

Remma Kogan

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Odessa,

Ukraine

Interviewer: Alexandr Tonkonogiy

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Remma Kogan is a nice elderly lady. She has vivid hazel eyes and a melodious voice that make you forget about how old she is. She is short and quick in movements regardless of her age and diseases. She lives alone in a two-bedroom apartment with all comforts. Remma has old furniture bought when she received this apartment in 1966. There is a table in the middle of the room and a sofa by the wall. There is a small carpet over the sofa. There is a bookcase full of books and on it there is a big portrait of her deceased husband. It's a plain apartment that needs repairs, but its owner keeps it clean and cozy. When telling me about her family Remma read me long excerpts from her father Moisey Kogan memoirs.



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Family Background

My maternal great grandfather Chaim Duvid Litinski was born in Novomirgorod [a town in Kherson province, according to 1897 census its population was 9,364 residents and 1,622 among them were Jews] in 1831. My father remembered him well: he was stocky, wide-shouldered and gray bearded. He owned a hardware store in Novomirgorod. In 1858 my great grandfather married Chasia-Ethil, a Jewish girl, born in Novomirgorod in 1838. My father could vaguely remember my great grandmother. He said she was beautiful, but wicked. My great grandfather died from lung fever in 1906. My great grandmother died from cheek cancer in Novomirgorod in 1909. My great grandfather and great grandmother were religious. They spoke Yiddish and Russian in the family. They had six sons: Moishe-Aron, Ghershon, Zelman, Sender, Nisel and Yitzhok-Leib, and four daughters: Chaya-Leya, Surah, Vera and Esther. All children were born in Novomirgorod.

My grandmother Chaya-Leya Kogan was born 1864. According to my father she was an extraordinary lady. Her brother Yitzhok-Leib finished the university and helped her to learn French

and German. She knew Latin, history, geography and literature. She was taller than average, had dark wavy hair, a big forehead, shortsighted eyes, straight nose, and tightly closed lips. My grandmother loved her children, but she was strict with them. Grandmother Chaya read a lot and taught her children to love Russian authors, among them Leo Tolstoy, Turgenev [1](#), Dostoyevsky, Chekhov, Korolenko [2](#), Kuprin [3](#), Gorky [4](#). Young people sharing revolutionary ideas often got together in their house reading, arguing and singing revolutionary songs until late at night. My grandmother Chaya didn't care about religion, but they always celebrated Purim, Pesach and Rosh Hashanah in the family. They spoke Russian and Yiddish in the family. Grandmother wanted her children to receive higher education and did everything she could to reach this goal.

My father's father Mordko Kogan was born in Boguslav, Kanev district, Kiev province [according to census of 1897 - 11,372 residents, among them 7,445 were Jews] in 1865. He lost his mother when he was small and was raised by his stepmother. He studied in cheder. Grandfather Mordko was a distant relative of Sholem Aleichem [5](#). He liked him and often read his works in Yiddish aloud. My grandmother Chaya and grandfather Mordko got married in 1882 and settled down in the house of grandmother parents' home in Novomirgorod. There were three rooms in the house. There was a kitchen and a toilet in the yard. My father told me that grandfather was small and thin, had brown hair, red beard and blue eyes. The Jewish community respected my grandfather Mordko and he was a permanent member of arbitrary court [the court is elected by conflicting parties, senior rabbi in the town usually was head of arbitration: ab-bet-din] that resolved the majority of conflicts between Jews. My grandfather went to the synagogue on holidays. He wore yarmulka at home. He was a religious man. Several times his wealthier relatives loaned money to him to start some business of his own, but he failed every time he started something. My grandfather was a shop assistant in a fabric store. He got up before dawn in the morning, boiled water in the samovar and sat down to have tea biting on a lump of sugar. He usually had 5-6 glasses of tea, wrapped his breakfast in a newspaper sheet and went to work. He had dinner after he returned from work in the evening. Grandfather Mordko didn't earn much. The family lived modest life, but grandfather Mordko didn't care much as long as his good name was preserved. After the February revolution [6](#) that grandfather welcomed he began to work in a cooperative. My grandmother Chaya and grandfather Mordko had seven children: six sons and one daughter. They were born in Novomirgorod. The boys studied in cheder and then in Russian elementary school.

My father's older sister Rosalia was born in 1883. In 1903 she married Yuli Belotserkovski, a Jew, and they moved to the Moscow region. They lived in Kratov station of Moscow-Kazan railroad. Rosalia finished a Medical School in Moscow and worked as a pharmacist. They had four children: 2 daughters and 2 sons. Their older daughter Ethilia was an electrical engineer. She lived in Moscow. She died in a car accident in Moscow at the age of 60. Their second daughter Olga was a geographer and scientific employee. She is a pensioner now. Their older son David is an astronomer and candidate of sciences [Soviet/Russian doctorate degrees] [7](#) and their son Mark is a candidate of geographic sciences. Olga, David, Mark and their families live in Moscow. Rosalia died in Kratovo at the age of 72 (1955). Her husband died in Kratovo at the age of 93 (in the 1970s).

My father's older brother Lev was born in 1891. In 1910 he entered the Medical Faculty of Petersburg University. In 1915 he graduated from University and worked as a doctor in Glukhov village near Kiev. He married his cousin sister Revekka Fooks, my grandmother Chaya sister Surah's daughter. Revekka was a German teacher. Before the Great Patriotic War [8](#) Lev and his

wife moved to Kiev. Lev was a surgeon in the central polyclinic in Kiev. Their only son Ludwig finished the Philosophic Faculty of Kiev University. He lectured on philosophy in the mining College in Krivoy Rog. During the Great Patriotic War Lev and Revekka evacuated to Votkinsk in Bashkiria. Lev was shortsighted. After the war they returned to Kiev. Revekka's parents Surah and Moisha Fooks perished in Babi Yar ⁹ in Kiev. Lev died in Kiev at the age of 75 in 1966. Revekka died in the 1970s. Ludwig and his wife Olga Luchko live in Krivoy Rog. Olga is Ukrainian. She was a teacher of history. They are pensioners now. They have two children: Natalia and Yuri.

Grisha [diminutive from Grigori], the second son, was born in 1896. In 1915 Grisha went to Kiev and graduated from the Medical faculty in Kiev University. He was a lecturer at the Medical College in Kiev. Grisha was married to his cousin sister Mariam Fooks, grandmother sister Surah's second daughter. In 1930 their daughter Lidia was born. Grisha perished at the front during the Great Patriotic War. His wife Mariam and her daughter were in evacuation in Votkinsk during the Great Patriotic War. Mariam worked as a medical nurse. After the war they returned to Kiev. Lidia finished the Mining College in Krivoy Rog, but she worked as a teacher in the kindergarten. She married a Jewish man. She has two children: son Grisha and daughter Svetlana. Mariam died in the 1970s. Lidia lives in Kiev. She is a pensioner. Lidia's children and their families moved to Germany in the 1980s.

My father's brother Yakov was born in 1902. In 1922 he left Novomirgorod for Petersburg. I don't know where he studied. Yakov was a heating engineer. Yakov's wife Sophia, a Jew, was a teacher of mathematic. They had two daughters: Galina and Olga. During the Great Patriotic War they evacuated to Novokuznetsk in Kemerovo region where they stayed after the war. Yakov's wife died of cancer shortly after the war. Yakov died in Novokuznetsk in the 1970s. Yakov's older daughter Galina got married and moved to the Moscow region where she works as an engineer. She has two daughters. Yakov's younger daughter Olga is a scientific employee of the metallurgical Institute in Novokuznetsk. She has two sons.

David was born in 1905. He was a railroad technician and lived in Moscow. David was single. During the Great Patriotic War he was commander of rocket launcher platoon. He perished during defense of Leningrad in 1941.

My father's younger brother Anatoli was born in 1909. Anatoli lived with my father's family in Kirovograd and then Odessa. He studied at the Communication College in Odessa and worked at a plant. In 1931 Anatoli finished his college and got a job assignment in Khabarovsk. He married his fellow-student Maria Sviridova, Russian. Maria was a communication engineer, but she worked very little. She dedicated herself to her family. Anatoli and his family lived in Khabarovsk where he was chief of regional communication department. During the Great Patriotic War Anatoli got an assignment to work in Nikolaev, Ukraine. Anatoli worked there for a short time and then was transferred to Kuibyshev [Samara at present]. Anatoli has three children: daughter Nelly and two sons, Sergei and Valeri. They finished a conservatory. Nelly was a teacher in a music school in Kuibyshev. She was married and had a son named Mikhail. Nelly died in the 1970s. Valeri is married and has two children. Sergei is married and has three children. Anatoli's sons play in the Philharmonic orchestra in Kuibyshev. Anatoli died in Kuibyshev in the 1980s. His wife died shortly afterward.

My father Moisey Kogan was born on 28 April 1900. My father told me a lot about his childhood. My father went to cheder at the age of 6. There were two rooms in cheder: one for senior and another room for junior boys. There was a teacher and his assistant called behelfer [assistant melamed]. This assistant taught children their ABC and often carried the youngest ones to school. My father started learning the Torah at the age of 8, I guess. They studied Hummash [Pentateuch in Yiddish]. My father found cheder dull and he entertained himself as much as he could: stuffed an inkpot with paper, chatted with his classmates, glued rabbi's beard to the desk when he was dozing off explaining Rashi's commentaries on Hummash. [Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040-1105), is known by the acronym RASHI. His commentaries on the Hebrew Bible and Babylonian Talmud are accepted as the most fundamental ones] Melamed hit my father on his back with his stick. At the age of 9 my father was expelled from cheder for his conduct.

At the age of 10 my father went to study at a Russian elementary school. Schoolchildren were children of local craftsmen, small tradesmen and clerks and also, farmers from neighboring villages. Children from wealthier families studied in a grammar school. It would have been bearable at school if it hadn't been for terrible anti-Semitism propagated by teachers and rooted among the pupils. The majority of children came from tradesmen's families. They didn't like Jews for making strong competition to their parents. Jewish children even received lower marks at school. My father told me that once his teacher of history called him to the blackboard. The teacher and classmates listened to my father's answer holding their breath. His teacher Shevchenko stated that this was an exemplary answer, but put him '3'. His teacher of mathematic Zizdo did the same. They rarely put a higher mark than '3' to my father. When my father entered a technical school he only received excellent marks in mathematic.

My father was quite advanced for his age at 13. He was interested in politics and was familiar with all details of the 'Beilis case' [10](#) and followed the subject discussions in the State Duma. He was 17 when the February revolution took place. In August 1917 my father entered a technical construction school in Odessa. He studied and worked. In January 1918 my father returned to Novomirgorod since he could not make his living in Odessa and was starving. The power switched from one group to another in Novomirgorod from 'Petliura units' [11](#), to the 'greens' [12](#) and other gangs [13](#). Jewish men organized a self-defense unit [14](#). They patrolled the area at night, but they couldn't fight bigger units, of course.

In spring 1919 the most dramatic Jewish pogrom in Novomirgorod took place. It became one of the strongest shocks in my father's life. My father said that this pogrom was made by the 'black hundred' [15](#) units. On 18 May crowds began to gather in Novomirgorod. From behind the closed shutters of his house my father watched how they broke into the house of Rabinovich, sales agent of Singer sewing machines. They broke doors and windows and dough flew out of the windows. In the evening rumors about the massacre spread. My father's neighbors, the Christian family of Berest who was a shop assistant in my father's shop, offered shelter to my grandfather's family. On the night of 19 May grandmother and my father's younger brothers David and Anatoli hid in Mr. Berest's house and grandfather with Grisha, my father and Yakov hid in their hayloft. The Berests put icons in front of their house and drew red crosses in chalk on the gates like all other Christian families in the town. The pogrom began at dawn. Throng of brutal townsfolk began to smite Jewish houses breaking crockery and furniture and cutting mattresses and pillows.

Grandfather Mordko decided to try to get home to see what was happening there despite his son's requests to stay. There was a group of bandits in the yard of his house. My grandfather ran to the river across the garden, but a bullet reached him. He was wounded, but he managed to sail across the river and hide in the stables at a farm. The owner ordered his laborers to throw him out into the street where my grandfather died. The pogromists took the remaining Jews to the town prison where my father and his family stayed three days. Somebody arranged for water delivery into prison. They also brought pieces of pork on iron griddles as if to ridicule Jews. There were talks in prison that dean of the town cathedral Reverend Georgi Kovalevski, a decent and sympathizing man, went out to meet the pogromists and talk them into stopping their brutalities, but it didn't work. Four days later a Soviet bandit-fighting unit came into town. My father's family returned home. There were pieces of broken furniture, crockery and feathers from pillows on the floors. There was also a portrait of my grandmother's brother Yitzchok with his eyes put out.

They buried victims of this pogrom in two common graves in the Jewish cemetery in Novomirgorod. Religious Jews recited the mourning prayers. They placed two huge granite gravestones on the graves. In 1938, when my father visited Novomirgorod for the last time he saw cows and goats walking in the cemetery. The granite gravestones were lost in grass and it was hard to discover them. In the 1960s my father's acquaintance Israel Radkovski visited Novomirgorod. He didn't find the cemetery since it was ploughed over.

In 1919 my father joined Komsomol [16](#), and in early 1920 he volunteered to the Red (Soviet) Army. My father wanted to get self-confident and take revenge for his father and other innocent people's death. One summer in 1920 in Podolia [an area in Western Ukraine, east of Bukovina] my father stood night watch with Van'ka, a Russian man from Vologda province. The young man was missing his homeland in the north a lot. He didn't like anything in Ukraine. 'They say there are zhydy [yids] living here. They are like us, only they are so ugly: they are black and have tails. I wish I saw one' he said. My father got angry and said; 'Well, you want to see a zhyd? Then look!' and he turned his back to Van'ka, pulled down his pants and showed that there was no tail. When he turned to look at Van'ka he felt sorry that he had done this; Van'ka was very confused. He didn't mean to hurt my father.

In May 1921 my father demobilized and returned home. Grandmother Chaya was very ill. After grandfather died her left hand and then left leg grew numb. My father's 19-year-old brother Yakov worked in Raiprodkom [abbreviation for 'raionnyi prodovolstvennyi komitet,' i.e. district product committee, main responsibility of which was perhaps distribution of food supplies among the population]. David was 16 and Anatoli was 12. They were desperately poor. My father went to work in a bakery. He received food packages there. In autumn 1921 all crops were gone [Famine in the Ukraine] [17](#). The food packages that my father and Yakov received were not enough to support the family of five. They had about half hundred pigeons that the brothers chased away to be not tempted to eat them; the brothers were sentimental. David and Anatoli were stealing beet leaves in their neighbors' gardens. They cut and boiled it with bran. This made their main food. My grandmother was having mental problems: she believed that her children were tormenting her providing no food. In 1922 my grandmother's condition got worse. Her toe on her paralyzed foot turned black and she died of gangrene. She was buried in Novomirgorod according to the Jewish tradition.

I know very little about my mother's parents. My maternal grandmother Olga Anfert was born in Malaya Viska village, Kirovograd region, in 1875. My mother's father Isaac Anfert was born in 1870. They got married in 1899 and lived in Malaya Viska village. My grandmother and grandfather perished during a pogrom in 1919. My mother never talked about it since this was too hard to think about. They spoke Yiddish in the family. I think my grandfather and grandmother were religious, because my mother's older sister was raised religious. Grandmother Olga and grandfather Isaac had three children: two daughters and a son, born in Malaya Viska.

My mother's older sister Mariam was born in 1900. She received Jewish religious education at home. She spoke Yiddish and celebrated all Jewish holidays. Mariam also finished a Russian school in Malaya Viska. In 1922 she married Peretz Vinnitski and moved to Odessa. She worked as a secretary at the shoe factory. I remember well that Peretz always gave me Chanukkah gelt at Chanukkah. At Purim aunt Mariam made hamantashen and always had matzah at Pesach. I don't think they went to the synagogue. They had four children. Two of them died in infancy. During the war Peretz went to the front and perished. Aunt Mariam was in evacuation in Kazakhstan with us. Their children Isaac and Anna live in Odessa. Isaac works as an engineer at a plant and Anna works at a design institute. Aunt Mariam died in Odessa in 1970.

My mother's younger brother Moisey was born in 1906. He finished school in the village and moved to Odessa in 1928. In 1930s Moisey finished the College of Foreign languages in Odessa. He married Bertha, a Jewish girl, and moved to Kishinev where she lived. He was an English teacher at school. They didn't have any children. During the Great Patriotic War uncle Moisey was in evacuation in Naryan-Mar (Russia). He was released from military service due to his health condition. His wife Bertha was a doctor in hospitals at the front during the war. She died in the 1950s. Moisey died in the 1960s.

My mother Rachil Anfert was born on 13 January 1903. My mother finished a elementary school in Malaya Viska village. My mother was of average height, thin and had brown hair. She had thin features and beautiful hazel eyes. People said she looked like a Greek woman. She was smart, kind, and sympathetic. She always helped the needy. She loved my brother and me, but we were actually raised by my father. My mother had to do housekeeping besides going to work. My parents never told us how they met. I think they met in Novomirgorod. Malaya Viska was near Novomirgorod. Before the Great Patriotic War we rented a house with a gorgeous big garden every summer. We occasionally took walks to Malaya Viska village. It was a small and green house. My parents never showed us their parents' houses.

My parents got married in Kirovograd on 14 January 1924 where my father had a Komsomol assignment. My mother followed him from Novomirgorod. My father told me that he was late for his wedding at the registry office. He worked in the publishing house of a Komsomol newspaper and got a task from chief editor. My father couldn't leave the office until he finished his assignment and my mother waited for him until the registry office closed. They didn't cancel their wedding party, though. They had a Komsomol wedding. My parents rented a two-bedroom furnished apartment. My father worked in the Komsomol regional committee and my mother was assistant accountant in an office. My parents were not religious. They didn't celebrate Jewish holidays or go to the synagogue. They spoke Russian at home.

Growing Up

I was born in Kirovograd on 9 November 1925. We had a housemaid that looked after me. She lived with us for about three years. I can vaguely remember her. She didn't look young to me. She wasn't a tidy woman. I remember once stepping into my mother's galoshes and walking in the apartment when I slipped over an empty tin and injured my forehead. I still have a scar. In 1928 my father was sent to work in Odessa. My parents bought a wardrobe and dinner table from the owner of the apartment we rented and moved them to Odessa. We had them for a long time. In Odessa we lived in a communal apartment [18](#) on the 3rd floor, in a house in Olgiyeskaya Street in the central part of Odessa. There was a bathroom, a toilet and coal stoked stoves. We made stocks of coal for winter. The other tenants of our apartment were Russian. They were the family of Znoiko: a wife and husband and their grown up daughter. We got along very well with them. Vasili, the head of the family, was an ethnographer. He often went on tours. His daughter Olga was an artist and his wife Zinaida was a housewife. During the war our neighbor died and his wife died after the war. Their daughter moved to Leningrad where she worked as an artist at the china factory. A big Jewish family of the Bodners lived in the basement apartment in our house: there was a husband and wife and four children. There were three sisters: Friema, Rosa, Menia and brother Samuel. When my mother was to go to work and there was nobody to look after me my mother took me to the Bodners where I spent half a day. They were very poor. I remember that they gave me makukha [ground sunflower seed husk] to eat. During the Great Patriotic War Friema married a Polish Jew in evacuation and they moved to Poland. Friema lives in America now and her sisters Rosa and Menia live in Israel. Rosa often calls me. On the first floor of our house there was another family that were my parents' friends. The father of the family whose last name was Sosyura was an obstetrician. They didn't have children, but on New Year they arranged a party for their neighbors' children. I remember these parties since we always received gifts on them.

In 1928 my father entered Communications College in Odessa. He attended classes and mother took up any work to support the family. In 1932 after finishing the college my father got an offer to lecture at the Electric Engineering Department. I have dim memories about famine in 1933. I was 8 years old and my parents took every effort to protect me from it. All I can remember is that my mother took her only pair of gold earrings to a Torgsin [19](#) store.

On 30 March 1933 my brother Yuri was born in Odessa. I went to school in 1934 when I turned 9 years old. I missed the first grade at school since I had to look after my baby brother at home. I went to school #5 in Mechnikov Street and then my parents sent me to school #28 in Perekopskaya Pobeda Street. Both school were Russian. We had very well qualified teachers. Many of my classmates were Jewish children, but I don't remember about teachers. My favorite teachers were as follows: teacher of mathematic Georgi Khristoforovich Stoyanov and Ms. Kiriakiova, teacher of the Russian literature and language. She inspired me to read books by Pushkin, Lermontov [20](#), Chekhov, Kipling [English writer and Nobel laureate, author of The Jungle Book (1894) and Just So Stories (1902)]. I took piano lessons at the music school in the Scientists House. I had all excellent marks at school and was a pioneer. I didn't join Komsomol since nobody offered me to become a Komsomol member. I had two friends at school and they were both Jews: Inna Faiman and Zoya Lyubianskaya.

In 1934 my father became dean of Electric Engineering Faculty of Communications College. I was 12, but I remember well how in 1937 [during Great Terror] [21](#) my father's cousin brother on my grandmother's side Michael who was the town prosecutor was arrested. He spent 19 years in

prison, camps and exile where he lost his eye. In 1956 he was rehabilitated and resumed his membership in the Party. He was secretary of a big kolkhoz. He died of stomach cancer in 1959 at the age of 56. My father, who was a member of the Party had to inform the Party unit of his college of his cousin brother's arrest. He did and they started a case against my father right away and formed an investigation commission. This commission began to receive reports that my father had ties with trotskists [22](#) in Kirovograd when he worked in the regional Party committee and that being a dean at the Electric Engineering College he developed 'saboteur curriculum', kept silent about his bourgeois origin and so on: there were numerous reports. Some colleagues were turning their back against him demonstratively at work and some were just ignoring him. My mother feared that my father would be arrested. Every night she waited for a 'Black Maria' car looking out of the window.

When I grew older my father told me about the meeting where they were reviewing his personal case in college. Most of his colleagues were sitting looking downward and many had a look of fear in their eyes. Many of them made inculpatory speeches. The meeting took a decision: 'For losing his watchfulness, for his ties and cooperation with enemies of the people we expel him from the Party and submit the investigation material to NKVD' [23](#). My father was fired. His acquaintances avoided him. Only his closest friends remained with him in the trying times: assistant professors David Isaacovich Oigenzicht, Jew, and Yuri Robertovich Lang, German. They stayed in our house until late at night trying to support my father. Considering the circumstances their conduct was heroic. To support the family my father had to take up miscellaneous jobs; he worked at a plant and on construction sites. He submitted two claims of appeal requesting the town party committee bureau to reconsider his case. My father was very surprised that he was not arrested at that time. In November 1939 my father resumed his membership in the Party and got back his job.

A long waited for quietude ascended on our family. I remember Odessa in spring, in March, when the snow was melting making streams and children were still playing snowballs. I spent my childhood in the yard where there were many children. We arranged concerts and our parents even installed a stage in the yard. My father liked opera and took me to the opera theater with him. After a performance I used to hum the tunes of arias to myself. I took my brother Yuri to the kindergarten in the morning and our parents picked him in the evening. When Yuri went to school he and I went there together in the morning. Yuri was a smart boy and studied very well.

During the War

In 1939 my mother entered the College of Foreign languages in Odessa. In summer 1941 I finished the 7th form with all excellent marks, got an award of honor and my parents sent me to aunt Rosalia, my father's sister, in Kratovo, near Moscow. I arrived at Kratovo on 17 June and on 22 June the war began. I heard about it on the radio sitting at the table in the yard of my aunt's house. All I remember is that there was a lot of fuss. All became nervous. Aunt Rosalia decided that we had to go to her older son David who worked in Tashkent [Uzbekistan] after finishing the Faculty of Astronomy and Land Survey of Moscow University. Her son Mark also lived there. A month later my aunt's family and I went to Tashkent by train. My cousin brother David went to the front. We were staying with Mark. My father was already at the front. My mother and brother followed us from Odessa: they reached Kharkov by truck first and from there they traveled to Tashkent by train.

From Tashkent my mother, my brother and I went to Dzhabul region in Kazakhstan [3 800 km from Odessa] where we lived at Burnoye station in 62 km from Dzhabul. We rented a room and the owner of the room and her daughter lived in this same room, too. The comforts were in the yard. My mother went to work as English teacher at high school of the railroad department. She received a one-bedroom apartment in a house near the railroad. There was a big room heated with wood stoked stove. There was a pump and a toilet in the yard. We were very poor and didn't have anything to eat. My mother made borsch with beet leaves and flat cookies from potato peels and bran. My mother bought a goat. My brother Yuri and I took it to a pasture. I milked it and we had milk. We used to buy some food products at the market. My brother went to the second grade and I went to the eighth grade at the school where my mother was working. There were highly qualified teachers in this school. I remember our teacher of physics from Leningrad, an intelligent and cultured man. The schoolchildren were children from neighboring villages. We were in bad need of money and I worked as a librarian at school. Since I studied and worked I didn't have time to socialize and I only had few friends. There were many Jews that had evacuated from Poland. Polish Jews observed Jewish traditions. A friend of mine, a Polish Jew, invited me to his wedding. I remember very well that there was a chuppah on this wedding. I finished school in Burnoye.

In early 1944 we moved to Simferopol to be nearer Odessa. My father's friend Yuri Robertovich Lang sent us an invitation letter from Simferopol where he was working. My father was at the front. Some time later the unit where my father was working was transferred to the Crimea and my father found us and we went to his unit where they gave us a meal and we ate to our heart's content for the first time in many years. During the Great Patriotic War my father was at the front near Moscow, in Ukraine, Northern Caucasus and in the Crimea. Throughout the war he only spent 11 days in standby. In January 1945 he traveled through Odessa and then he went to Romania. After the war with Germany was over my father was sent to the war with Japan [24](#).

From Simferopol I sent my documents to Odessa Medical College and since I had all excellent marks in my school certificate they admitted me without exams. In September 1944 I went to live in Odessa. I lived in our prewar apartment. Other tenants moved into one room during the Romanian rule, but another room was vacant and I moved into it. The ceiling in my room was damaged and I pinned newspaper sheets on it to cover the holes through which I could see the sky. There was no heating and it was terribly cold. I slept in a fur jacket wrapping myself in a jacket. I also had food problems: I cut a big onion into a saucer, added some oil and salt and ate it heartily. However, I was healthy. There were many Jewish students and teachers in our college. My mother and brother also moved to Odessa in early 1945. I remember the Victory Day very well. On the morning of 9 May somebody knocked on my door. When I opened the door I heard screams 'Victory!'

After the War

My father returned to Odessa in September 1945. He arranged it through our residential department that we got our second room back and we began to live in our two rooms in the communal apartment. After the war my father became chief of the Electric Engineering Department in the Communications College. My mother finished the College of Foreign languages after the war and worked as an English teacher in the Technological College named after Lomonosov and later she went to work at the Department of Foreign languages in Communications College. My brother went to the 6th grade in Odessa. He finished school in 1950. In those years

Yuri and I had wonderfully warm and friendly relationships. We understood and respected each other. When a student I was not interested in politics, but the murder of Mikhoels [25](#) was a big shock for me. I understood that it had to do with anti-Semitism.

I met my future husband Yefim Kogan during the celebration of New Year at our home in Odessa in 1948. Yefim was our guest. We saw each other for a year. In 1949 I finished my college and got an assignment to Krasnodon Voroshilovgrad region [Mandatory Job Assignment] [26](#) where I worked as a registrar in hospital for 205 patients. Besides, I worked as a part-time therapist in a polyclinic. There was a young Jewish family working in the polyclinic: Leonid was a radiologist and his wife Sophia was a traumatologist. They were my friends. When in 1950 I came to Odessa on vacation Yefim and I decided to get married. We registered our marriage in a registry office. Our wedding party lasted three days as our parents wished. On the first day our relatives, on the second day our parents' colleagues and on the third day our friends came to the party. When my vacation was over I returned to work in Krasnodon. My husband obtained a release from my job assignment and I returned to Odessa by late 1950.

My husband Yefim was born to a Jewish family in Odessa in 1920. His father Yefim Kogan died two months before he was born and his mother named him after his father. His mother Rosalia Kogan was director of a kindergarten. She spent all her time at work and her only son was all by himself. Yefim's family wasn't religious. They didn't celebrate holidays and neither he nor his mother went to the synagogue. Yefim was fond of playing chess and attended a chess club in the house of pioneers and later he became a professional chess player. Yefim studied at the Faculty of History in Odessa University. He had finished four years [out of five] at the University before the war began. According to Stalin's direction senior students had to finish their studies in evacuation. Odessa University evacuated to Maikop. Yefim graduated from the University in Maikop and then he was sent to an artillery school and after finishing it he went to the front. Yefim was commanding officer of an artillery battery and after the war he returned home.

We lived in Yefim's apartment with his mother. This was an apartment near the toilet in the yard. There were two small rooms and entrance to them was through the kitchen. When we came to live there was not even a toilet there. We built a toilet and a closet for a primus stove. My return to Odessa coincided with two state anti-Semitic campaigns: campaign against cosmopolitanism [27](#) and 'doctors' plot' [28](#). It was very hard for me to find an employment. My acquaintances helped me to become chief of medical facility in the tobacco factory. I worked there several years.

I remember that I heard about Stalin's death in 1953 on my way to work. I was walking and crying. All people around me, all of them really, were crying. At that moment I didn't think that my father suffered during the period of arrests. Like all others, I was under the influence of the state propaganda. However, I believed in Khrushchev's denunciation [29](#) of Stalin. I knew about the famine among peasants and about what was happening to my father and many others between 1937 through 1939. In the 1950s I also faced big difficulties trying to find a job. At that time it seemed to me that this was the fault of the Stalin's government.

On 25 July 1952 our son Alexandr was born. After he was born we went to live with my parents. Since we had to go to work Alexandr had baby sitters that we had to replace frequently since they were young and didn't want to trouble themselves with looking after a child. Later, when we didn't have any baby sitters we took Alexandr to my husband's mother in the morning and picked him up

in the evening. When Alexandr grew older we moved back to Yefim's mother and Alexandr went to kindergarten. He didn't like going there and often had angina. In summer we rented a dacha [summer cottage] in the Bolshoy Fontan [resort area in Odessa] and spent all summer there. I spent all my free time at the seashore with Alexandr. He lay in the sun and bathed in the sea. In 1959 Alexandr went to school. He didn't face any anti-Semitism there, but he didn't identify himself as a Jew either. Alexandr studied well. He was a smart and bright boy and he played chess like his father. He was a very sociable boy and had many friends. His best friend was our neighbor boy Yuri Bashlykov, a Russian boy. Alexandr was very attached to his father. He always had a good time with him: Yefim knew literature, art, music and history. Alexandr was fond of light music, he had a very good ear for music. He studied in a music school and often played the piano at home.

My brother Yuri finished Communications College in 1955 and got a job assignment to 'Giprisviaz'' Institute in Kiev. He worked as an engineer. He married Clara Pekker, who was Jewish. Clara finished a college and worked at a design institute. They have three daughters. Their older daughter Olga was born in 1964. She finished a pedagogical college. She is married and has two sons. She lives in Kiev. His middle daughter Svetlana was born in 1971. She finished a college of public economy. Yulia, the youngest, born in 1980, finished the Faculty of management in a construction college. Yulia is a member of the Jewish organization for young people 'Ghilel' in Kiev. She performs in the Jewish student's theater. 2 years ago Yulia went on a trip to Israel under a students exchange program. Yuri, his wife and two younger daughters live in a small two-bedroom apartment in Rusanovskaya Naberezhnaya in Kiev. He is a pensioner.

In the 1960s I worked as a district therapist in a polyclinic. Our chief doctor Dmitri Arkadievich Tsarkovski was a Jew and 90% of doctors were Jews. I was responsible for provision of medical services to the district in Torgovaya Street near the Water Engineering College near the polyclinic. When I fell ill with myocarditis I stopped visiting patients on calls and worked as therapist at reception. My husband worked in the house of officers. He trained a men's regional chess team of Odessa and a women's national chess team of Ukraine. He was an Honored Coach of the USSR [title of honor]. In December 1961 he received a two-bedroom apartment with all comforts on the second floor of a 5-storied house on the fifth station of the Bolshoy Fontan. This is where I live now. I remember this day very well since we couldn't imagine a happier day. There was quite a story of getting new furniture. It was difficult to buy furniture at that period. My husband went to a chess tournament in Moscow and I traveled with him. We went to a furniture store where we bought a Romanian set of furniture. The problem was that it wasn't allowed to take furniture out of Moscow. My husband talked with director of the store. He showed him his certificate of Honored Coach of Ukraine and obtained his permission for transportation of the furniture. When we moved into our new apartment we arranged a great housewarming party that lasted from 7 in the evening till 7 in the morning. We invited our friends and relatives. Our friends played the guitar and sang.

My mother-in-law Rosalia Vladimirovna died in 1963. She was buried in the Jewish cemetery. In 1969 my son Alexandr entered the Faculty of Labor Economics at the College of Public Economy. He had excellent knowledge of required subjects and he was admitted without any problems. His Jewish identity had no impact on his admission. Alexandr's best friend Yuri Bashkykov also entered this college. They continued to be friends when studying in college and later, when they got married and had families. Regretfully, Yuri suddenly died at the age of 41. In 1974 Alexandr finished his college and got became an economist. He worked as logistics manager in a

construction company for some time, and then he became an economist in Odessa department of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.

In the 1960s we lived an interesting life. We celebrated all Soviet holidays: 1 May, 7 November, [October Revolution Day] [30](#), New Year, Victory Day [9 May], birthdays of members of the family and relatives. We made arrangements for each celebration making a list of guests and menus. My husband had Jewish and Russian friends: masters of sports, Honored Coaches of Ukraine. We went to theaters and concerts together. Yefim often brought records of classical operas and new books from his trips. When I met him at the railway station he had two bags when he got off a train: one with records and another one with books. We worked and Yefim also delivered lectures for which he was paid, so we were rather well off. We bought our first TV in the 1960s. My husband brought it from Moscow. We rented a dacha at the Bolshoy Fontan in summer and spent time there with our parents. When my husband went on chess tournaments I usually took a leave and joined him after the tournament was over. I visited Leningrad, Tbilisi and the Baltic Republics traveling with him. I've seen a lot.

In the 1970s Jews began to move abroad from Odessa. Many people thought it was betrayal of their Motherland and called them enemies of the people. Our family didn't consider departure and I had a neutral attitude toward those that were leaving. Daughter of my mother's distant relative moved to America with her family.

In 1973 my husband fell ill with frontitis and antritis. He went to hospital and then he was appointed as chief judge of a chess tournament in Beltsy, Moldova. Yefim left there before his treatment was over. This resulted in staphylococcal sepsis. He died from it at the age of 53. Yefim was buried in the international cemetery without following any Jewish traditions. For a long time it seemed to my son and me that Yefim had left for another tournament and was coming home soon. My friends cheered and supported me. They often came to see us and I traveled in the European part of Russia. Sometimes we bought tours in a travel agency in Odessa and sometimes in travel agencies of other towns.

My father died from prostate cancer in 1986. He had hypertension and two heart attacks. My mother died in 1991. She had fracture of femoral neck and she was bedridden for half a year. She was 88 years old. My parents were buried in the international cemetery. They were not buried in accordance with the Jewish tradition.

When the USSR fell apart the Academy of Sciences of the USSR was closed. Alexandr who had worked in the Odessa affiliate of the Academy lost his job. He couldn't find a job by his profession and went to work as a book vendor at the book market.

Alexandr married Tania Verko, a Ukrainian, in 1988. After finishing a school in her village she finished a school of photographer and worked in a photo shop. Now she works as a shop assistant in the department store. She is a very nice and sympathetic person. They live in a three-bedroom apartment in Roman Shuchevich Street. I get along very well with my daughter-in-law. My brother says that she is more than a daughter to me. My granddaughter Inga was born in June 1989. She studies in grammar school # 1. She doesn't identify herself as a Jew.

I retired in 1980, but I continued to work until 1995, when I turned 75. When in the middle of the 1990s the revival of Jewish life began I started to take more interest in the Jewish culture, history and traditions. I watch the situation in Israel with great interest and sympathy. I attend events in

the Jewish library of the University of Jewish Culture in 'Moriya' organization. They arrange interesting meetings with writers, poets, musicians, cultural workers and outstanding professors of the town. I celebrate Jewish holidays in these organizations. We celebrated Rosh Hashanah and Sukkoth in the University of Jewish Culture. On Friday I get invitations to Sabbath in the Gmilus Hesed charity center. This center provides great assistance to pensioners. We receive food packages. Besides, they have various assistance programs in this center: I've had my iron fixed. They fix shoes and clocks and in June a crew from this center did a general cleanup of my apartment. My curator often calls me to ask how I am doing and whether I need any help. I am very grateful to Gmilus Hesed for this.

Glossary:

1 Turgenev, Ivan Sergeyevich (1818-1883)

Russian writer, correspondent member of the Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences (1860). Turgenev was a great master of the Russian language and psychological analysis and he had a great influence on the development of Russian and world literature.

2 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.

3 Kuprin, Aleksandr Ivanovich (1870-1938)

Russian writer. In 1919, during the Russian Civil War, he emigrated to Paris. In 1937 he returned to Russia. Kuprin is best known for the short novel *The Duel* (1905), a story of army life in a provincial garrison, and *Captain Ribnikov* (1906), a spy story.

4 Gorky, Maxim (born Alexei Peshkov) (1868-1936)

Russian writer, publicist and revolutionary.

5 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.

6 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 WWI, 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.

7 Soviet/Russian doctorate degrees

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

8 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.

9 Babi Yar

Babi Yar is the site of the first mass shooting of Jews that was carried out openly by fascists. On 29th and 30th September 1941 33,771 Jews were shot there by a special SS unit and Ukrainian militia men. During the Nazi occupation of Kiev between 1941 and 1943 over a 100,000 people were killed in Babi Yar, most of whom were Jewish. The Germans tried in vain to efface the traces of the mass grave in August 1943 and the Soviet public learnt about mass murder after World War II.

10 Beilis case

A Jew called M. Beilis was falsely accused of the ritual murder of a Russian boy in Kiev in 1913. This trial was arranged by the tsarist government and the Black Hundred. It provoked protest from all progressive people in Russia and abroad. The jury finally acquitted him.

11 Petliura, Simon (1879-1926)

Ukrainian politician, member of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Working Party, one of the leaders

of Centralnaya Rada (Central Council), the national government of Ukraine (1917-1918). Military units under his command killed Jews during the Civil War in Ukraine. In the Soviet-Polish war he was on the side of Poland; in 1920 he emigrated. He was killed in Paris by the Jewish nationalist Schwarzbard in revenge for the pogroms against Jews in Ukraine.

12 Greens

members of the gang headed by Ataman Zeleniy (his nickname means 'green' in Russian).

13 Gangs

During the Russian Civil War there were all kinds of gangs in the Ukraine. Their members came from all the classes of former Russia, but most of them were peasants. Their leaders used political slogans to dress their criminal acts. These gangs were anti-Soviet and anti-Semitic. They killed Jews and burnt their houses, they robbed their houses, raped women and killed children.

14 Jewish self-defense movement

In Russia Jews organized self-defense groups to protect the Jewish population and Jewish property from the rioting mobs in pogroms, which often occurred in compliance with the authorities and, at times, even at their instigation. During the pogroms of 1881-82 self-defense was organized spontaneously in different places. Following pogroms at the beginning of the 20th century, collective defense units were set up in the cities and towns of Belarus and Ukraine, which raised money and bought arms. The nucleus of the self-defense movement came from the Jewish labor parties and their military units, and it had a widespread following among the rest of the people. Organized defense groups are known to have existed in 42 cities.

15 Black Hundred

The Black Hundred was an extreme right wing party which emerged at the turn of the twentieth century in Russia. This group of radicals increased in popularity before the beginning of the Revolution of 1917 when tsarism was in decline. They found support mainly among the aristocrats and members other lower-middle class. The Black Hundred were the perpetrators of many Jewish pogroms in Russian cities such as Odessa, Kiev, Yekaterinoslav and Bialystok. Although they were nowhere near a major party in Russia, they did make a major impact on the Jews of Russia, who were constantly being oppressed by their campaigns.

16 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.

17 Famine in Ukraine

In 1920 a deliberate famine was introduced in the Ukraine causing the death of millions of people. It was arranged in order to suppress those protesting peasants who did not want to join the collective farms. There was another dreadful deliberate famine in 1930-1934 in the Ukraine. The authorities took away the last food products from the peasants. People were dying in the streets, whole villages became deserted. The authorities arranged this specifically to suppress the rebellious peasants who did not want to accept Soviet power and join collective farms.

18 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 shared apartments continued to exist for decades. Despite state programs for the construction of more houses and the liquidation of shared apartments, which began in the 1960s, shared apartments still exist today.

19 Torgsin stores

Special retail stores, which were established in larger Russian cities in the 1920s with the purpose of selling goods to foreigners. Torgsins sold commodities that were in short supply for hard currency or exchanged them for gold and jewelry, accepting old coins as well. The real aim of this economic experiment that lasted for two years was to swindle out all gold and valuables from the population for the industrial development of the country.

20 Lermontov, Mikhail, (1814-1841)

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

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 Trotsky, Lev Davidovich (born Bronshtein) (1879-1940)

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

23 NKVD

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

24 War with Japan

In 1945 the war in Europe was over, but in the Far East Japan was still fighting against the anti-fascist coalition countries and China. The USSR declared war on Japan on 8 August 1945 and Japan signed the act of capitulation in September 1945.

25 Mikhoels, Solomon (1890-1948) (born Vovsi)

Great Soviet actor, producer and pedagogue. He worked in the Moscow State Jewish Theater (and was its art director from 1929). He directed philosophical, vivid and monumental works. Mikhoels was murdered by order of the State Security Ministry

26 Mandatory job assignment in the USSR

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

27 Campaign against 'cosmopolitans'

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

Jews to the eastern part of the USSR began to spread. Stalin's death in March 1953 put an end to the campaign against 'cosmopolitans'.

28 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.

29 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.

30 October Revolution Day

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