

Alexandra Ribush

If not for the fatigue which could be seen in Alexandra Maksovna's face, nothing indicated that this person lived a very hard life, having experienced all states starting from happy childhood and ending with her parents' exile and life on occupied territory and in Siberia. Notwithstanding the constant unfortunate reality, Alexandra Maksovna is very responsive in conversation. Great love towards her forefathers sounded in her voice.

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My family background

My memory often lets me down, but I remember my relatives. My maternal grandfather's name was Ziska Iosilev Ribush. In everyday life we called him Alexander Iosifovich [see common name] [1](#). I don't know when and where he was born. As a teenager he was sent to study at a cantonist [2](#) college. He graduated from the military cantonist college and was assigned to serve as a corps man in a regiment. Later he obtained medical education through military medical attendants' courses. There is a certificate, dated 1881, which proves that he graduated from the medical attendants' courses and was a certified regiment medical attendant. Upon finishing his military service he received a reference which stated that he was distinguished by excellent medical knowledge, showed effort in taking care of the patients and was recommended to the position of a zemsky [provincial] medical attendant. This certificate was dated 8th March 1883 and was signed by the officer of the 25th artillery brigade.

After allocation from the regiment he worked as a zemsky medical attendant. I don't know all his life's circumstances but I do know that as of 1905 grandpa lived and worked in Pskov. He was very famous in Pskov and had very extensive medical practice. He treated patients at home and also visited them. I still have a 'certificate', which proves that he was a district zemsky physician for the municipal medical station. The certificate was issued by the Pskov District Zemsky Council in 1918. My grandpa was remembered even in the 1950s, 25 years after his death. I overheard a conversation between two women in a Leningrad tram. They were scolding physicians who didn't treat patients properly and suddenly one woman told the other, 'We had a medical attendant in Pskov in the old times, his name was Ribush - and he was a real doctor, better than today's professors'.

My grandpa was a wealthy man. He owned a house in Pskov with a big yard. He also had a cart. There was a cook and another domestic worker, who helped in the household and raise the seven children. Grandpa was a very sociable person. He was much wealthier than his brothers were, thus some of his nephews often stayed with him. Grandpa had one brother named Natan, who lived in Pinsk with his family. His daughters Revekka and Dora visited Pskov very often. There were also other relatives but I don't remember them. My parents couldn't get me acquainted with the members of our family since they were subject to repression [during the so-called Great Terror] [3](#) and were imprisoned while I was a small girl. I know our relatives only from pictures which my mum collected when she came back from imprisonment.

Our family was very big, since there were a lot of children and many relatives came to stay. Grandpa was strict with the children. According to my mother, her brothers were very frisky and liked to banter and play tricks on people. Grandpa always took their tricks very seriously and scolded them severely. By the end of his life he started to limp and walked with a cane. I know about grandpa only from what my mother and grandma told me. He died in 1925, three years before I was born. He was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Pskov. A monument in the form of a sea-shell was placed on his grave. I don't know if the grave in Pskov is still there. Germans were on that territory and I doubt that the Jewish cemetery is still preserved today. I was told that grandpa's house is still there. My cousin Sarah Ribush, the daughter of my mother's brother Lazar, visited Pskov several times and told me that she had seen grandpa's house in front of Pogankin's Chambers, a stone building from the 17th century in the center of the city. However, when I visited Pskov with a bus tour in 1960, I couldn't find it.

Grandpa's first wife, my grandma, died of consumption in 1903, when my mother was born. I know almost nothing about her, not even her name. She gave birth to eight children. I know the names of six of them: Berta, born in 1880, Abram, born in the 1910s, Daniyl, born in the 1900s Lazar, born in the 1890s, Rosa, born in the 1890s and Berta, my mum. Two children died of consumption at a very early age. Six of them survived, but their lives took a very different course.

Grandpa got married for the second time in 1907. His second wife's name was Khaya Moiseyevna. She came from the Baltic countries, but I know nothing about her family. She raised all small kids and gave birth to Lyuba, her own daughter, in 1908. Much later, she finally raised me, too. I always considered her my grandma. She wasn't a blood relative of mine; she was better than that! She was very kind, very attentive and religious. After grandpa died in 1925, Khaya moved from Pskov to her mother's place in Leningrad. When my mother was arrested in 1937 she joined us in exile in Kazakhstan. She returned from exile to Leningrad and lived with her other daughter. She died in 1952.

Khaya spoke Russian with a very strong accent. Her mother tongue was Yiddish. She was religious, attended the synagogue regularly, observed holidays and knew Jewish cooking traditions. While in Leningrad grandma stopped to go to the synagogue in order not to put her daughters on the spot, since religiosity was persecuted [see struggle against religion] [4](#). However, when we left for Dzhankoy in Ukraine in summer, she began to attend the synagogue as soon as it became possible.

I have a picture of almost the complete family of my grandpa. The picture was taken in Pskov. On this picture are grandpa, Grandma Khaya, my mother Berta Alexandrovna and one of my mother's

sisters and my grandma's daughter Lyuba. I still have her birth certificate, dated 1908 and issued by the rabbi of Pskov in 1915 to be submitted at school. There are also three of my grandpa's sons: Daniyl, Abram and Lazar. There is uncle Lazar's daughter Malvina, grandpa's first granddaughter. There is Malvina's mother, Tsilya Yakovlevna. There were two daughters besides these family members. One of them, Berta, died in the same year my mother was born. She died of tuberculosis and mum, the new-born, was given her name. The other daughter, Rosa, by the time this picture was taken, was already married and lived in Tallinn.

Grandpa's elder son Lazar died in 1924, before I was born, but I was on friendly terms with his wife Tsilya. She died a long time ago and her daughters Malvina and Sarah remain my closest relatives. When Malvina was born in 1919, the Civil War [5](#) was at its height and it wasn't possible to send telegrams. It was only allowed to send telegrams that informed someone about someone's arrival. So the relatives received the following telegram about her birth: 'Malvina Lazarevna arrived successfully'.

I don't know anything about Uncle Abram's destiny. As a child I heard that he converted to Christianity and was turned out of his parents' house. I was shocked when I heard that but I was too shy to ask about the details. After that he sort of became a member of the Communist Party. I never heard anything about him later.

Daniyl got married and left for Riga. He didn't have children of his own and they often took Allochka, Aunt Rosa's daughter, who lived in Tallinn, to stay with them. Daniyl perished in the concentration camp in Riga when the Germans came in 1941. I communicated closely with Aunt Lyuba, Khaya Moiseyevna's daughter. She didn't have children of her own and she loved me very much. I was also very attached to her. Lyuba wasn't religious, she didn't believe in God; moreover, she shared communist views.

My mother Berta Alexandrovna Ribush, was born in Pskov in 1903. She went to school from 1910 to 1917. It was a Russian school; I think, it was a girls' grammar school. In 1924 she moved to Leningrad to study and never returned to Pskov. She entered the Military Medical Academy in Leningrad, graduated from it and worked as an oculist up to 1937. She got acquainted with her future husband in 1925 in the Military Medical Academy. They were schoolmates. They had a common-law marriage, without any religious ceremonies and official registration. This was actually common in the young Soviet intellectual circles of the time. After my grandpa died my grandma moved to live with them. I don't remember my mother telling me about her childhood. I didn't live with her for a long time together, especially as a child; besides, I never asked her to tell me about her life.

My father, Maks Solomonovich Skoblo, came from Vitebsk, a provincial town in Belarus. His family lived there. He finished the Belarus national school in Vitebsk where he studied for 10 years, from 1906 to 1916. I know nothing about my paternal great-grandfather, except that he had three sons: Sander, affectionate for Alexander, Solomon, my grandfather, and a younger son, whose name I don't remember.

My grandpa Solomon owned a small store and sold ironmongery. He was a respected man at the local synagogue. He had a very big family. I cannot imagine how he supported the whole family. They weren't very well-to-do, I would say they lived quite modestly. My grandpa probably made some money on the side. He was a very pious man and always fulfilled various public tasks he

received at the synagogue. For example, he collected notes that visitors wrote to the rabbi and read them to him after the prayer when everybody had left. He also collected money from idaka [a box for donations]. He had a place of his own there. In 1921 his son Abram took him away to England. Grandpa and Abram had problems with the Bolshevik power: they were against the Bolsheviks so they had to escape abroad to avoid a possible massacre.

Abram was engaged in the fur business in London. He also got married there. He and his wife were middle class, neither poor, nor rich. Abram's son, Max, became a physician and lived independently. We didn't keep in touch in the Soviet times, as it wasn't permitted [it was dangerous to keep in touch with relatives abroad] [6](#). Now none of his family is alive any more.

Grandma and grandpa approached their old age separately. Grandma didn't leave for England; she stayed with her children. Grandpa died in England after the war. His wife's name was Peisya Borisovna Skoblo, nee Sorkina. She was born in the 1870s. She took care of the house. She wasn't very religious, but very fussy; she was always busy with the store, while Solomon took his place at the synagogue. Peisya died of cancer in 1943, in Zlatoust, in the Urals, where she was in evacuation.

My grandparents had many children, but I only know the names of my father, Aunt Mira and my uncles Isaac and Abram. Their older daughter Rakhil died at a very young age. My father was offered a position at the department of neurosurgery at the Military Medical Academy after graduation. He got the degree of a professor very quickly and later became head of the Institute of Neurosurgery. Our family was absolutely non-religious. We didn't think about religion in those times. Although my father was a very educated man, knew Yiddish and Hebrew, and had his bar mitzvah as a child, he didn't pray or celebrate Jewish holidays as an adult during the Soviet times. He became an atheist and a communist.

We were rather well provided for. My father got a four-bedroom apartment in a big new building on 61, Lesnoy Prospect [The Specialists' House] in Leningrad. Our windows faced the prospect and the entrance was from the yard. I lived with my parents and I remember the apartment very well. It was a nice, modern apartment with central heating, a bathroom, and a telephone. It was equipped with antique furniture that my mother bought in commission stores. When my father was arrested in 1937, the furniture was confiscated.

However, my parents weren't rich. My father returned the bigger part of his income to the pay fund. As a communist he didn't have the right to earn more than the party-max [Party payment maximum limit], which was much less than his salary. For one, if the salary was 1,000 rubles and the party-max was 700 rubles, he returned 300 rubles in the form of a party fee. My father submitted an application to join the Party at the Leningrad Military Academy, but he had already been involved in some party activities in Vitebsk before he entered the academy. If he hadn't been a party member, it would have been impossible for him to take on the position of head of the Neurosurgery Institute. All top managers in any organization were trustworthy people and loyal to the Party. At those times we were absolutely sure that communists, members of the Communist Party, were worthy people, who were entrusted by the Party to fill such important posts.

Growing up

My parents went to work and my grandma maintained the household. Certainly she never let anyone disturb her solemn performance in the kitchen. There were two kids: myself and my brother Volodya, who was five years younger than me. I was born in 1928. We had a nanny. When I was small I had a nanny called Tanya. Later, when I grew up, she got married but continued to visit me from time to time. When my brother was born, we took another nanny, Lyuba. Both nannies were Russian.

My brother was born on 7th November 1933, October Revolution Day [7](#). He was named after V.I. Lenin, since our parents were Bolsheviks. My father was a member of the Communist Party, and he was a very sincere and convinced communist. My mother wasn't a party member, but she adhered to the same views. All official newspapers and other party publications were read in our family.

We only spoke Russian at home. My mother understood Yiddish, but she couldn't speak it. My father knew both Yiddish and Hebrew, but never used them in his day-to-day life. Besides, he had an excellent command of English and French. We didn't celebrate traditional Jewish holidays in the family. Well, maybe my grandma did, but not publicly. She observed everything; she found matzah somewhere, probably at the synagogue. It wasn't easy to procure matzah in those times. Since then I've always tried to buy matzah for Pesach, though we aren't really religious. However, what we always had in our family were Jewish savory dishes.

My grandma was good at cooking. I remember meals like teyglakh and tsimes. Teyglakh was flour balls mixed with sugar, walnut, almond and honey, roasted in oil. I remember these names from my childhood, though these dishes weren't 'officially' declared as Jewish food. My grandma cooked kosher food, but I didn't know it at the time. When I grew up I understood why grandma didn't mix dairy and meat products and understood that it was the kashrut requirement. But as a child I wasn't aware of that.

On days off my dad always took me somewhere. We tried to 'escape' so that my brother wouldn't be foisted off on us. He was small and it was no fun for my dad to spend time with him. Dad took me everywhere: to the zoo, to children's shows at the movie theater. Besides, I studied in a ballet group. When I was seven or eight years old, we left for Dzhankoy in summer and stayed with my dad's brother Isaac Solomonovich. I don't remember clearly, but it seems to me that Isaac was an atheist, he had a biological education. Dzhankoy is a town in the Crimea, now in Ukraine. He took three families with him and we rented a house together. Grandma Khaya could attend the synagogue freely to pray there.

In 1937 dad was arrested on the basis of slanderous denunciation. Mother was arrested right after him as the wife of an 'enemy of the people' [8](#). There existed this term: members of the parricides' families. They were accused of knowing, but not informing the authorities about the 'criminal design'. My mother stayed in prison for five years at Yaya station, as the wife of a repressed one; it was a wide spread phenomenon. After the camp she was forced to work as a physician for the Ministry of Internal Affairs [MIA]. After the arrest and the verdict my father stayed in prison for nine years; at first in a camp in Magadan, where he worked as a stoker in a bath-house. My father was a professor, a neurosurgeon, he knew several languages and got this job 'unofficially'. Those who fulfilled the required amount of work at the timber processing sites, basically didn't survive.

Once my father was absorbed in a book, a small and pathetic-looking English book. He read it in the light of the stove fire. He didn't hear the inspectors approach. When the supervisors arrived, he

was punished immediately. First they threw him into the punishment-cell. Then they transferred him to the position of a grave-digger. He would have died for sure, if not for the new camp management. A new head was appointed, who believed that people should be evaluated properly or, at least, made reasonable use of. There were no good physicians in Magadan, so imprisoned doctors were assigned to work at the municipal hospital. They were taken to work under an escort.

Dad was a good doctor. He was later appointed head of the neural department of the municipal hospital. He was a prisoner, but treated all members of the camp and municipal management. At first we knew nothing about my father's destiny, but later my mother managed to find him and they kept in touch. When he returned after the war he told us in detail about his life in the camp. In 1946 my dad was released. He came to Tomsk and worked there for two years. He was arrested for the second time and exiled to the small station of Reshety near Kansk in Eastern Siberia. He was deprived of all rights and had to visit the MIA department every month for registration. He couldn't leave the place either. He lived and worked relatively freely and advised people. However, this routinely medical work at a tiny station didn't comply at all with the level and possibilities of a professor of medicine. In 1948, in the course of the second tide of Stalin's repressions, those who had been previously arrested, served their time in a camp and had been released, were imprisoned again based on new accusations. A lot of biologists were imprisoned in Tomsk at that time.

During the war

After my parents were arrested in 1937, my brother, my grandma and I were exiled from Leningrad. Grandma Khaya didn't let me and my brother be taken to a children's home, so we were banished. Nanny Lyuba didn't forsake us and joined us. We lived in Kazakhstan in a very small village called Dzharkul. We led a hard life. Grandma took a sewing-machine with her and sewed dresses for local citizens. She was paid in kind for this work, not money. There was never enough money. Uncle Isaac, my father's brother, as well as Aunt Lyuba, my mother's sister, sent us some money from time to time. This was how we survived in exile. Uncle Isaac never stopped soliciting for us. I still have some of the requests, which he submitted in order to get permission for us to return.

Grandma remained in exile and nanny brought me and my brother to Leningrad. The trip to Leningrad took place in fall 1937 because grandma was old and, being in exile, she wasn't able to take care of two children. Our father was imprisoned as well as our mother. So it was decided to distribute us among relatives, who were able to give us shelter. I lived with Uncle Isaac's family and went to school for some time. I only remember that time very vaguely; the school was a common Russian one. I had no friends, I was afraid to be chums with anyone. If asked, I wasn't allowed to tell anyone that my parents were 'enemies of the people' and in a camp. My brother Volodya was accepted by my mother's relative Grigory Moiseyevich Klouberman. I stayed in Leningrad and my brother was taken away to the town of Velikiye Luki. Grandma Khaya came back from exile to Leningrad in 1939 and stayed with her daughter Lyuba, who lived on the Petrograd Side.

In 1941 the war began [see Great Patriotic War] [9](#). Leningrad was besieged in September by the Germans [see Blockade of Leningrad] [10](#). The Klouberman family, with whom my brother lived, left Velikiye Luki for Zlatoust in the Urals. Grandma and Aunt Lyuba left for the same place. No one chose his place of evacuation. People simply went where the train took them. In 1942, during the blockade, Isaac Solomonovich's family was taken away into evacuation. There were six of us: Uncle

Isaac, his wife Vera, their children Lyonya and Inna, Vera's mother and myself.

Aunt Vera worked at the 1st Medical Institute, which was evacuated to Kislovodsk. Unexpectedly we got into German occupation there. All adults were executed. The three of us, children, were saved by a Russian woman called Varvara Alekseyevna Tsvelenyova. I was 13 years old at the time. We lived in various apartments. Our landlady was a nice woman, but her husband and son were anti-Semites. They owned a house. Varvara Alekseyevna worked with Vera Isaacovna, the wife of dad's brother Isaac. She was evacuated from Leningrad along with the 1st Medical Institute. They were evacuated in the same train, in a heated goods' carriage. That's where they became friends. They hadn't known each other before. Varvara was very young; she was 27 years old and she wasn't married. Her brother was at the front. Varvara Alekseyevna came to Kislovodsk, which was occupied by the Germans, because of her old mother, who was in hospital. That's why she couldn't leave Kislovodsk on foot when the Germans approached the town. She was very young and didn't want to abandon her mother. When the Jews were gathered in Kislovodsk for execution, she took us to stay with her.

The Germans arrived in Kislovodsk on 11th August 1942. The first order issued by them was related to Jews: Jews were told to wear yellow stars. The second order said that all food products which had been stolen from the warehouses, were to be returned. At the beginning of September all Jews were ordered to gather at an appointed place at the railroad station. People were allowed to carry 20 kilograms of belongings and food with them. It was announced that everybody would be taken to unsettled areas in Ukraine. When the Germans announced this order we understood that we wouldn't be able to stay with our landlords. Aunt Varvara came and began to persuade Uncle Isaac and Aunt Vera to leave the children with her. They didn't want to do it, since they were really afraid for Varvara, as she could have been executed for that. However, she managed to persuade them.

The adults certainly suspected where they were really going to be taken. I, just a child back then, thought that they would be taken to the ghetto. Although we were just children we heard what the adults talked about and understood perfectly a lot of the things that were happening around us. We grew up at an early age. Of course it was impossible that they would be brought to some unsettled areas in Ukraine. When it was time to take our luggage and go to the appointed place, Inna, Leonid and myself went to Aunt Varvara's instead. All Jews were loaded onto the train, brought to Mineralny Vody and executed there. At first there were only rumors about it, but later on we found out that it was true. Later a monument was erected at that spot.

Employees of the 1st Medical Institute, who remained in Kislovodsk, had no means to live on. There was this professor Schaag, he was a German and he wasn't anti-Semitic. He obtained permission from the occupation officials to open a Medical Institute in Kislovodsk. A lot of young people were eager to attend paid studies. This was during the occupation. One of the buildings of the health center was meant for studies. There was a room in the building where Varvara hid us. Aunt Varvara lived in the laboratory, in which she worked. The laboratory was located in a big building. There was also one of these organizers of the NEMVAKHO Institute, who came from Leningrad, and worked with Schaag. He gave us this room for hiding. Varvara, her mother and the three of us lived in this room in the Medical Institute. We sold everything we had in order to buy food. It was my obligation to sell: I became a seller at the market place at the age of twelve. Later Aunt Varvara started to work at the Medical Institute and got a small salary. So there was a possibility to survive, however, we had to steal the firewood: we stole from the Germans and sawed dry trees, since

there was something like a park near the health center.

I didn't look like a Jew when I was a little girl, so it wasn't difficult for me to go anywhere. Lyonya and Inna did look like Jews: their noses were long and hooked, their eyes were large, their skin was pale-blue and their hair was black and curly. Their faces and skull were of recognizable Jewish type. They were very small, so they stayed indoors all the time. Only late at night they could go for a walk in the nearest park. Besides, our main entertainment was to play upstairs in the mezzanine of 'our' one-and-a-half- storied health center. The mezzanine was made of colored glass and we spent almost all our time there. Of course, we understood the 'rules' perfectly. Once Inna went outside, drew squares on the ground and played hopscotch. A woman came up to her and asked her name. Inna told her as I had taught her to answer. So it turned out all right. After that she had no more conversations with anyone there.

We stayed at the health center until 11th January 1943. The Germans left Kislovodsk without any combat, the same way as they had occupied it. Two days after their retreat our [Soviet] army arrived and we started to look for a possibility to correspond with our mum. Mum should have already been freed from the camp by that time. Our aunt, my mother's cousin Grigory Moiseyevich Klouberman's wife, with whom my brother Volodya lived, received the first letter. They lived in Velikiye Luki first, later got evacuated to the Urals and lived in Chelyabinsk region. The town was named Tankograd during the war. She didn't know my mum's address at that time, because my mum had just been released from prison and was trying to get a job at the children's penal colony. The latter wrote to my mum and she found us.

Varvara Alekseyevna was a very kind woman; she tried to entertain and teach us. We didn't have any books, there were no libraries, so she narrated books to us, which she had read in her childhood. Kipling's Kim made an unforgettable impression on me back then. [Editor's note: Kipling, Rudyard (1865-1936): English short-story writer, poet and novelist.] I read it later, as an adult, and was quite disappointed. Varvara also narrated ancient Greek myths and different movies. She was a very educated woman. After we were released she came to Tomsk, too. There was an affiliate of the Leningrad Medical Institute. Those who got evacuated 'in a proper way', were taken to Tomsk, not to Kislovodsk. Aunt Varvara was offered a job there and she decided to stay. She was also offered a room. She worked there and defended her thesis later. In the last years of her life she lived in Leningrad and defended her thesis for a Doctor's degree. Before her retirement she left for the Far East, where she was offered another job. She lived in Vladivostok for six months. She never got married, but she had a son, who is still alive.

After the war

We knew everything about my father and received letters from him. We knew nothing about my mum for a long time, since she was in prison and was deprived of the right to correspond. Dad managed to send her a message about us by prisoners' mail. He told her that my brother and I were alive and lived with our relatives. After Kislovodsk was freed in January 1943 we and Varvara Alekseyevna wrote to all the addresses where our relatives had ever lived. This kind of chain method worked. My mother was told that we were alive, that the children were alive and that the adults had all perished. My mother worked as an oculist at the children's penal colony # 2 near Tomsk.

There were a lot of colonies and places of detention in that region. When colony inmates under age were released, they were sent home under an escort. There was this boy who was sent home to Kislovodsk. His convoy also took the three of us, children, Varvara Alekseyevna, her mother and another kid from a Cossack [11](#) village, not far from Kislovodsk, along with him. He brought us to the colony near Kislovodsk. That's how I met my mum for the first time after ten years of separation. Me, Leonid and Inna came to Tomsk. I remember how we first traveled by train, then on board a ship to the colony where my mum lived. When we met, we all cried: mum cried, I cried, everybody was so glad. My mother had changed a lot, she had grown old and all her hair was gray. I also cried because I realized that I hadn't seen my mother for ten years and I hadn't seen how she lived all that time without me. However, I always knew and believed that mum would be back and that she thought about me and my brother while she was gone.

My mother and father kept in touch from the moment my mum was released and appointed to work at the children's settlement. We came to Tomsk in 1943 and in 1946 my dad arrived. Thus we all met again. Grandma Khaya returned to Leningrad and lived with her daughter Lyuba. I changed schools of course because of the exile, moving and other military events. After I finished the 8th grade at the colony school, I had to go to Tomsk, because there was no possibility to receive higher education in the colony. I accomplished my education at school # 12 [12](#) in Tomsk. I had to pass a lot of exams without attending studies. I finished the 4th, the 6th and the 8th grade. Teachers were always very friendly to me because studying came easily to me. I managed to do everything. My favorite subjects at school were physics and mathematics.

Best of all I remember our teacher of German. He was a very interesting person. His Russian name was Mikhail Ilyich. He was a Jew from Moldova. He had studied in France, had graduated from the Sorbonne [in France] and had come back to Moldova right before the war. He was immediately banished to Siberia. He came to Tomsk, not knowing the Russian language. We taught him Russian and he taught us German. There was the following incident: he read a book to us and couldn't translate something. We tried to explain to him the difference between a sheep and a harrow. He taught Latin and French at the Medical Institute and German in our school and in another school. Mikhail Ilyich devoted so much time and efforts to us! He arranged clubs, staged performances and so on. Teaching was separate at that time, so boys from the boys' school took part in performances.

Our teacher of history was also an interesting person, his name was Lechter and he was a Jew, too. One could read in his face that he was a Jew, besides, he couldn't pronounce the 'r' properly. He was an old Red Army man. He was all covered with scars, had a wooden leg, and a scar across his face. His understanding of history didn't comply with the views of Mikhail Ilyich, who had graduated from the faculty of history at the Sorbonne. We always eavesdropped on their disputes. They certainly chased us away, but we tried to grasp the core of their disputes pressing our ears to the door. Sometimes we succeeded. We listened to their mutual attacks with great interest. So, when perestroika [13](#) started I easily freed myself from propaganda phrases and official dogmas. We were very lucky to have such teachers.

I finished school in Tomsk in 1946. After school I entered Tomsk University, the faculty of physics. I had no problems with entering; problems only came later, in 1948. I wasn't expelled from university, but I didn't have the right to choose the department where I wanted to study. I studied at the physics/mathematics faculty, but the time came to choose a more narrow profession. I was

offered only two specialties: at the solid-state physics subfaculty and at the subfaculty of electricity. They weren't deemed secret, military or interesting. All the rest - electromagnetic oscillations, optics - were prohibited for me. I chose solid-state physics. Now solid-state physics is the most secret field. At that time we dealt with the easiest issues.

At the end of the 1940s, beginning of the 1950s anti-Semitism increased a lot in the USSR. It revealed itself in official propaganda, staff policy, public opinion and in everyday life [see campaign against 'cosmopolitans'] [14](#). I didn't feel any anti-Semitism while in Siberia. I felt oppression because my father was declared an enemy of the people. I wasn't allowed to choose the profession I was interested in. I was accepted to the faculty where they didn't have enough students. I didn't get what I chose, but something I was allowed or assigned to. For instance: all my co-students at university went to do practical work at the Kuznetsk metallurgical combine. I wasn't allowed to go since the enterprise belonged to the 1st category of secrecy [see access to state secret] [15](#). So I had to do my practical work at a small mechanical plant in Tomsk.

When I graduated from university in 1951 I was deprived of the right to continue my post-graduate studies, as I was the daughter of an enemy of the people. The fact that I was a Jewess, my nationality, didn't mean anything: children of enemies of the people, who were Russian by nationality weren't accepted either, and literally weren't allowed to live a normal life. The 'enemy of the people' was not simply a national problem, but a social and a political one. I was assigned to work in a laboratory of the V.V. Kuibyshev heavy engineering plant in Irkutsk. There was no possibility to choose either. In general there was a wide choice, but I was only allowed to go to either Krasnoyarsk or Irkutsk. So I worked there up until 1958. It was a laboratory plant. I worked there as a senior engineer in the laboratory of the physical metallurgy. My responsibility was to determine solidity and durability. If something got broken because of some hidden flaw, I was supposed to detect the flaw.

I didn't feel humiliated for being a Jew. Four fifth of my friends were Russians. I still have friends from my student's years. Volodya Bordukhov came from the family of servicemen. He was born at Bolotnaya station in Siberia. Only military units were located there. He came to Tomsk to study and we met there. 30 years have passed since the moment he told me, 'You know, I always knew that it's bad to be a Jew, though I never knew any Jews. And here I am at the institute where I find a lot of great guys and girls, and they are Jews.' It was like a bomb exploding for him. Graduates from our university meet every five years. Our first gathering was arranged here, in Leningrad in 1966. It was the 15th anniversary of our graduation. After that we met regularly in Moscow and in Novosibirsk. Starting from the 25th anniversary we met every five years in Tomsk. I went there this year, too, and a lot of my university mates came. It's very expensive to go there. I am a blockade survivor and have the right to travel free of charge, so it would have been a sin not to go. It's very nice in Siberia in winter. I feel much better there than in Leningrad.

My husband is Russian; his name is Vasiliy Vladimirovich Kytmanov. He was born in Irkutsk in 1927. He speaks Russian, he is Russian by passport, though he comes from Ufa, on his mother's side. He also had Tatars as relatives on his father's side. His mother's last name was pure Russian: Yachkova. Her first name was Varvara Vladimirovna. His father's name was Kytmanov Vladimir Stepanovich. He died when my husband was 14 years old. His mother died before, when he was small. He was considered an orphan. His father got married for a second time and his wife didn't acknowledge his children; my husband has a younger brother, Gennadiy. That's why he lived with

various aunts from his mother's side; they raised him jointly.

Vasiliy studied in an industrial school in Irkutsk and stayed there to work as a metal turner. He started to study there in 1942 after his father died. In 1955 he got transferred to the V.V. Kuibyshev heavy engineering plant, where I worked. We both went in for sports: I was fond of track and field athletics, and my husband liked rowing. There were competitions held in the city under the title 'Circle around the city', in which representatives of various kinds of sports took part. We got acquainted during one of those sports events and later we figured out that we worked at one and the same plant. We were in one sports team. There was this woman, Valentina Victorovna, who arranged all these competitions. She was called 'sports business organizer'. She was managing the sports department at the plant and we all hung out there often and got acquainted there. It also turned out that Valentina Victorovna was born on 9th December, just like me, as well as my husband, though he was born a year earlier than me. So we decided to celebrate our birthdays jointly with our sports team. We were placed at one table as the 'main characters' of the date. Since that time we've never parted.

My husband studied at a heavy engineering school before he started to work at the industrial school. Besides working at the plant he also studied at the mechanical department of the Agricultural Institute. He became a mechanical engineer after graduating from the institute in 1958. Our daughter Irina was born in 1958.

My husband's relatives were working class people. None of his brothers or sisters was subject to repressions. All his numerous uncles and aunties treated me like their own daughter. My husband and his relatives are real Russian people, though they don't attend the Russian Orthodox Church at all, so there were never any disagreements when it came to faith.

I didn't feel any anti-Semitism until I returned to Leningrad in 1958. When I arrived I started to work at the Arsenal plant. It's a secret artillery plant. Later the plant started to produce satellites. The attitude there was decent enough. However, when I decided to take a job at the Scientific and Research Institute, I was rejected as a Jew. I don't look like a Jew by appearance, but Jewish is stated as my nationality in my passport. Everything went well at the beginning, we even agreed upon the payroll. When I brought my passport to the manager, he looked at it and said: 'You know, this position is already taken'. I stayed at the plant and worked there until I retired in 1976. I retired very early. I had the right to retire at the age of 45, but did so when I was 50 something I think, I was 52 at that time. [Editor's note: Starting from the 1960s retirement age in the USSR was established 60 years for men and 55 years for women. Military men, also those who worked at hazardous production enterprises and people who worked in the utmost North retired at the age of 45.]

Later I returned a few times to the plant, when it had difficult, 'hot' times. As I said before, I don't really look like a typical Jew, so I never faced any hostility in everyday life. I was mostly surrounded by decent people. Though sometimes there were anti-Semitic hints. For instance, our household manager, when I asked for some materials for the laboratory, once told me, 'You are pestering me with requests like a Jewish woman'. And I replied, 'Why like? I am one.' She was close to dropping on her knees and began to beg for forgiveness.

In general I was always a very sociable person and I had a lot of Russian friends. We celebrated Soviet holidays together. My favorite holiday was New Year's, but not the Jewish New Year, I mean

the one common to all mankind. I didn't celebrate Jewish holidays, I even forgot about them. I don't know where I got time and strength: Saturdays were working days, there was only one day off, on Sunday. And going to work by public transport required a lot of time. Our family never owned a car; that was a rarity and luxury we couldn't afford. I never had any spare time, as I was always a very active public person, a member of the YCL [Young Communist League] and a sportswoman. Actually I went to extremes. I went in for track and field athletics and free calisthenics simultaneously. A lot of young people were fond of sports in those years. Being young I was a true YCL member. I believed everything we were told about communism, the Soviet power, etc. I believed that God didn't exist and thought that only illiterate old people believed in Him.

First doubts came to my mind when I was a student at the institute. We studied Clause IV of the 'Short Historical Course of the All-Union Communist Party (b)'. The clause was related to the Marxism-Leninism philosophy. Our teacher very passionately told us that no one had been able to write such a Clause, so comrade Stalin had written it himself. He appeared to be the only decent man of all, concealed his authorship, never told anyone about it because he was very modest. Immediately a question arose for me. What kind of modest person could he be if he called himself the father of genius, etc. So these were the doubts I had. I at once recalled my school teachers' disputes, which we had overheard in our childhood. However, those doubts were quite vague, since I was absolutely Soviet. I believed that dad had been slandered and it had nothing to do with Stalin. The policy of the Party was quite definite but I knew that dad hadn't been able to act against the Party and I thought that he had been slandered. That was what I thought at that time, though later on I reached other conclusions.

When Stalin died in 1953 we were very young. I wasn't married at that time yet, lived in the dormitory and worked at the plant in Irkutsk. The country was in deep mourning, people were crying. I didn't cry. I hoped that since he had died, my parents would have an easier life. However, being an active YCL member, I stood guard of honor at the Stalin monument on the territory of the plant yard. Life was really so double-sided! We were one thing outwardly, but deep inside something different already started to ripen.

In 1948 my father was imprisoned and we lost touch with him; there was no information about him. In 1949 a group of physicians was sent from Tomsk to have a close look at prisons in Novosibirsk. One of the doctors recognized my dad, as she had met him before. He was in the prison hospital. She wasn't able to tell my mother since they weren't acquainted; she only knew my dad. She sent this information to me through her son, with whom I had gone in for sports in Tomsk. She said that my mother immediately had to go to a certain hospital in Novosibirsk, where my dad was staying at the time. My mum went there and had to visit all the managers until she finally obtained permission for my father to get smooth prison treatment. He was allowed to leave with my mum and was exiled to the town of Kansk.

Later my mother took my brother Volodya away from Tomsk. I studied in Irkutsk at the time. They lived together in Kansk up to 1951: my father, mother and Volodya. I kept in touch with them. My mother was free and my father had to go to the militia station to register in order to prove that he hadn't left or escaped. Volodya left to study at Irkutsk Polytechnic Institute in 1951.

After Stalin had died in 1953, my parents returned to Leningrad. They lived with my father's sister Mira. Later, in 1955, with the help of the district party committee they obtained an apartment. It

was at a time when those who returned from imprisonment acquired apartments. My father was very sick and wasn't able to work properly, to his full capacity that is, so he worked as a consultant-neuropathologist at the Psychiatric Hospital #2. In 1958 me, my husband and our little daughter moved to Leningrad and lived with my parents in their two-bedroom apartment, so there were five of us: my dad, my mum, me, my husband and our daughter. My brother Volodya left for Ulan- Ude to work at that time. My husband transferred from the Irkutsk plant to the Leningrad plant, so he didn't have to look for a job. One of the plants was looking for exactly the specialist my husband was. My parents lived in Leningrad in their own apartment and I obtained an apartment from the plant I was working at. I lived there with my husband and our daughter. After the war my mother worked as an oculist at a clinic. She retired in 1963. My father retired in 1959. He died in 1963. We buried him in the Jewish cemetery in Leningrad. My mum died in 1971 and her grave is near my dad's.

The Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973 didn't really have any influence on me [see Six-Day War [16](#) and Yom Kippur War [17](#)]. I simply didn't understand the core of the conflicts and the strife. I didn't know what kind of people these Arabs were. I didn't really care about it either. Later on I figured out a lot for myself. Last year my daughter visited Israel. She came back delighted, told me about the Wailing Wall, about the sanctuaries of our nation. She told me a lot and I began to understand what kind of country Israel, our historical motherland, was.

My world view changed bit by bit. By the time perestroika started I was almost completely disappointed in everything we had been taught, in every single dogma that had been imposed on us. When the democratic changes began in this country with Gorbachev [18](#), I was ready to accept the changes and stopped believing in communism being our bright future. After the country fell apart we at first trusted Gaidar's government reforms and believed that he would be able to do something. Later all those political games began to bore us. I ceased paying attention to them. I simply live today, the moment. I see my friends and relatives though our relations develop in different ways.

My husband and I were no friends with my younger brother Volodya. He was five years younger than me. We grew up separately. Volodya was three years old when my mum was arrested. He stayed with us in Kazakhstan. He finished ten years of school in Kansk and entered the Irkutsk Polytechnical Institute, subfaculty of geology. That was in 1951. I graduated from the institute at the time he entered it. However, after the 2nd year of his studies when our parents returned to Leningrad he moved in with them and continued to study at the Leningrad State University, at the faculty of geology, from 1952 to 1956. He was accepted to the previous year of study. After his graduation he stayed in Leningrad and started to work but he felt bored with it. In a year he got an assignment and left for Ulan-Ude and worked there until he retired. He defended a Ph.D. thesis there and became a candidate of geological science. After he retired he moved to Irkutsk. He was married and had a son, Sasha, born in 1958. Volodya's wife, Ninel Abramovna Lyanina is a half-Jew; her mother was Russian. She wasn't very religious. She got adapted to his temper. At first they lived in Ulan-Ude and then they moved to Irkutsk. They had a big apartment there. Volodya and Ninel lived in harmony until he died of a heart attack in 1999 in Irkutsk.

I always loved and still love my cousins, Lyonya and Inna, Uncle Isaac's children. We lived together before the war and were together on the occupied territory in Kislovodsk. I also keep contact with my cousins on my mother's side, Lazar and Tsilya's daughters. Sarah, who was born in 1925, lives

in Leningrad. We meet often, though she cannot walk a lot and mostly stays at home. Her older sister Malvina, born in 1919, went to Wroclaw in Poland after her husband died. Her daughter Zhenya married a Pole in the 1950s and left for Poland with him. Malvina stayed in Leningrad. Her husband died last year and her daughter took her away. Malvina didn't want to leave, but their house is in the center of the city, near the Spartak movie theater, and some rich man purchased all apartments in this house. So she was forced to sell her apartment and leave. It isn't easy for her to live there, as she doesn't know Polish, and thus she cannot go anywhere alone. We talk on the phone, but not often because it's too expensive.

I also have another cousin, Maya Isaacovna Lanina Shifrina, who lives in America. She is the daughter of Mira's father's sister. She left twenty years ago. We are not great friends. She never invited me and I don't want to go for a visit.

I put all my hopes in my daughter Irina. We moved in with my husband in Leningrad in 1958. She grew up here, finished school and graduated from the Institute of Culture. She worked at the Academy of Arts and at the Institute of Culture. Now she works as head of library for the Scientific and Research Institute of the History of Art, located on Isaaciyevesky Square. She has a very interesting job, though her salary is very low. She was offered a job with a payroll of 300 USD, but she preferred to stay with her 700 rubles [20 USD]. She could afford to do so since she doesn't have a family of her own and lives with her mum and dad. Irina isn't married since she hasn't met a decent man. In 1995 she studied for five months in America, at the University of Champaign [in Illinois]. She won the Soros [19](#) Fund grant for studying the newest librarian methods. Unfortunately, only a few of these novelties can be applied in our conditions. Everything new requires a lot of money and the institute doesn't even have funds to buy new books.

My daughter took part in many conferences: in Lithuania and in the Crimea. Last year she visited Israel and came back very delighted. She liked everything very much. Besides, she has a friend, who lives in Israel. They worked together. She came to visit him after the conference and he showed her many towns. You know, she is more Jewish than I am. She attends the synagogue and celebrates all Jewish holidays. She has a lot of friends, both Russian and Jewish. I'm very glad about her success.

Certainly at some times life was very difficult when it came to our financial situation. My pension is very small and we live poorly. It's good that the Jewish community provides help. As a member of the prisoner's society I receive parcels on a regular basis: every month. There is also other help: I wear glasses which I can buy at a very low price; I go to the theater and I went on a trip to Kronstadt. This is all thanks to the community. We also have meetings with the prisoners' society. We get together and stay in contact. We listen to lectures about Jewish traditions and read about the history and holiday customs in books, which are part of the holiday parcels. I would like to take a more active part in the life and work of this society, but haven't succeeded so far because I'm not used to active social and religious life. There always appears something more important for me in this life. Usually I spend my evenings with my husband.

I began to reflect on genuine values and the subject of eternity when I grew older. I began to understand that I was born a Jew and that there is a certain sense to it. I'm not really attracted by the religion but by the Jewish traditions and ceremonies, as well as everything else connected with the life of the Jews. This is ours, this is real, and all we were taught is just a husk. I'm trying to

celebrate Jewish holidays. I'm trying to cook meals which are described in Jewish cooking books. I don't always succeed, but at least I try. It's important for me because my conscience tells me that I have to think about my soul and about the memories I will leave behind after I die.

Glossary:

1 Common name

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

2 Cantonist

The cantonists were Jewish children who were conscripted to military institutions in tsarist Russia with the intention that the conditions in which they were placed would force them to adopt Christianity. Enlistment for the cantonist institutions was most rigorously enforced in the first half of the 19th century. It was abolished in 1856 under Alexander II. Compulsory military service for Jews was introduced in 1827. Jews between the age of 12 and 25 could be drafted and those under 18 were placed in the cantonist units. The Jewish communal authorities were obliged to furnish a certain quota of army recruits. The high quota that was demanded, the severe service conditions, and the knowledge that the conscript would not observe Jewish religious laws and would be cut off from his family, made those liable for conscription try to evade it. Thus, the communal leaders filled the quota from children of the poorest homes.

3 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.

4 Struggle against religion

The 1930s was a time of anti-religion struggle in the USSR. In those years it was not safe to go to

synagogue or to church. Places of worship, statues of saints, etc. were removed; rabbis, Orthodox and Roman Catholic priests disappeared behind KGB walls.

5 Civil War (1918-1920)

The Civil War between the Reds (the Bolsheviks) and the Whites (the anti-Bolsheviks), which broke out in early 1918, ravaged Russia until 1920. The Whites represented all shades of anti-communist groups - Russian army units from World War I, led by anti-Bolshevik officers, by anti-Bolshevik volunteers and some Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. Several of their leaders favored setting up a military dictatorship, but few were outspoken tsarists. Atrocities were committed throughout the Civil War by both sides. The Civil War ended with Bolshevik military victory, thanks to the lack of cooperation among the various White commanders and to the reorganization of the Red forces after Trotsky became commissar for war. It was won, however, only at the price of immense sacrifice; by 1920 Russia was ruined and devastated. In 1920 industrial production was reduced to 14% and agriculture to 50% as compared to 1913.

6 Keep in touch with relatives abroad

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

7 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.

8 Enemy of the people

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

9 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.

10 Blockade of Leningrad

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

11 Cossack

A member of a people of southern European Russia and adjacent parts of Asia, noted as cavalymen especially during tsarist times.

12 School #

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

13 Perestroika (Russian for restructuring)

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

14 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'.

15 Access to state secret

secrecy at Soviet Defense enterprises restricted access to official information, materials and documents. There existed three categories of secrecy, the first category being the highest. Access to secret information was issued by the KGB. When the first wave of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union occurred in the early 1970s, many people were refused the exit visa on the grounds of "access to state secret," which was determined by these categories of secrecy.

16 Yom Kippur War

The Arab-Israeli War of 1973, also known as the Yom Kippur War or the Ramadan War, was a war between Israel on one side and Egypt and Syria on the other side. It was the fourth major military confrontation between Israel and the Arab states. The war lasted for three weeks: it started on 6th October 1973 and ended on 22nd October on the Syrian front and on 26th October on the Egyptian front.

17 Six-Day-War

The first strikes of the Six-Day-War happened on 5th June 1967 by the Israeli Air Force. The entire war only lasted 132 hours and 30 minutes. The fighting on the Egyptian side only lasted four days, while fighting on the Jordanian side lasted three. Despite the short length of the war, this was one of the most dramatic and devastating wars ever fought between Israel and all of the Arab nations. This war resulted in a depression that lasted for many years after it ended. The Six-Day-War increased tension between the Arab nations and the Western World because of the change in mentalities and political orientations of the Arab nations.

18 Gorbachev, Mikhail (1931-)

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

19 Soros, George (1930-)

International philanthropist, born in Budapest, Hungary. He emigrated to England in 1947 and graduated from the London School of Economics in 1952. In 1956, he moved to the US. George Soros founded the Open Society Fund in 1979, the Soros Foundation-Hungary in 1984 and the Soros Foundation-Soviet Union in 1987. He now has a network of foundations operating in 24 countries throughout Central and Eastern Europe, as well as South Africa and the US. These foundations are helping to build the infrastructure and institutions of an open society through the support of educational, cultural and economic restructuring activities. Soros is also the founder of the Central European University in Budapest established in 1990.