

Unalienable Rights

(Notes for my dear grandchildren)

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

[The Declaration of Independence](#)

Both to the road again, again!
Out on a clean sea-track -
Follow the cross of the gipsy trail
Over the world and back!

R.Kipling

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Chapter 1. Introduction

I love my grandkids. Everyone does. I think they are extremely talented, nothing unusual here either. I enjoy speaking about them.

Charlotte is our big sister, she is a high school senior, in six months she graduates and goes to a college. Charlotte is an artistic girl, she plays ukulele and sings, she performs on theatrical stage and already was admitted to the theatric professional society.

Tommy is my favorite grandson, he is my only grandson, he is eight, little brother. He speaks out his mind, some people find this difficult for communication, but I don't. We are the best friends since when he was a child. I like how he explores things, which are new to him. We spent quite a long time working on the project of space satellite. He was a little disappointed when I told him that it takes a few months to build one, plus we need to arrange for the rocket as well. And recently he begun to compose music, very seriously, I want to think that this is a gift from his mom, my daughter.

Hannah is my other granddaughter, and she is very gifted too. At 14 she was a writer already, having her works published on Internet. At 16 she was admitted to the University of California. Her farther, my son, and mother decided to give her home education and I have to admit that they did a great job. I love her, though we are cannot be together for now. Today she is making her own decisions about future life and career. Meanwhile I will continue watch her life events through her Facebook posts. Sarah and Tyler are older, already married and I hear about their lives through my son. Proud to have them as my grandkids.

I watch my kids and grandkids, try to help them with advices, when they get themselves into difficult situation, requiring their tough decision. They listen, but don't follow, continue with half measures that only prolong their struggling existence. It's hard to see them, making one mistake after another, and keep your patience with them, though you know that after 10 or 20 years they will look back and regret that so many years were uselessly spent on hopeless project (some guy or girlfriend relations included), and they are back to the start only at much older age. Those are kind of thoughts I have, when I think about them.

In these notes I will talk about various people, who by some amazing twist of destiny were brought together with the only goal to continue their lives, hoping for the better future. They came from many distant places, had a very diverse family live styles and social positions. Nevertheless, they all believed in their ability to survive in difficult time and raise to the happiness eventually.

As an example of so unbelievable life entangled knot I am referring to my father-in law, major co-author of the book "The Struggle of the Soviet Union for the Disarmament", published in 1961. In Introduction he wrote: "Disarmament is an effective guarantee for support of the world peace and security, because the only way to avoid a danger of wars is destruction of material means of war engagement". He sincerely believed in that idea. I deeply respected my father-in-law, highly appreciated his sharp mind, and at the same time, with a great interest I watched him talking with my father, veteran of the Soviet nuclear weapon program, personally responsible for the development and production of such weapons during the "Cold War" as a detention response to the American expansion and prevention of the next

World War. Both were convinced that they were doing the only right thing, but eventually agreed that both directions are a must for the preserving of Soviet way of life.

Many people who knew them considered my family members, from my grandparents to my grandchildren, to be lucky in achieving their success, just like win the lottery. But I am absolutely convinced that all successful people are made by themselves. I found interesting article about great American investor Warren Buffett and would like to present short extracts from this Article:

"Warren Buffett Believes 3 Decisions in Life Separate Those Who Succeed from Those Who Fail

1. Invest in yourself According to Buffett, one of the keys to your success is to go to bed a little smarter each day

2. Measure your success by your 'inner scorecard'

It gives meaning to who you are, and how you naturally behave and see the world on the basis of your values and beliefs, not someone else's. In short, it's taking the higher road to achieve success because it comes from the heart.

3. Your life's success should be defined by one four-letter word

Love

In the end, the ultimate test of how you've lived your life basically comes down to how far and wide your love was spread to impact the lives of others.

"The more you give love away, the more you get," asserts Buffett.

I love all three, but think number Three deserves the first place. Love has a great power in anyone life, only few can really appreciate the meaning of love, they are the "lucky" ones, they set their own goals (see number Two) and move daily to get closer to their dreams (see number One).

Chapter 2. Why to change?

Many years ago somebody told me: "Why do you want to emigrate? Not you and even your children will never be 100% Americans, only your grandchildren can become Americans and live the real free life". "Is not this a great goal of anyone life?" – said I without a second of delay. It was my purpose to leave a country, where I was born, raised, educated, and worked for 21 years. All those career successes were just a path to the life among free people, who respect everyone personality. I wanted to be among the

people for whom "Life, Liberty and Pursuit for happiness... are self-evident truths with certain unalienable Rights".

Here's what I wrote to a famous Russian TV and Internet Journalist, Andrey Karaulov, about my understanding of Russian society, which basically explained my decision to leave the country of my birth.

From letter to A.Karaulov

I am not a Patriot

Why am I writing to you? I think you may be interested in my life story, my views, and maybe even you can correct your opinion about the fate of people in Russia (I catch you saying that there are no people in Russia, there is a population). In fact, it was this statement that prompted me to write to you.

In the film "You are not patriots," people highly respected by you and me, talk about the slavish worldview of the Russian people, cultivated for decades by the authorities. It is expressed in the most direct way in the fact that in order to achieve something good, you need to ask everyone who is above you, starting from God and going down to the state, local authorities, bosses at work, and finally, your district police officer. To ask, and not to earn with your labor, talent, invention - all this has absolutely no effect on the progress towards your dream. Therefore, it was rightly said by Daniil Granin - in Russia there is no national dream, there is no people, there is a population.

You probably already understood why I made the decision to emigrate. Here in the US I have met quite a few people with similar views. One of them most clearly formulated when you need to leave Russia: you need to leave when you absolutely cannot live there anymore. After the collapse of the USSR, a large number of people rushed to the United States, hoping to break free and "conquer the world." A huge number of these people did not find a place for themselves in the new society, were stuck in low-skilled jobs or even turned into unemployed, living on poor social benefits, many returned back to Russia. I see the reason for their failure in their unpreparedness for honest, albeit hard at first, work for the sake of their dreams. When I talk to visitors from Russia, I always hear smart stories about the easiest way to get comfortably settled in America. The simpler has replaced the concept of the better, which can be achieved in a very difficult way.

The slave worldview kills the love of work as a means of satisfying vital needs. When the communists said that under communism they would give everyone according to their needs and take according to their abilities, they developed a slavish worldview - you can get more than others without working.

I have good friends in Russia, smart and kind people, I enjoy spending time with them when they visit me in California. But I have not been to Russia and do not want to go in the future, out of curiosity, to visit present-day Russia. While still a student in the construction brigade of Moscow State University, one of my friends once said - "There is vulgarity and rudeness all around!" - and this phrase still pops up in my mind every time I see your reports.

There is another topic that worries me - this is fanning of anti-Americanism in all possible ways. I was born into a family that has been at the epicenter of the nuclear arms race all the time; my father, the direct project manager of MinSredMash, also conveyed to me how important it is to have a nuclear potential to contain American imperialism. Now I am witnessing an even more aggravated information

flood at all levels, claiming that great Russia must follow its own special path and, if necessary, sweep away any adversary. With all the ambiguity of the processes of the 90s, one thing is absolutely clear, Russia lost its chance to join the ranks of the most socially developed countries when a helping hand was extended to it.

In 1993-1994, I was invited to take part in a series of meetings with the heads of academic and departmental research centers in Russia dealing with the use of lasers. Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory was the lead organizer of these meetings and had a substantial government budget for these purposes. You may have your own point of view on the sincerity of the Western "allies", but you may be interested to hear my impressions of that time as a participant in the US-Russian negotiations on the possibility of joint development in the most advanced scientific areas.

The meetings were organized on a thematic basis (among the topics were high-power lasers, research on laser nuclear fusion, the use of lasers for environmental control, etc.) As a rule, groups of leading scientists and heads of institutes, from 10 to 15 people, were invited to Livermore, and presentations of achievements were heard in order to establish business contacts. All the participants in the Russian delegations did not hide their satisfaction in the negotiations, hoping to receive the long-awaited support for their work, while practically being ignored from the Russian government. Many of them I met in my previous life, they were happy to know me (which they did not openly showed when I was one of them), and I sincerely wanted to help them not only with the English language (especially considering the many specific scientific terms), hoping to continue to work together.

Unfortunately, my hopes were not justified, by 1995 not a single valid contract remained, the last with whom LLNL decided to terminate contacts were the heads of the laser project from Arzamas-16, now Sarov. The reason for all the failures was the same - a lack of novelty and a low level of development of problems announced by Russian institutions. I myself experienced a certain inconvenience, seeing with what pathos the respected Russian professors presented the results obtained a decade ago. Nevertheless, Livermore invited all interested institutes to submit a technical report on the reported topic. As a reward for each report, 10 thousand dollars were paid, plus 5-7 of the most powerful personal computers at that time were sent to each institute.

A year later, after the reports were received and identified as not of significant scientific value, the question was about the inventory of personal computers, since they were officially leased out for free for the preparation of reports. Steve, the property manager of the laboratory's laser department, approached me, and literally with tears in his eyes began to beg me to contact the Russian heads of institutes from St. Petersburg to Novosibirsk. The fact is that for the annual inventory, he needs the signature of the responsible person on the faxed form. All his attempts to get an answer to his inquiries went unanswered, as did his direct calls. As he said, his usual conversation ended after the first phrase, a woman's voice answered that she did not understand English.

I spent a dozen nights trying to get through to the directors of well-known institutions at a convenient time for them. Usually my conversation with their secretaries went like this: "The respected director is not there, he hasn't come yet today and it's not known when." I tried to convey a message to the deputy Director through the secretaries, but this did not work either. Of the ten Institutes that I have called, only three have sent faxes with illegible signatures from no one knows who "confirming" that the computers are still in operation. Steve was happy with this result, but I was very bitter for the rudeness shown, one might say, by the crop of the intelligentsia of Russia. Even the American property keeper

turned out to be more intelligent. I don't want to name these directors, that's not the point, this is just an example of how deeply a slavish conscience is rooted in Russian people.

Willingly or unwillingly, Mr. Karaulov, you have touched on my thoughts about the reasons for the collapse of the Russian nation as a uniform, united, integral people. Of course, for last 30 years I have not been a part of it, I myself aimed for such a position and in fact I am really happy that I realized my dream of living in a society of people like me, to honestly work and receive their respect for the successes I have achieved, as well as the corresponding material compensation.

Interestingly, when I first came to work at an English university, I was found by one of the leading political science professors, who often appears on national television commenting on events in Russia. It was September 3rd, 1991, and he was sitting on pins and needles with me at lunch. "Do you think Russia will soon undergo the changes necessary for its inclusion in the democratic commonwealth of free and developed countries?" He asked, "is five years enough?" He was very disappointed and did not seem to believe my objectivity when I replied that I would be glad to see the completion of this process in 25-30 years. I explained to him that since biblical times the slavish conscience can disappear only when the current carriers of it die their natural death and the new generation is able to lead the people. So far, in my opinion, there are no such leaders in Russia.

Chapter 3. Grandparents Lena and Fedor

Beginning

So, yesterday I became 73, I am old, my male ancestors died in earlier ages. I am a happy man, if I die today, I will die without regrets. But I want live longer, I am still able to bring happiness into the life of my loved ones. I have set a number of tasks for myself, this writing is one of them.

And now I look on the white screen of my computer and don't know where I should start. Is it my childhood in a "zone" – secret place, where my father was making first and many following nuclear weapons, or the beginning was much earlier, when my grandparents were young. What if I start with something and compose the whole story later.

Lena

Grandma Lena deserves to be the first character in my story. Not only because she is a matriarchy of our family, but mainly because she developed and embedded in my mind that constant drive for the better life. You may argue that better life is everyone dream. Unfortunately I found that 90% of people absolutely convinced that only wealth provide better life, substituting meaning better with easier. It's common saying "easy money – easy life".

In my head "easy" never was a goal, sometimes I had to choose a hard way, if it was the only way I can get to reach my destination, which I would call a better life. I guess, I picked up this philosophy quite unconsciously, just by listening numerous tales of my Grandma Lena's life. So, I will start with amazing

stories, happened in the first half of last century. I heard those stories, when I was young and anxious to begin my own path in life, studying in high school. We spent hours together, and she went on and on, talking about all kind of events, that happened in her life.



Lena and Gary, 1969



Nadya and Lena, 1980

1908

Lena is 12, her mother just died. Lena became the mistress of the house with her father and two older brothers. They lived in small town Kamensk-Uralsky in the western Siberia. There was a factory for metal ore processing, and her father, Konstantin Gusev, was a chief and only engineer at that factory. Her oldest brother Aleksei was in high school, preparing himself to go after his father steps.

1971

I met my grand uncle only once, it was May 1, 1971. It was Lena's 75th birthday. He sat next to me at the family's party, with dinner table full of traditional Siberian food, which only Grandma could cook so exceptionally well. We ate classic pie with "iziga" (soft round pieces of sturgeon spine cord), and he was telling me what a life was before the communists, before the World War One. He looked at me and said "I was young like you and just graduated from University as an engineer. The factory gave me nice wages, house, horse vehicle with assigned driver. And what do you have?" That was the best criticism of Soviet regime, I ever heard. And there was not envy feeling about material possession, suddenly I felt that my grand uncle was and still is a much more free man, than I am, he was a respected professional, and I was just a little screw in the huge mechanism, anyone could force me to the miserable life.

I guess, that episode stuck in my memory as a first among many others, which I collected and built a strong foundation for a decision to take my family to the Free world.

1913

Lena is 17 and just graduated from the high school. She is full of joyful expectations, she is going to be a dentist after learning in Warsaw University. Some great jump from the routine life of teenager housekeeper from provincial small Siberian town to wonders of European capital.

She travels by train through Russian plains about four days. She is accompanied by her friend, another young girl. Their adventure started with a memorable surprise. When they just sat on their benches in their sleeping section, some bearded big man joined them. He had very simple clothes, like a peasant, but it was strange that he could afford to travel in the sleeping train car. He politely asked permission to join young ladies, and they, a little shocked, agreed. He probably noticed girl's tension and was tried to entertain them in a very friendly manner. Lena remembered how they were surprised that just a simple man could talk about so many things usually discussed in higher society. It was a very interesting conversation, he asked and they told him about their future plans. The man was obviously enjoyed the time with them, and they also forgot their tension and openly joined the chatting. After a couple hours the train had a stop in some Siberian village. The man stood up and politely wish the girls a happy journey and left. Girls looked into the window and saw a large crowd greeting that very man. They chanting something and it was obvious that they show their greatest respect. "Who was that man?" - Lena asked the conductor. "Didn't you recognize him" - conductor answered. "He is Rasputin!"

Many years later I asked Grandma Lena: "You met and even talked with Rasputin?" And she said "Yes, we heard about him, that every summer he visited his family in Siberian village, long way from Petersburg and his infamous adventures in Russian high society. But we didn't see his pictures, and of course didn't we expect to meet him on the train". I was 15 at that time, and I thought, what an incredible events are awaiting for me to happen.

Let's get back to 1913, Warsaw. Lena as always study hard the dentistry and explores the Poland capital, though at that time it was a part of Russia. Many years later (1978) she excitedly remembered places, where she had been, asked me after my visit to Warsaw, if some particular shop was still there. She felt herself free and happy, she liked to walk on the streets of the old part of the big city, spent hours in beautiful shops just absorbing the never seen before merchandise. She liked everything around her, including the marvelous bookshop on Nowy Swiat street and especially medical supplies shop, where she observed with adoration various dental kits.

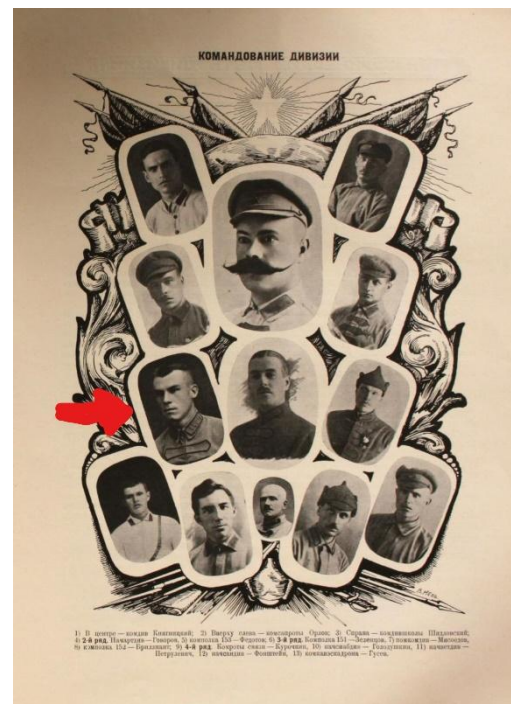
Life in the university was absolutely new experience for her, it was cultural shock, so many young people were always running trying to catch all the most interesting meetings and events, - so much different from the life she knew before.

Fedor

It was one of those student evening gatherings, where Lena first saw a familiar face, and very handsome one too. His name was Fedor, she remembered him from the one of the big Siberian summer parties, which attracted all even distant family members from large area between big rivers Tobol and Ishim. She was a modest teenager then and Fedor was in his golden age of 20. She liked him a lot, but didn't dare to introduce herself. And now Fedor himself rushed to her and asked her: "Didn't we meet before?" She

bravely looked in his eyes and answered: “Yes, you are Fedor, a distant cousin from Ishim, we met two years ago”.

Since that day they were together almost every day. Fedor studied philosophy at the Warsaw University, didn't pay much attention to the class, but instead was well known in most popular among young people restaurants and pool clubs. It must be said that he was very skilled pool player. Fedor came from the family of the highest priest in Russian Orthodox Church in Siberia, very respectful and wealthy position in religious and civil areas. His younger brother Nickolay became an army officer, but Fedor was entered by his father to the prestigious seminary and destined to continue his father life trek. Unfortunately, such future wasn't in the plans of young man. His father tried to put his son on the righteous path, but was unsuccessful. Fedor was expelled during his first semester for freethinking (official term for drinking and class absence). Father tried hard to bring Fedor back to church career, but must eventually redirect his son to the theology and philosophy, hence Fedor left to Warsaw to study.



Elizaveta Zelentsova, mother of Fedor Zelentsov, chief of the Red Army regiment in 1920s

Lena and Fedor very soon fell in love and became a wedded couple for more than 40 years. It was a great love right from the first glance, they went together through the all the tests, life stored for them. There was only one moment of disappointment, Grandma told me she couldn't forget. It was in Warsaw, they were dating. One evening Fedor came and said: “Lena, tonight you can ask me for anything you want, I just won a lot of money at the pool”. Lena remembered that evening, even after 50 years later. She said “There is a wonderful dental set, I had an eye on”. “What a wicked desire,” he said, “but if this, what you want, it will be yours”. Next, they are in the shop. Two sets are for sale, one at 25 rubles and another, much bigger set at 75 rubbles. What my grandma chose? The 25 rubbles set, just because she

never could dream of such an awesome set. Well, Fedor just barked to the salesman to get wrapped and pulled Lena to the restaurant. Next day, Lena told me later, she couldn't get rid of the thought that she was such close to possession of the best dental set that would be her proud toolbox for the rest of her life. Same day evening she asked Fedor to go back to the shop and exchange the sets. "Oh, my dear, why didn't you ask me to buy it yesterday? Today was my unlucky day at the pool, no money left, my honey".

"I will never forgive myself for not asking him to buy me that damn expensive toolset," she said to me more than 50 years later. And I thought if that was the biggest embarrassment in their married life, then how big was their love to each other, I would like that I met such a big love in my life. They got married in 1920 and first child was born in February 1921, their daughter Nadia (Hope in Russian). Fedor and Lena loved each other through many years and Lena always found her ways to be near Fedor during his complicated, sometimes even dangerous life journey.

Chapter 4. Grandparents Mitri and Maria

I remember my grandpa Mitri (Dmitri) as my first impression of a kind adult, who was always ready to come to help or rescue to little child, which was me. He was calm and patient with me (3 or 4 years old) and spoke in a low soft voice, that somehow made me and two of my neighbor friends respect him, following his suggestions (I can't say that he gave us commands, ever). At the same time grandpa was able to fulfill many errands around the house. I want to tell you more about that man, not only because I loved him, but because I think he was an amazing character, showing to me example of kindness and soul generosity. Later in 1966 I, as University student, lived with him over year and loved to listen his endless stories about his numerous relatives.

Mitri didn't get any school education, well almost, he was expelled twice from the first grade in two different elementary schools for lack of interest and effort to study plus for the bad behavior. He told me that he paid a couple of kopecks to some poor old woman for attending the meeting with school supervisor. So, she came and quietly listened all the complaints, just nodding in accordance. Mitri was from ordinary hard working family, and began his work life early, learning from experience.

In 1916 he became old enough to be drafted and sent to the front of WW1. He was trained in a month long military training camp and dispatched to the Northern Turkey. That destination was not the most active front, so he probably thought that he was lucky. Maybe he was, but his luck didn't last long enough. During one of the rare Turkish attacks he got a head contusion from the shell explosion and was brought unconscious to the medical tent. Since his condition was not life-threatening he was left outside for quite a long time, just enough for hot Turkish summer to get sunstroke on top of his contusion. That combination gave local army medics a reason to send young warrior to Moscow, his birthplace, to get him back in normal health. Mitri was admitted to one of the hospitals, which was full of infected patients with typhoid fever. His head injury became a secondary problem, when he contracted the worst form of that terrible disease. Almost three months later, in the end of September he returned home.

October Revolution of Bolsheviks didn't make much impression on young Mitri, he was decommissioned for the military service, so his major interest was in ability to get himself alive. He started his worker's career at one of Moscow machine shops, where he learned a welder skills. He lived with his parents in a small apartment in Lefortovo district, South East of Moscow, where most of his relatives migrated from Smolensk region resided. Days were filled with long hours of hard work, and Mitri tried to keep his employment, fighting the debilitating health problems. He didn't care much, what was going on with his country politics.

In 1919 he met a pretty girl Maria, she also lived nearby. Her father was Polish and mother was German, they migrated from Warsaw a few years before WWI to Moscow with hope on better life. Her father's name was Yuzef Kowalski , which he changed to Russian Osip to get quicker promotion in his technician career. So, in spring of 1920 Mitri and Maria got married and in February 1921 Maria bring him a healthy son Alexander (Sasha).



Maria, 1930s



Mitri with Garik , 1952, Sarov

Chapter 5. Nadia and Sasha

Nadia and Sasha were born just two days apart, Nadia was two days older than Sasha. They first met in September 1939 in the class room of Moscow Institute of Chemical Machinery, and got married next year.

But let me describe briefly what a different backgrounds they had. Fedor, father of Nadia became a general of Red Army following his brave actions in establishing Soviet power in his Siberian town Tyumen in 1917-1918 and fighting against White Army during Civil War of 1918-1920. His wife, Lena became a very successful dentist in Moscow, where they settled at the end of the Civil War and where she gave birth to her daughter Nadia (popular Russian name meaning Hope, plus Fedor was dreaming about the New world that he hoped was coming). Lena was a very persistent in her dental career and eventually became a lecturer in Moscow Stomatology Institute and received her medical PhD. But the biggest passion of her life was her beloved husband. She never left him alone, even during the WWII she stayed near him volunteering to the military medical group attached to the Fedor's staff. The only separation of the young couple happend in 1918, when the White Army took back the city of Tyumen and Nikolai, younger Fedor's brother, who joined White Army, gave him early warning that saved Fedor's life, but at the same time sent Lena to the small remote Siberian village, where she worked as a school teacher for the whole year. Fortunately, in 1919 the Red Army returned to conquer the Siberian land, Fedor was one of the high rank commander by that time, he found Lena and since then they never left each other.

Sasha was born in a poor Moscowite's family of factory worker Mitri (he was 23 years old) and a teenager Polish girl Maria (she was 19). In 1921 Moscow was a place suffering from multiple contagious diseases and hunger. So, Mitri decided to move with his pregnant wife to his relatives in Smolensk area, where he could provide at least minimal care to Maria. So, soon after Sasha was born, young family returned back to their home in Moscow. Mitri became a very skillful welder and gained respect at just establishing Soviet industry, so he managed to work two jobs (7 working hours each at two different factories). So, he could provide for the family, but refusing easy life for himself.

By the age of seven Sasha went to school and Maria became to work at typography factory, that also add to their family budget, though harming her health in poisonous working conditions. Under the persistent pressure of local management Maria even applied for joining the Communist Party, but was stopped by Mitri, who was angry with her frequent absences attending Party meetings. He worked hard enough to expect some rest at home. So, husband said "no" and Maria dropped her party involvement for good. I think that was lucky decision, because like almost everyone among the working people Mitri began drink regularly without much time to spend at the family home.

At school Sasha liked the most their sport sessions, obviously he had a gift of soccer and hockey player (soccer at the summer and hockey at winter). In high school he was admitted to the all-Moscow united team, which opened the door to the sport career, his hockey skills were also sufficient to play for one of professional team (he continued actively play hockey to the age of 43, then switched to tennis for another 20+ years). So, a lot of sport in his head, not much for the science. Mitri and Maria loved their son and wanted him to be engineer, not a factory worker like them. They pushed him to continue his education in one of Moscow Institute, and he promised to do as they asked, although he had no any particular desire apart from sport. He decided to get into the one of the student's sport team, doesn't matter what was the Institute. The nearest to their home in Lefortovo district was the Chemical Machinery Institute, so he picked that one without even understanding what kind of engineer he was going to be. To his great surprise he passed the exams and was admitted. It was 1938, the year before the WWII began.



Sasha, 1940

Sasha would never imagine how much his life could change thanks to the meeting at the Institute his wife-to-be, Nadia. She was cute little girl (he was five inches taller and visibly enormously stronger), she was a daughter of respected general Fedor Zelentsov, she was first in her high school, graduated with a Silver medal. But from that very first moment Nadia decided that Sasha is her man forever. It probably her Siberian ancestors whispered in her 17-year head, especially multiplied by Fedor's and Lena's influence. Anyway, Nadia fell in love, she must take care of that not-much-thinking guy, make him a person who deserves to be her husband.

Nadia worked hard to get her plan going, she wrote his tests before her own, she explained the complicated issues in various technology and science classes, she trained him how to be organized and speak politely, she forced him to read books (!!!). And she succeed! Suddenly, Sasha began to work on his character. He also fell for this little cute girl. In the middle of 1939, just after the completion of the first year in the Institute, Nadia decided that Sasha is ready to be introduced to her parents. She was so determined that Sasha could not refuse. He cleaned and ironed (I guess that part was done by his mom) his best and only suit, combed his hair, and arrived to the general's apartment precisely at ordered (by Nadia, of course) time.

That episode deserves to be mentioned in details, because it played a decisive role in the lives of Sasha and Nadia (I can say so judging by how many times Nadia told us about it). From Sasha's recollections, at first everything was going well. General Fedor had an impression of stern, authoritarian person, but he showed respect to the young fellow and tried to make him feel comfortable. They sat at the dinner table and drank vodka and ate delicious Siberian pie, made by Lena. One thing bothered Sasha most of anything else – a dog, French bulldog, who went under the table and pushed and pulled the best trousers of Sasha. The whole evening Sasha tried to shake off that nasty dog, but at the same time he continued talking with his potentially relatives like nothing happened. When the dinner was over, it was embarrassing moment for everyone, dog did a lot of damage to the trousers, practically destroyed them. Everybody were apologizing, but it was Nadia who took the problem into her hands. She commanded Sasha to take off his pants and sit in the bedroom while she mended the torn pants. Her parents, watching Nadia's determination decided to drop their concerns about Sasha and let their daughter make her own choice. Lena told me that she saw herself in Nadia, the same spirit of young woman in love.

After that infamous episode the destiny of Sasha was determined. They married on September 30 of 1939, both were just eighteen and a half at that time. They lived in general's apartment and no wonder that nine months later Nadia was ready to have a baby. Unfortunately, the boy was stillborn, it was a devastating for the young couple.

1941 brought another test to Nadia and Sasha, in fact to the whole country of the Soviet Union – on June 22 the Great Patriotic War began.

Chapter 6. Life in the USSR before the WWII

Here I will introduce more of my relatives and their stories. I begin with my wife Natalie's ancestors.

Her father Pavel Shakhov was born in 1913 in a village Mikhailovka on the south-east of Ukraine, which always had a big Russian population. In 1930 after high school graduation Pavel went to Leningrad and lived together with his older cousin, who was recruited to the Naval academy. Pavel started his higher education in one of the Institute, but after a few months he received an offer to join the new State

Diplomatic Academy in Moscow. That was the most crucial turn in his life that determined the next 50 years of Pavel's career. After a couple years at the office of Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a one of the most perspective young diplomat Pavel was assigned to continue his education at the Columbia University at New York. The beginning of WWII started while he was a student of CUNY. He enjoyed his living in the USA, despite constant lack of money and carrying on a very Puritan way of life. He absorbed the new for him American life, learned fluent English, made friends with fellow students, during University classes breaks looked for the various odd jobs around the country, which gave him opportunity to travel.

In 1940 Pavel returned back to Moscow, worked in the Ministry, got married pretty girl, who gave him a daughter. With the beginning of the Great Patriotic War in 1941 he was assigned to work with the Department dealing with the Great Britain. He was transferred to the USSR Embassy in London in 1943, his wife and daughter stayed in Moscow. There, in London Pavel met a young, bright secretary Inna Domov (she was 18 at that time), eventually she became his wife for the rest of his life.

In the beginning of 1945 Pavel was sent to the USA as a member of international team preparing the first meeting of the new organization, United Nations. He was delighted to come to the USA again, especially the opportunity to work in International organization. As usual Pavel work hard, forgetting about his personal life, leaving his family back in Moscow. He was one of the key administrator at the first organizing meeting of major UN members at Dumbarton Oaks in 1945. Since that time Pavel worked in several UN departments (most of his time in Department for Africa Liberation and Department for Mutual Disarmament). In 1946 Pavel brought his new wife Inna to New York, where they lived most of each year till 1975, doing just short visits to Moscow. There in New York Inna gave



birth to her two daughters, Natalie in 1948 and Olga in 1953.

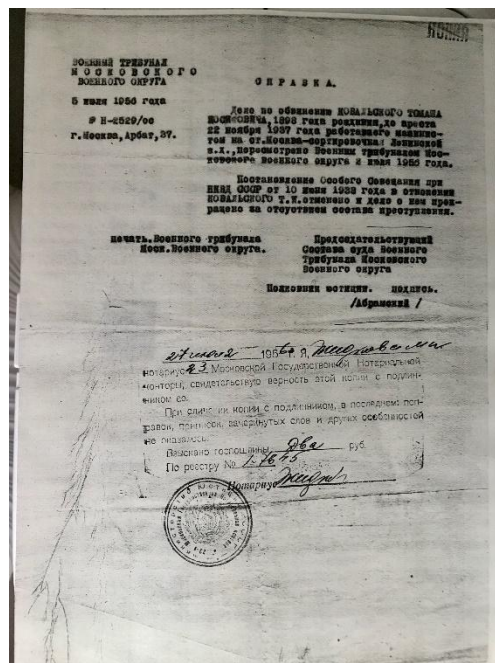
Evdokia Dvoryakovskaya, 1915

Inna was from the family of the Military Prosecutor General of Belarus, Nikolai Domov. Her mother, Ducia, was born in 1898 in aristocratic Dvoryakovsky family. Soviet regime destroyed the lives of many previously respected people, made them hide among “simple” working population. Since the age of 18 Ducia had to earn her bread and shelter by herself. Fortunately, she met young commander of the Red Army, whom she loved very much. They married, lived happily together with their son Nikolai and daughter Inna (born in 1926). In the middle of 1930’s Nikolai was promoted to the Military Prosecutor General. That was a wrong time to get such title, Stalin's repressions were in the peak, innocent people everywhere in the huge country were killed, thrown to the Gulag – system of the forced labor mainly in remote areas, practically to their complete extinction. Stalin constantly rotated the most important and close to the Soviet government people, that “rotation” meant death execution without formal criminal charges. Nikolai in his high position recognized the danger for his life very fast, all he could do was to find a way to safe his family, because he, maybe better than anyone, knew that his bad fate was immediately the end of the normal life for his wife, son and daughter, maybe even their conviction as collaborates of anti-soviet element. So, he told Ducia that in order to save their lives (for himself he didn’t see a way out) they must divorce as soon as possible.

This story of self-sacrifice was one of the most incredible in my mind. Just the very thought of person life, when one began to feel love and hope for the better future, being broken without any sensible reason and she must to find that slim chance to survive – always gave me a big hit, demanding never quit my efforts to leave that evil mechanism, comfortably residing in the vast Russian land.

Ducia divorced Nikolai and two weeks later he was arrested and nothing was known about him since then. She must start her life from the beginning, find job, raise her daughter, Nikolai Jr. was carrying his own life by then. And she did, devoted to only one goal – make her daughter happy, she was an amazing example of human strength. I met her after I married Natalie, her beloved granddaughter, we lived in the same apartment in Moscow for several years, where she told her stories, even then trying to avoid the words somehow judging the people at power. Add to this that her son was missed in action during the war, and it became obvious how much of strength and determination to survive was inside that woman.

Remember Maria, my grandmother? She had an older, kind brother Tomash. At age of 25 he became the assistant of train engineer. His major duties were to shovel the coal into the locomotive furnace. He



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