin line, which was included on all job application forms. Jews, who were considered a separate nationality in the Soviet Union, were disadvantaged in this respect from the end of World War II until the late 1980s, as there was state-sponsored anti-Semitism.

## **30 Soviet/Russian doctorate degrees**

Graduate school in the Soviet Union (aspirantura, or ordinatura for medical students), which usually took about three 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 (doktorantura). 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.

### **31 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.