



ЮРИЙ ОКУНЕВ

САГА О ВОССТАВШЕМ ИЗ ПЕПЛА



YURI OKUNEV

SAGA OF THE RISEN FROM THE ASHES

YURI OKUNEV

SAGA OF THE RISEN FROM THE ASHES

Translated by Anna Tucker

BOSTON • 2017

ЮРИЙ ОКУНЕВ

САГА О ВОССТАВШЕМ ИЗ ПЕПЛА

БОСТОН • 2017

Юрий Окунев *Сага о восставшем из пепла*
Yuri Okunev *Saga of the Risen from the Ashes*

Translation from Russian by Anna Tucker © 2015

Copyright © 2012–2017 by Yuri Okunev

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the copyright holder.

ISBN 978-1-940220581

Library of Congress Control Number 2016920957

Published by M•GRAPHICS, BOSTON, MA

📄 www.mgraphics-publishing.com
✉ info@mgraphics-publishing.com
mgraphics.books@gmail.com

Printed in the USA

Сага о восставшем из пепла

10

Фотографии / Photographs

67

Saga of the Risen from Ashes

77

ЮРИЙ ОКУНЕВ

**САГА О ВОССТАВШЕМ
ИЗ ПЕПЛА**

*Посвящается Михаилу (Моше) Окуневу —
человеку необыкновенной стойкости и мужества,
чья судьба сложилась в таинственную сагу,
возвышенную и поучительную,
как и всякая неприбранная правда,
ставшая легендой...*

ПРЕДИСЛОВИЕ АВТОРА — *ANDANTE SOSTENUTO*

Интерес к истории предков, ощущение себя звеном бесконечной цепи, уходящей в бездонный колодец прошлого, пришли ко мне поздно, уже в эмиграции.

В молодости люди вообще редко интересуются своими предками. Озадаченность настоящим, озабоченность будущим, учеба, работа, карьера, женщины, семья, дети — все это оставляет мало возможностей обратить вдумчивый взгляд в прошлое, а двуликие Янусы, способные смотреть назад и одновременно идти вперед, встречаются нечасто...

У живших в бывшем Советском Союзе существовали дополнительные причины избегать чрезмерного интереса к своим предкам, ибо подобное любопытство было чревато большими неприятностями — ненароком могло выясниться, что кто-то из предков имел «непролетарское происхождение» или, не дай бог, духовное звание, а то — и среди «врагов народа» пребывал. Соккрытие непролетарского происхождения предков или их религиозно-культурных занятий могло повлечь сначала исключение из компартии, а затем увольнение с работы — это еще в лучшем случае. Недаром, лишь покинув Россию, многие уже в весьма зрелом возрасте подсади к компьютеру и написали историю своих предков, отыскали корни своего семейного древа, рассказали детям об их прапрабабушках и прапрадедушках из русских, польских, литовских, украинских и белорусских городов и местечек...

Ко мне лично неодолимое желание отыскать свои семейные корни и рассказать о них детям и внукам пришло после смерти мамы, когда за спиной сгустилась холодная пустота вечно-сти. Работу эту сильно ускорила неожиданная болезнь, этакий «звоночек тревожный» — мол, тебе дается последний шанс со-

хранить для потомков историю семьи и вызволить из небытия образы предков — если не ты, то кто это сделает?

Дополнительным стимулом к глубинным раскопкам послужило внезапное озарение: из чудом уцелевших невнятных обрывков старых воспоминаний, из полустертых надписей на пожелтевших фотографиях, на горизонте семейного видения нарисовались две воистину выдающиеся, знаковые фигуры — мои прадеды по отцовской линии Мовше Окунев и Давид Якобсон. Мовше Окунев, отец моего дедушки Исаака Окунева, был известным резником города Велижа и окрестных местечек во времена после потрясшего всю Россию знаменитого Велижского дела — кровавого навета о ритуальном убийстве велижскими евреями христианского мальчика. Давид Якобсон, отец моей бабушки Раисы Окуневой, служил раввином в Любавичах — всемирно известном центре Любавичской ветви хасидизма, родине Хабада (*Фото 1*). Давид получил это высокое назначение в 1882 году из рук самого Четвертого Любавичского ребе — великого цадика-праведника Самуила Шнеерсона, известного в истории Хабада под именем Махарш. Опускаю все перипетии моих поисков, приведших к этим семейным открытиям, ибо тема этого повествования совсем другая.

Здесь я хотел бы рассказать удивительную семейную сагу — историю об исчезновении в огне Холокоста целой ветви семейного древа Окуневых, которая, тем не менее, словно сказочная птица Феникс, возродилась из пепла и, обновленная, расцвела в Израиле и Америке. Ядром нашей саги является подлинное чудо — невероятное обнаружение, казалось бы, навсегда исчезнувшей семейной ветви благодаря одной книжной публикации...

В этой истории два главных героя.

Первым является мой троюродный брат Михаил (Моше) Окунев, сначала сгинувший вместе со всей семьей где-то в окрестностях польско-литовского города Вильно во времена кровавого разлома Второй мировой войны, а затем, через пол-

столетия, внезапно возникший в американском городе Чикаго во главе большой новой семьи.

Вторым героем нашей повести является... книга «Письма близким из XX века», благодаря которой первый герой был обнаружен самым фантастическим образом — словно «на кончике пера» было найдено одно из десяти колен израилевых, исчезнувших, казалось бы, навсегда...

Роль вашего покорного слуги — автора этой документальной повести, была достаточно скромной — свести вместе двух означенных выше главных героев...

Дом Иаковлев, вставай, идем!

Исайя — библейский пророк

И встал народ Иаковлев, иссеченный и окровавленный, забитый насмерть и распятый, воскрес и восстал... Изможденным дистрофиком вырвался из Варшавского гетто, недобитой девочкой выполз из под трупов Бабьего Яра, поседевшим юношей вышел из литовских и белорусских лесов.

Восстал народ Иаковлев и пошел! Сорвал с себя кровавые струпья, стряхнул пепел крематориев и пошел, чтобы с самого высокого места на Земле — из Иерусалима — ясно и непреклонно уведомить всемирную юдофобскую чернь: «Никогда больше! Никогда и никому не позволю убивать еврейских детей!»

Ю. Окунев. «Ось всемирной истории»

ЛИТВА, РУДНИНКАЙСКАЯ ПУЩА.

ВЕСНА 1944 ГОДА

Весной 1944 года Генштаб Красной Армии начал подготовку гигантской военной операции «Багратион» по разгрому немецкой группы армий «Центр» и освобождению от фашистов Белоруссии и Литвы. Значительная роль в этой операции отводилась многочисленным партизанским отрядам, действовавшим глубоко в тылу вражеских армий. В мае того года в одной из сводок Совинформбюро среди других новостей с фронтов

сообщалось об уничтожении литовскими партизанами немецкого конвоя с продовольствием вблизи Вильнюса...

* * *

В том году зима затянулась, и тепло весеннего солнца с трудом пробивалось сквозь хмурое небо в густые лесные дебри Руднинкайской пуци, что между Вильнюсом и Лидой. Ночь выдалась холодная, с поземкой, и дежурный в старом овчинном тулупе подбросил несколько толстых сухих веток в костер. Пламя взметнулось, выхватив из тьмы контуры сосен, окружавших поляну, и уже подтаявшие снежные сугробы, отодвинутые от входа в сколоченный из стволов деревьев барак. Темнота ночи рассеется еще нескоро, но в котелках, подвешенных к перекладине над костром, уже почти готов завтрак — мясо с картошкой. Командир отряда приказал приготовить побольше еды — всё, что удалось получить из близких деревенок и лесных хуторов. Бойцы тоскуют по хлебу, но хлеба у крестьян нет и печь его негде, но картофель есть, а иногда, как в тот день, — и мясо...

Моше проснулся — его сосед по нарам Давид толкался и монотонно тихо подвывал: «Подъем...подъем...» Молодые мужчины и женщины лежали, прижавшись друг к другу, чтобы не замерзнуть, на сплошных деревянных нарах, двумя рядами протянувшихся вдоль всего барака с узким проходом между ними. Нары были устланы в несколько слоев мягкими сосновыми ветками, а на них — старые пальто, куртки, тулупы и ватники, всё, что у кого было, чтобы подстелить под себя и укрыться. Три десятка людей поднимались в крошечной темноте ночи. Они уже привыкли к жизни в глухом лесу, они знали, что это их единственный шанс спастись... Они безропотно поднимались с нар, одевались наощупь в темноте, перекидывались фразами на идише и русском, говорили тихо, словно подчеркивая ответственность и даже торжественность момента — все знали, что вскоре им придется уйти далеко в лес, что вскоре будет бой...

Моше выбежал из барака, быстро растер лицо, грудь и бока влажным снегом, потом, вернувшись, натянул на себя две рубашки — все, что у него были, а сверху надел пальто, сшитое из остатков старой солдатской шинели, подпоясал его ремнем, засунул шапку-ушанку в рукав. Вход в барак уже открыли, и в отблесках костра он скоро отыскал свою миску и деревянную ложку, вырезанную из распила сосны.

Командир отряда Абба Ковнер сидел на стволе спиленного дерева и терпеливо ждал, когда люди, окружившие костер, закончат еду... Эти люди — его еврейский отряд, наконец-то признанный командованием Красной Армии действующим партизанским подразделением. Признание пришло несколько недель назад, когда советский самолет сбросил им на парашюте рацию и оружие. Больше полугода Абба действовал на свой страх и риск, подбирал в глухих литовских лесах измученных скитаниями беглецов из еврейских гетто, добывал им пищу, пристраивал на глухих хуторах детей, больных и немощных, разрушал вражеские коммуникации, нападал на немецкие патрули и местных полицаев. Очень трудно было поддерживать баланс между боеспособностью отряда и милосердием к детям и старикам, но самым трудным было найти среди местного сельского населения тех, кто не выдаст евреев гестаповцам и полицаям, — Абба научился делать это. Теперь отряд получил по радиции приказ командования: регулярно уничтожать немецкие конвои с продовольствием, движущиеся к фронту. Абба выбрал для первой операции лесную дорогу между Вильно и Лидой, по которой немцы переправляли солдат и продовольствие на фронт. В течение двух недель его разведчики следили за движением конвоев — они донесли, что дважды в неделю на рассвете транспорт с продовольствием проходит по дороге в сопровождении бронетехники и охраны численностью до полуроты.

Моше поел со всеми, проверил винтовку и встал в неровную линию бойцов рядом со своим другом Давидом. Абба Ковнер перечислил по именам участников рейда. Он был краток:

«Наша задача — уничтожить немецкий конвой, сопровождающий обоз с продовольствием, и захватить обоз; этот бой будет проверкой нашей способности к борьбе с врагом и нашей готовности поддержать наступление Красной Армии, которая прислала нам оружие и боеприпасы».

Командир стоял перед бойцами с непокрытой головой, и его лицо и густые с ранней сединой волосы переливались бликами от неровного света костра. Моше казалось, что Абба похож на Эйнштейна, на скорбного Эйнштейна, с горечью смотрящего на разваливающуюся гармонию мира. В лучистых глазах Аббы словно окаменели страдание и ненависть. Все знали истоки и этого страдания, и этой ненависти...

Абба Ковнер был известным в Вильно лидером молодежной сионистской организации Ха-шомер Ха-цаир. Потом, когда пришли немцы, он создал подпольную организацию сопротивления в Вильнюсском гетто. Абба не желал быть рабом, Абба был поэтом, его дерзкие слова были подобны мужественному призыву древнего иудейского воина Элазара к защитникам крепости Масада перед последним штурмом римских легионеров:

«Нас не поведут, как овец, на бойню!

*Еврейская молодежь, не давай сбить себя с пути.
Из 80000 евреев Вильнюса, литовского Иерусалима,
осталось всего 20000. На наших глазах отняли наших
родителей, наших братьев и сестер. Где сотни лю-
дей, которых забрали на работу литовские «хапуны»?
Где раздетые догола женщины и дети, которых увели
в страшную «ночь провокации»? Где евреи, которых уве-
ли в Судный День? Где наши братья из Второго гетто?
Все, кого увезли из гетто, никогда больше не вернут-
ся. Все дороги Гестапо вели в Понары. А Понары — это
смерть!*

*Сомневающиеся! Избавьтесь от иллюзий! Ваши
дети, ваши мужья и жены погибли. Понары — это не ла-
герь. Их всех убили там. Гитлер намерен уничтожить*

всех евреев Европы. Евреям Литвы суждено стать первыми на этом пути.

Не будем же овцами, покорно идущими на убой! Правда, что мы слабы и беззащитны, но сопротивление должно стать единственным ответом врагу!

Братья! Лучше погибнуть свободными борцами, чем выжить по милости убийц.

Спротивляйтесь! До последнего вдоха!»

Осенью 1943 года Абба Ковнер организовал побег группы узников из гетто, создал партизанский отряд в Рудникайском лесу. После гетто никто никогда не видел улыбки на лице Аббы — слишком много смертей прошло перед ним, слишком много зверски убитых родственников и друзей. Все знали это, и Абба тоже знал — нет у него в отряде бойцов, у которых не было бы убитых близких. Здесь не было счастливых людей — гармония мира лежала в руинах, словно сам Бог скончался в Понарах, в кровавых котлованах Понарского леса, где немцы и литовцы убивали евреев.

Моше сжал руками винтовку. Он пришел в этот лес вместе с Аббой Ковнером и еще двумя десятками беглецов из Вильнюсского гетто прошлой осенью, и 7 октября, — это запомнилось на всю жизнь, — выполнил первое боевое задание: с группой бойцов разрушил линию телефонной связи вдоль дороги на Вильнюс. В феврале Моше исполнился 21 год, он тогда вспомнил, как родители и братья поздравляли его прежде в Вильно, но здесь никто не отмечал дни рождения, это осталось в прошлом, а путь в прошлое заслонял кровавый призрак банды убийц, в которую, казалось, превратился весь мир... Моше закинул винтовку за спину и зашагал рядом с Давидом — до рассвета им предстояло пройти несколько километров по заранее намеченным тропинкам сквозь чащу темного леса и устроить засаду на крутом изгибе лесной дороги. «Ты знаешь, Моше, — тихо рассуждал Давид, — фрицы мерзнут в России, и мы лишим их пищи и теплой одежды».

Командовать операцией командир отряда поручил Абраму Сабину. Абрам явно гордился своей миссией и выглядел франтовато на фоне кое-как одетых бойцов — на нем была теплая полосатая фуфайка и до блеска начищенные сапоги, в правой руке — автомат, за поясом — пистолет. «Мы получили из советского партизанского штаба приказ любыми средствами предотвратить поставку продовольствия и оружия немецким войскам из нашего района, — пояснял Абрам, — вскоре к нам присоединятся литовские партизаны из группы Петритиса, с ними вместе у нас почти полурота бойцов, мы уничтожим врага».

Когда дневной свет начал пробиваться сквозь темную чашу леса, они приблизились к месту операции. Абрам Сабин и его помощник Исаак Чужой разделили объединенный еврейско-литовский отряд на три части. Центральная группа, вооруженная гранатами, автоматами и четырьмя пулеметами, залегла у самого изгиба дороги в скрытой густыми ветвями засаде за стволами поваленных деревьев — группа должна была нанести основной огневой удар по охране конвоя. Две другие группы располагались слева и справа от центральной группы, слегка в стороне от дороги, — они должны были поддерживать ружейным огнем центральную группу в случае непредвиденных осложнений.

Светало... Мощенная булыжником лесная дорога, обрамленная неглубокими канавами для стока воды, все яснее проступала на фоне темного леса с грязноватыми белыми полосами еще не растаявшего снега. Тишина пустынного леса не нарушалась даже птицами, удивленными появлением людей в такое раннее время. Моше с Давидом попали в левофланговую группу, они залегли в неглубокой яме и забросали себя сверху сосновыми ветками. Было зябко и сыро, время, казалось, остановилось, и минуты мучительно растягивались до бесконечности... Восемь часов, девять часов утра, уже совсем рассвело, и остатки снега с деревьев с шумом падали на бойцов то тут, то там... Враг не появлялся. Первоначальное возбуждение сме-

нилось усталостью и тревогой — операция, похоже, провалена, а, может быть, и того хуже — передвижение отряда обнаружено, и он будет атакован...

Внезапно все услышали отдаленный шум — громохание телег по булыжной дороге, смешанное с монотонным рокотом моторов. В гулкой тишине утреннего леса шум движения быстро нарастал и вскоре из-за поворота длинной змеей начал выползать конвоируемый фашистами обоз. Сначала несколько десятков крестьянских телег, запряженных лошадьми и нагруженных в два ряда мешками, медленно проехали мимо партизанской засады. Все замерли, стараясь скрыть даже свое дыхание — командир приказал ни в коем случае не стрелять по возницам и лошадям. Затем к цокоту копыт и стуку колес о булыжники добавилось рычание моторов — вслед за телегами с небольшим отрывом появился бронетранспортер с отделением немецких солдат и двумя пулеметами на борту, а за ним, также с небольшим отрывом, — два открытых грузовика, набитых местными полицаями. Когда грузовики с полицаями оказались прямо напротив засады за поваленными деревьями, командир тихо сказал: «За нашу победу!», а затем громко выкрикнул: «Огонь! Огонь!»

В мгновение тихая лесная дорога превратилась в ад — грохот пулеметов и автоматов, разрывы гранат, крики людей и ржанье испуганных лошадей, пламя и дым от взрывов и горящей техники, мечущиеся люди, окровавленные тела убитых и раненых. Немцы пытались открыть пулеметный огонь с бронетранспортера, но он был первым выведен из строя и загорелся под градом пуль и гранат. Горящий бронетранспортер заблокировал дорогу, и теперь вся мощь пулеметного огня обрушилась на грузовики с полицаями. Успевших выскочить снимали автоматными очередями, и не было жалости ни к убежавшим, ни к раненым. Санька Нисанилевич методично добивал прицельными выстрелами из винтовки всех фашистов, проявлявших признаки жизни — «Вот вам расплата за убийство моей семьи, за отца, за мать, за братьев и сестер...»

ИЛЛЮСТРАЦИИ

ILLUSTRATIONS



Фото 1 / Photo 1

*Вот такими были наши предки!
Прадед автора Давид Якобсон — последний раввин
местечка Любавичи, родины ХАБАДА.*

*This is how our ancestors looked like!
Grandfather of the author David Yakobson —
the last Rabbi of Lubavitch, the birthplace of Chabad.*



Фото 2 / Photo 2

*Старинный герб городка Окунев и костел св. Станислава
The old town of Okuniew coat of arms and St. Stanislaw church*



Фото 3 / Photo 3

*Велижский резник Мовше Окунев — родоначальник семейного древа
Окуневых, и его жена Минна-Двоира (Велиж, начало XX века)*

*The Velizh shochet Movshe Okunev, the founding father of the Okunev family,
and his wife Minna-Dvoira (Velizh, early XX century)*

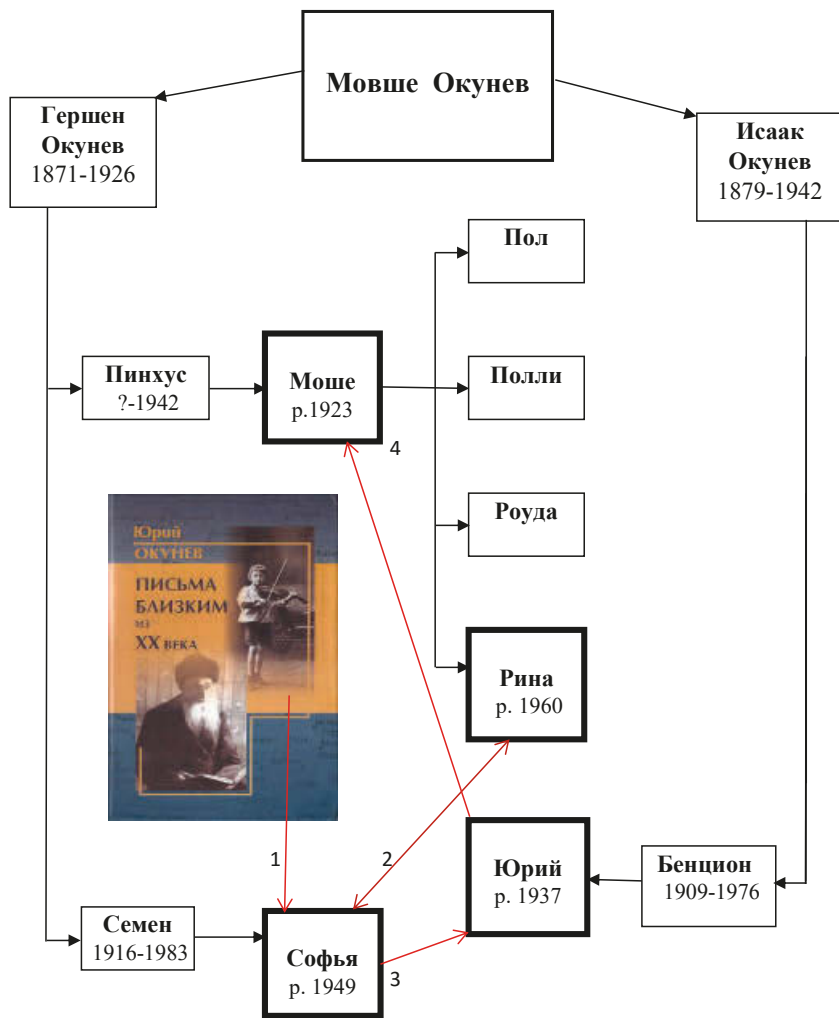


Фото 4

Схема поиска пропавшей семейной ветви

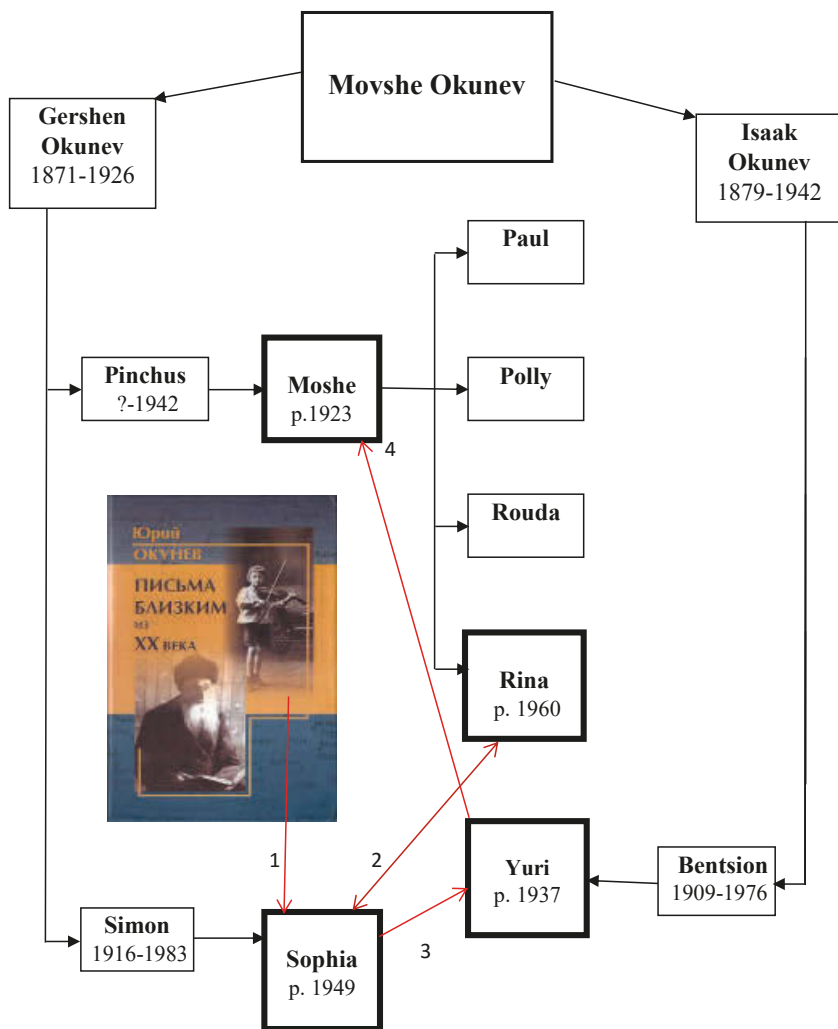


Photo 4

Searching the disappeared family branch



Фото 5 / Photo 5

Семья витебского провизора Гершена Окунева (Витебск, около 1912 года), крайний справа его сын Пинхус—отец Михаила Окунева.

The family of the Vitebsk pharmacist Hershen Okunev (Vitebsk, around 1912), On the far right his son Pinchus, father of Michael Okunev.



Фото 6 / Photo 6

*Софья Окунева-Павлова
Sophia Okuneva-Pavlova*

Dr. Yuri Okunev
1023-B Heritage Village
Southbury, CT 06488
(203)-264-1157
yuriokunev@aol.com

February 23, 2003

Mr. Michael Okunev
116 Plum Tree Ln.
Wilmette, IL 60091

Dear Michael:

Let me first introduce myself.

My name is Yuri Okunev, and I am your relative, namely: your grandfather Gershen Okunev and my grandfather Isaak Okunev were brothers, i.e. we have mutual grandgrandfather - Movshe Okunev. I am a scientist in the field of applied mathematics and a writer in the area of Jewish-Russian history, and I work and live with my wife in Connecticut. My son and daughter with their families live in New York. I have known your address from Sophia Pavlova from Israel.

Now, let me explain the goal of this letter.

I write the history of our big family - all branches of the Okunevs. Recently Publishing House "Art of Russia" in Saint Petersburg published the first volume of my memories "Letters to Dears from XX century" in Russian. I am attaching this book - you can find your family branch on page 433. And you can see our grandgrandfather Movshe Okunev on the cover of the book. Unfortunately, I did not know about fate of your family, when I wrote this book, but I intend to describe your family in the next publications. So, I would like to know much more about you and your family, especially about your son and daughters. Please, provide me with the proper information.

Finally, I am glad to find the Okunevs in the USA, and I will be happy to continue our families contact.

Best wishes to you and your family!
Sincerely,
Yuri

Фото 7 / Photo 7

*Фотокопия письма Михаилу Окуневу от 23 февраля 2003 года.
Letter to Mikhail Okunev as of February 23, 2003 (photocopy)*



Фото 8 / Photo 8

*Слева: штат Вермонт, предгорья Северных Аппалачей, первая встреча автора с Михаилом Окуневым, весна 2003 года;
Справа: Бостон, встреча автора с Михаилом Окуневым на бат–мицве его внучки, весна 2012 года*

*Left: Vermont, foothills of the northern Appalachians, spring of 2003, author meets Michael Okunieff for the first time;
Right: Boston, spring of 2012, author and Michael Okunieff at Michael's granddaughter's Bat-Mitzvah.*



Фото 9

Профессор Пол Окунев (слева) и его дед Пинхус Окунев, убитый фашистами в Понарских котлованах в Литве в 1941 году.

Professor Paul Okunieff (left) and his grandfather Pinchus Okunev, who was killed by the fascists at the Ponary pits, Lithuania in 1941.

YURI OKUNEV

**SAGA OF THE RISEN
FROM THE ASHES**

*Dedicated to Michael (Moshe) Okunieff—
a person of uncommon fortitude and spirit,
whose life became a mysterious saga,
dignified and enlightening,
as any undisguised truth turned into legend...*

FOREWORD BY THE AUTHOR — *ANDANTE SOSTENUTO*

I became interested in my ancestry and started feeling like a link of an endless chain that goes down into the bottomless well of the past, late in life, after I had emigrated.

Young people are seldom interested in their forebears. Their concern about the present, worry about the future, their school, job, career, women, family, and children leave little time to take a thorough look at the past; and two-faced Januses able to look to the future and the past at the same time are quite rare.

The people of the former Soviet Union had additional reasons not to show any special interest in their ancestry, for such curiosity could lead to big trouble. The ancestors could turn out to be not of “proletarian origin”, or, God forbid, clerics, or “enemies of the people”. Hiding non-proletarian ancestry or their connections to clergy could lead to the expulsion from the communist party, and then you lost your job — as the best case scenario. That is why many of us first sat down at the computer as old men, after leaving Russia, to write down the story of our fathers, to find the roots of the family tree, to tell our children about their great-great-grandmothers and great-great-grandfathers that lived in the Russian, Polish, Lithuanian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian towns and villages.

I felt an overwhelming desire to find my family roots and tell my children and grandchildren about them after my mother passed away and the cold emptiness of eternity stood behind my back. My work was rushed by an unexpected illness, a kind of wake-up call that said: “Here’s your last chance to preserve the family history for your descendants and to free the images of your ancestors from the void. If not you, then who?”

As an additional motivation to dig deep in the past came a revelation. From the miraculously preserved obscure fragments of memories, from the faded writings on the faded photographs, there rose

on the family horizon two truly outstanding, significant figures, those of my paternal great-grandfathers Movshe Okunev and David Jacobson. Movshe Okunev, the father of my grandfather Isaac Okunev, was a well-known shochet of the town of Velizh in the time after the infamous Velizh case that shook Russia, a blood libel of the Velizh Jews that allegedly ritually murdered a Christian boy. David Jacobson, the father of my grandmother Raisa Okuneva, served as rabbi in Lubavichi, the world-famous center of the Lubavichi branch of Hasidic Judaism where Chabad started (*Photo 1*). David received this high appointment in 1882 from the fourth Rebbe of Lubavichi, the great Tzadik Samuel Schneerson himself, known in the history of Chabad as Maharsh. I am going to omit my adventures that led to these discoveries, for they are not the topic of my story.

I would like to tell an incredible family saga, a story of a branch of the Okunev family that perished in the fire of Holocaust and yet rose from the ashes, like the fabulous Phoenix, and blossomed anew in Israel and America. The core of this story is a true miracle, the incredible discovery of a seemingly lost Okunev branch, the discovery that was made with the help of a certain book.

This story has two main characters. The first one is my second cousin Michael (Moshe) Okunev, who was lost with the rest of his family somewhere around the Polish-Lithuanian city of Vilna in the bloody breaking of the Second World War, and suddenly reappeared after 50 years in the American city of Chicago as the head of a new large family. The second main character of this story is... a book called "Letters to Relatives from XX Century". This book magically brought to us our first hero, as if one of the ten lost tribes of Israel that seemed to have forever disappeared was found at the tip of the writer's pen.

The part of yours truly, the author of this story, was to quite humbly put the two above mentioned characters together.

Come, O house of Jacob, let us walk...

Isaiah 2:5

So came the house of Jacob, lashed and bloodied, beaten to death and crucified, it rose and walked. A famished man, it broke out of the Warsaw ghetto; a little girl that was left for dead, it crawled out of the pile of bodies in Babiy Yar; a gray-haired youth, it came out of Lithuanian and Belarussian woods.

So came the house of Jacob, and walked. It ripped off the bloody scabs, it shed the ashes of the crematory ovens, and walked to the highest point of the Earth, Jerusalem, to clearly and firmly assure the judeophobic mob of the world: "Never again! Never will I allow anybody to murder Jewish children!"

*From The Axis of World History
by Yuri Okunev*

LITHUANIA, RUDNIKI FOREST SPRING OF 1944

In the spring of 1944 the General Staff of the Red Army began to prepare an enormous military operation "Bagration" to destroy the German Army Group Center and free Belarus and Lithuania from the fascists. A significant part of this operation was played by the

The author used original memories by Michael Okunieff as a basis of this essay in Russian. The essay was translated from Russian by Anna Tucker.

numerous partisan forces fighting far behind enemy lines. In May of that year the Soviet Information Bureau (Sovinformburo) among other news from the front lines reported the destruction of a German supply convoy by Lithuanian partisans near Vilnius.

* * *

Winter lingered that year and the warmth of the spring sun struggled to break the gloomy skies over the thick woods of Rudniki forest that grows between Vilnius and Lida. It was a chilly night, with drifting snow, and the guard, dressed in an old sheepskin coat, fed a few more thick dry twigs to the campfire. The fire swelled, pushing away the darkness, and outlined the silhouettes of the pines surrounding the clearing and the already melting snowdrifts that have been shoveled away from the entrance to the log cabin. The dark of the night would stay for a while, but the breakfast of meat and potatoes was almost ready in the mess tins hanging over the campfire. The commander ordered to cook as much food as possible, all they could get in the nearby villages and homesteads. The soldiers missed bread, but the farmers had none and no place to bake it. Still, they had potatoes and sometimes—like that day—even meat.

Moshe awoke to his bunkmate David pushing him and chanting in a low voice: “Wake up... Wake up...” Young men and women huddled together to stay warm on two rows of wooden pallets that lined the cabin leaving a narrow passage in the middle. The pallets were covered with several layers of soft pine sprigs with old coats, sheepskins and quilted jackets on top. They used everything they had to sleep on and cover with. Three dozen people were waking in the pitch dark of the night. They got used to living deep in the woods; they knew it was their only chance of survival. They were getting off their pallets without complaint, feeling for their clothes in the dark, talking quietly in Yiddish and Russian, as if stressing the importance and even solemnity of the moment. They knew that they would soon have to go far in the forest, that there would be a fight.

Moshe ran outside and quickly rubbed his face, chest and sides with wet snow. Then he went back in, put on both his shirts and a coat made of old tattered military greatcoat, belted it, and shoved his trapper's hat in the sleeve. The door to the cabin stood open and in the light of the campfire he soon located his bowl and his carved pine spoon.

Abba Kovner, the commander, was sitting on a felled tree trunk and patiently waited for his people to finish their campfire meal. These people were his Jewish team finally recognized by the Red Army command as an operational partisan troop. The recognition had come several weeks before, when a Soviet airplane parachuted them some firearms and a radio. For over six months Abba had acted of his own accord. He would pick up Jewish refugees, exhausted by wandering in the forest, find food for them and put children, the sick, and the weak in the care of remote homestead dwellers. He destroyed enemy lines of communication and attacked German patrols and local pro-Nazi police. Keeping the balance between the team's effectiveness in combat and the safety of the old and the children was a very difficult job. But the hardest part was finding local people who would not betray the Jews to the Gestapo and the police. Abba learned how to do just that. Now his troop got orders from the command to regularly destroy German supply convoys on their way to the front lines. For the first operation Abba picked a forest road between Vilna and Lida. This road was used by the Germans to deliver troops and supplies. For two weeks his scouts tracked the movement of the convoys. They reported that a supply train takes the road twice a week at dawn, guarded by armored vehicles and half a company.

Moshe finished his meal, checked his rifle and joined the uneven line of partisans next to his friend David. Abba Kovner named the participants of the raid. His speech was short. "Our task is to destroy the German convoy that is guarding a supply caravan and seize the supplies. This raid will test our ability to fight the enemy and our readiness to support the advance of the Red Army that sent us arms and ammunition." The commander stood in front of his sol-

diers bareheaded and his thick hair that turned gray before its time glimmered in the flickering light of the fire. Moshe thought Abba looked like Einstein, the Einstein that was mourning the failing harmony of the world. Suffering and hatred froze in Abba's bright eyes. Everybody knew the reason for this suffering and hatred.

Abba Kovner was well known in Vilna as the leader of a youth Zionist organization Hashomer Hatzair. Later, when the Germans came, he started a secret resistance movement in the Vilnius ghetto. Abba did not want to be a slave. Abba was a poet and his brave words were like the words of the ancient Hebrew warrior Eleazar that called to the defenders of the Masada fortress before the last Roman attack:

"We will not go like sheep to the slaughter.

Jewish youth, do not be misled. Of the 80 thousand Jews of Vilnius, the Jerusalem of Lithuania, there are only 20 thousand left. Our parents, our brothers and sisters have been taken away from us. Where are the hundreds of people that were sent into slavery by the Lithuanian "snatchers"? Where are the naked women and children that were taken on the scary "provocation night"? Where are the Jews that were taken on the Judgment Day? Where are our brothers from the Second Ghetto? None of them is coming back. All the Gestapo roads lead to Ponary, and Ponary means death!

If you still doubt, get rid of your illusions! Your children, your husbands and wives perished. Ponary is not a camp. They were all murdered there. Hitler intends to exterminate all Jews in Europe. The Jews of Lithuania are destined to be the first in his way.

Let us not be sheep that walk meekly to slaughter! It is true that we are weak and defenseless, but resistance must be the only answer to the enemy!

Brothers! Better die as free fighters than survive at the mercy of the murderers.

Resist to your last breath!"

In the fall of 1943 Abba Kovner organized a ghetto breakout and started a partisan team in the Rudniki forest. After the ghetto nobody ever saw Abba smile. He has witnessed too many deaths, too many of his relatives and friends had been brutally murdered. Everybody knew that. And Abba knew that there was not a single soldier in his troop that had not lost somebody close to them. There were no happy people there. The harmony of the world lay in ruins, as if God himself died in Ponary, in the bloody pits of the Ponary forest where Germans and Lithuanians murdered Jews.

Moshe squeezed his rifle. He had come to this forest with Abba Kovner and three hundred refugees from the Vilnius ghetto the fall before and went on his first military raid on October 7. He would remember that day for the rest of his life. His group of partisans destroyed a phone line along the road to Vilna. Moshe turned 21 the following February. He remembered celebrating his birthday with his parents and brothers in Vilna. Here nobody had birthday parties. It was a thing of the past, and the past was shadowed by the bloody ghost of the murdering gang that the whole world seemed to have turned into. Moshe slung the rifle on his back and walked by David's side. They had to walk several miles through the thick forest along the marked paths by dawn and set an ambush at a sharp bend in the road. "You know, Moshe," David mused, "The Fritzes are freezing in Russia, and we are going to take their food and warm clothes away."

The commander appointed Resel Sabin as the leader of the operation. Resel was obviously proud of his mission and looked like a dandy compared to his randomly dressed mates. He wore a warm striped quilted jacket and polished boots and carried an automatic rifle in his right hand and a handgun in his belt. "We received an order from the Soviet partisan staff to prevent delivery of supplies to the German troops from our area by any means," Resel explained. "Soon the Lithuanian partisans of Petritis' group will join us. Together we'll make almost half a company. We will destroy the enemy."

When daylight started to break through the dark thickness of the forest, they reached the place of operation. Resel Sabin and his

assistant Isaac Czuzoy divided the united Jewish-Lithuanian team into three groups. The central group armed with hand grenades, automatic rifles and four machine guns lay in ambush by the bend in the road behind the fallen trees. They were supposed to deliver the first fire strike to the convoy guard. The other two groups took their positions to the right and left of the central group a little further away from the road. They were to support the central group with gunfire in case of unexpected complications.

Day was dawning. The cobbled forest road with shallow ditches on both sides was getting more visible on the backdrop of the dark trees and dirty white splotches of melting snow. No birds broke the silence of the empty woods. The birds were stunned speechless by the humans showing up at such an early hour. Moshe and David were part of the left-side group. They lay low in a shallow dip and covered themselves with pine sprigs. It was chilly and wet. Time seemed to be standing still and minutes dragged forever. Eight o'clock, nine o'clock, and then it was full daylight. The trees were noisily dropping remaining snow off their branches on the soldiers here and there. The enemy was nowhere to be seen. The initial excitement changed to tiredness and worry. The operation must have failed. Or worse, the movements of the team had been spotted and they were going to be attacked.

Then they heard a distant sound, a mix of horse-driven carts on cobblestones and rumbling engines. In the resonant silence of the morning forest the sound grew fast, and soon the fascist-guarded convoy slithered around the bend in the road like a long snake. First came several dozen carts pulled by horses and loaded with two rows of sacks. They slowly passed the ambush. Everybody froze and held their breath. The commander ordered not to shoot the horses or the cart drivers under any circumstances. Then the rumble of engines joined the clanking of the horses' hooves and the rattling of the cartwheels on the cobblestones. The carts were followed by an armored personnel carrier with a squad of German soldiers and two machine guns on board, and right behind it came two pickup trucks full of local gendarmes. When the gendarme trucks came even with

the ambush behind the trees, the commander said quietly: “To our victory!” and then yelled, “Fire, fire!”

The next moment the silent forest road turned into hell full of rattling machine guns and automatic rifles, exploding hand grenades, yelling people and scared neighing horses, fire and smoke of burning vehicles, people running randomly, blood covering the bodies of the dead and the wounded. The Germans tried to fire their machine guns from the armored carrier, but it was the first to be shot and burned in the shower of bullets and hand grenades. The burning vehicle blocked the road and all the firepower of the machine guns turned onto the gendarme pickups. Those who jumped off the trucks were shot with automatic rifle bursts with no mercy to the fleeing or wounded. Sanka Nisanilevich was methodically finishing the still breathing fascists pointblank from his rifle: “Here is for my family, for my dad, for my mom, for my brothers and sisters”.

Moshe was overwhelmed with vindictive joy. Former helpless ghetto prisoners were beating celebrated Hitler’s troops. He wanted to kill at least one German soldier or Lithuanian policeman with his own hands. The rage brewed inside him, as if his parents and brothers, tortured by the Nazis, called for vengeance. The surviving driver of one of the trucks suddenly jumped out of the cab and tried to run to the woods. Moshe aimed and shot at him. The driver fell. Later they found out that several partisans had shot at the fleeing driver and nobody knew for sure whose bullet had hit him.

The operation went brilliantly. The German convoy was destroyed; dozens of the fascists dead, no partisan casualties, lots of uniforms, firearms and ammunition, supplies, carts and horses were seized. The partisans let the cart drivers who did not escape go with a note of temporary removal of their carts and horses. It must be those coachmen that started in villages and homesteads the legend of a “division of Lithuanian partisans” that destroyed “thousands of German soldiers and officers”.

They took a detour back to the camp, riding the confiscated horses and in carts, carrying the precious supply load. Moshe was sitting on top of the sacks with a Lithuanian partisan, and Sanka drove. Ev-

everybody was quiet for a long time reliving what had just happened. After the tiresome waiting for the enemy, after the shock of a swift fight, after the excitement of victory there came heavy exhaustion. Sanka talked first:

“War is cruel, but this fight is different. It was not cruelty, it was cleansing. I felt I could finally pay the Nazis back for my family’s murder.”

“I see,” interrupted the Lithuanian. “All you want to do is moan and groan like wild animals to cover your secret hatred. All of you Yids are murderers seeking revenge. The German driver was wounded and not dangerous. Why did you shoot him? My Christian faith is based on love for every creature that Jesus gave life to.”

“Lies!” Moshe cut him short. “Our Hebrew Bible teaches justice. The German soldier is our enemy. I don’t know how much blood was on his hands, but he was part of the system that is trying to exterminate my people and destroy the whole world.”

“Look, this is war.” Sanka tried to cool down the argument. “We have no choice. Either we kill the enemy or the enemy kills us.”

The Lithuanian snorted angrily, jumped off the cart and joined his team. Moshe and Sanka fell silent. Such an end to cooperation made them sad. Finally Sanka said:

“This guy really doesn’t care about the Jews or even who wins the war. He ran to the woods to dodge German draft.”

“He sensed that the Germans were losing,” Moshe added. “And he’s trying to be good for the Soviets that are coming back.”

Moshe and Sanka felt uncomfortable after the chat with their Lithuanian companion. They had met unfriendly Polish and Lithuanians even before the war, but mean words from a teammate alongside whom they had just fought the common enemy, the fascist, hurt deeper. Some things didn’t change, Moshe thought, like anti-Semitism. Germans were killing Jews, but Lithuanians chose to feel for the killers. Somehow it fit their faith better.

It got dark early in the forest and the sun never broke the clouds that day. In the dusk Moshe thought of sad things. The long-gone

happy childhood in his parents' home faded behind the terror of his miserable youth. What had he seen in his best young years? Humiliation, bloody pogroms and murder of his family, life in the ghetto worse than the life of cattle before slaughter. Orphaned youth with no place to call home, no relatives, living in filthy attics, dugouts and barracks, in this gloomy forest that sometimes showed him the faces of his mom, dad and brothers as he had last seen them.

* * *

Moshe did not know what was in store for him in the depths of the Rudniki forest. He did not know that only two months later Wehrmacht High Command would place tens of thousands troops and tanks along the road where the former Gestapo prisoners destroyed the German convoy; that two German armies of Group Center would set the last defense line against the Red Army marching to East Prussia here, on the way from Vilnius to Lida; that all hell would break loose when two gigantic armored armies clashed in battle.

Moshe Okuniew had little chance of survival, and yet he lived.

WARSAW SUBURB OF OKUNIEW XVI-XX CENTURIES

To paint the full picture we should begin this story with the origin of the name Okunev, or at least the Jewish variant of it.

On the outskirts of Warsaw about 16 miles from its center, where the rivers Długa and Zonza meet, up to this day stands a little village by the name of Okuniew (*Photo 2*). It has a small market, a beautiful St. Stanislaw church, the ruins of the Lubenski family mansion and the remnants of their park, an old abandoned Jewish cemetery, a famous stud farm and the Fellowship of Knight Okun building.

The village of Okuniew grew here in the first half of the XVI century and was named after the knight Stanislaw Okun, who received the ownership of the nearby lands on the trade route from

Warsaw to Russia and the right to hold markets and fairs from King Sigismund I the Old of Poland himself. In 1634 Andrzej Swiecicki wrote in his work “Topography, or Description of Mazovia”: “On the other side of the Wisla the Warsaw land spreads wider and envelopes the little towns of Okuniew and Stanislawow”. This area is connected to many historic events. In 1656 a Polish national hero hetman Stefan Czarniecki defeated the Swedes by Okuniew, and in 1703 King Carl XII of Sweden resided in Okuniew. At the time of the November Uprising of 1830 the Polish rebels fought the Russian military between Okuniew and Old Milosna, right before the battle of Olszynka Grochowska. Fired at by the Russian army, Okuniew burned down on February 18, 1831. The well-known Battle by Okuniew, in which one of the Polish national liberty movement leaders Piotr Wysocki fought, took place the same year.

In the times of Commonwealth of Poland the Okuniew estate was owned by the Okuniews, the Powsinows, the Chyolkows, the Radziminskis, the Okenckis, the Grzybowski, the Clickis and the Lubenskis. In 1795, after the Polish state fell as a result of the Third Division of Poland Okuniew became part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and a border town. During the Napoleon wars Russia annexed Warsaw and the surrounding area, including Okuniew. After the Warsaw-Brest railroad had been built and detoured the town, Okuniew started to decline, and in 1869 Emperor Alexander II stripped it of the status of town. In the early XX century Okuniew ran a horse-pulled tram to the railroad station in Milosna. This tram operated until WWI, when the retreating Russian troops dismantled the two-mile track and got rid of the rails. The Russian rule ended in 1915 and Okuniew found itself occupied by the Germans that lasted until the end of WWI. In 1920 during the Polish-Soviet war the front lines cut through Okuniew. In the following years, on the bumpy road through history of the XX century, the village of Okuniew suffered every misery and trouble that befell the distressed Polish land. Those events do not need further comment.

Jews came to Okuniew in XVIII century. The first synagogue was built here at the same time. According to historical evidence the

village of Okuniew “belonged to the lands where Jews could reside with no oppression”. In the middle of XIX century the village had a population of 532, including 105 Jews; and according to the 1897 census 287 out of its 1119 residents were Jewish. At the time of 1921 census about 500 Jews lived in Okuniew and a lot of Jewish social, religious and cultural organizations operated here. After 1930 a large number of Jews emigrated and the Qahal was moved to Rembertowo. In September of 1939 Okuniew was occupied by German troops and in April of 1940 Germans deported the Okuniew Jews to Warsaw ghetto. Nearly all of them died. There are no Jews in Okuniew at present and the only reminder of them here is a small Jewish cemetery with a dozen tombstones. In 1988 the Nissenbaum Family Foundation renovated the cemetery and put a fence around it. But since then the cemetery has been slowly reclaimed by woods.

Let us go back to our story. In the early XIX century after the three divisions of Poland and the end of the Napoleon wars the Okuniew Jews learned that they now were the subjects of the Russian empire with the right to reside inside the Pale of Settlement in Lithuania, Poland Belarus and part of Ukraine. The break-up of the Commonwealth of Poland, the administrative chaos and the collapse of economy in the former Polish-Lithuanian lands pushed Jews to migrate east. That was then, in the first quarter of the XIX century, that my great-great-grandfather whose name I do not know left Okuniew for good and went searching for a better life far east in Belarus, in the Vitebsk Governorate, closer to the eastern border of the Pale of Settlement, closer to the border of Russia, and settled in the town of Velizh on the banks of the mighty Western Dvina.

Last names for Jews were introduced in Russia in the early XIX century. “The regulation of the Jewish Affairs” of 1804 under the reign of Alexander I stated that “every Jew must have or accept his known family name or nickname, which must be henceforth kept without change in every document and record with the addition of the first name given according to one’s faith or at birth.” Having settled in Velizh our distant ancestor faced the need of picking a

name for himself and the rest of the family. His relatives and he still remembered their old homeland well and so without a doubt chose the name Okunev, after the village in Poland where they came from. The next generation of the Okunevs bore this last name officially and it was kept in every “document and record without change”.

VELIZH-VITEBSK, XIX-XX CENTURY

To further move towards the opening of our story let me give a very short account of the history of the Okunev family that settled in Velizh in the first quarter of the XIX century.

A Velizh ritual butcher (shochet) Movshe Okunev, the son of the first bearer of this name from the Polish village of Okuniew and the founder of the whole modern Okunev clan, was born in the middle of the XIX century in Velizh and died there in 1914. Nowadays the town of Velizh that is situated about 56 miles northeast of Vitebsk on the bank of the Western Dvina is a part of the Smolensk Governorate of Russia. At the time when Movshe Okunev’s father, whose name we will never know, settled in Velizh, the town was the center of the Velizh uезд of the Vitebsk Governorate of the Russian Empire. About 300 Jews lived there, among them 10 merchants, and by the time of Movshe’s birth there were over 3000 Jews in the area. According to the 1861 census 2105 Jews lived in Velizh making up 40% of the town’s population.

I do not have much left to say about Movshe Okunev and his family, because I know little. He was a respected man in Velizh and around it. The trade of ritual butcher (shochet) was considered inherited and very honorable. The shochet had to study Talmud and Shulchan Aruch to know every detail of shechita and kashrut* and pass the test given by the strict rabbis in Lubavichi. Movshe had to

* Shechita is the ritual slaughter of mammals and birds for food according to Jewish dietary laws.

Kashrut is the set of Jewish dietary laws or, in the wider sense, the set of religious rules for righteous life.

practice a lot before he learned how to keep the slaughtered animals kosher. When he first picked up a shechita knife there were almost 3000 Jews in Velizh and all of them maintained the Law and kashrut, and all of them came to Movshe to be able to cook their food according to Torah and Talmud. The Jews of the villages Ilyino and Usvyat also came to him, so he never knew shortage of work and his family never knew poverty.

In the only remaining portrait of Movshe Okunev we see a wise old man reading Torah or Talmud (*Photo 3*). The picture was apparently taken in the early XX century in Velizh. We see a noble thin face framed by a large gray beard, lively and slightly sad dark eyes looking over the glasses that slid down his nose. He is dressed in a dark kaftan and wears a deep fur hat like those of the Hasidim. Should I be asked to describe Movshe from what I know about him, I would describe something very close to this picture. I cannot imagine a better symbol for our family, so charmingly simple and at the same time so sublime.

Movshe's wife's name was Minna-Dvoira. There exists a picture of her taken in the Velizh studio of M. A. Tevelev in the early 1910s (*Photo 3*). On the back of the picture it comfortably says, "We keep the negatives". Oh sweet ignorance! In a few years the peaceful conservative Velizh and all the photographic negatives would fall into the abyss of an endless chain of catastrophic wars and revolutions. And yet this picture miraculously survived, and we can see what our ancestors looked like in the early XX century.

Movshe and Dvoira had three children—sons Hershen and Isaac and daughter Basia. Movshe's children were very prolific. Hershen had ten children with two wives, sons Pinchus, Simon, Joseph, Hirsh and Moses, and daughters Sonia, Rachel, Brayna, Fira and Minna. Isaac had three sons, Pinchus, Abram and Benzion, and three daughters, Ida, Rachel and Minna. Basia had a son named Boris and a daughter named Anna. So Movshe Okunev had a total of 18 grandchildren.

Movshe Okunev's sons Hershen and Isaac started the two branches of the Okunev tree of our family. The main character of

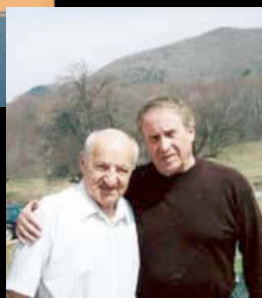
this amazing story Michael (Moshe) Okunev belongs to the Hershen branch, and the author, Yuri Okunev — to the Isaac branch.

As visual aid I include here a part of these two branches of the family tree, coming from the Velizh shochet Movshe Okunev, which is directly related to our story (*Photo 4*).

The four bold rectangles show the direct participants of the events in the following story, the main character Moshe Okunev, his daughter Rina, his first cousin Sophia and second cousin Yuri. The red lines show the interactions of the participants of the search based on the book “Letters to Relatives from XX Century”. This search led to the discovery of a lost branch of the family tree. But let’s be patient. We will learn the details further on.

To finally get to the life story of the main character we have to briefly go through the Hershen branch of the family tree. The father of this branch Hershen as the oldest son was supposed to inherit the family trade and the job of the Velizh shochet, but refused it and left to study pharmacy in Vitebsk. There exists a wonderful picture of Hershen Okunev’s family dated around 1912 (*Photo 5*). In it we see a Vitebsk pharmacist Hershen Okunev himself, his wife Fania and their five children, Brayna, Pinchus, Rachel, Esther and little Josef. Hershen’s son Pinchus, the father of our hero, is on the far right in this picture.

In the winter of 1919/20 Pinchus Okunev left Soviet Russia, ran to Poland and settled in Vilna. This is how his son Michael tells the story he overheard as a child: “Father put on a White Army officer uniform and an expensive fur coat, pretended to be a former rich landowner and started moving to the West. He was detained multiple times, but managed to get free and reach Vilna saying that he had suffered from the Bolsheviks. In 1920 Pinchus got married. The marriage according to Michael was a happy one and his parents complemented each other very well. His father was a businessman with good intuition, but superficial education, and his mother, on the opposite, was very well educated. She graduated from a Russian school with high honors and devoted her free time to teaching her three sons, Boruch, Moshe (Michael) and Hershon.



Основой этой истории является подлинное чудо — невероятное обнаружение, казалось бы, навсегда исчезнувшей семейной ветви благодаря одной книжной публикации...

The core of this story is a true miracle, the incredible discovery of a seemingly lost family branch, the discovery that was made with the help of a certain book...

«Многочисленные попытки их уничтожить охватывали самый длинный период человеческой истории. Египетские фараоны, ассирийские цари, римские императоры, одержимые крестоносцы, готские князья и святые инквизиторы — они приложили все свои силы для достижения этой, казалось бы, простой цели. Изгнание, пленение, грабежи, изощренные пытки и массовые убийства, система унижительных обычаев и законов — все это могло подорвать душу любого другого народа, но оказалось совершенно напрасным в отношении евреев».

Лорд Биконсфильд,
премьер-министр Великобритании

"The attempt to extirpate them has been made... on the largest scale; the most considerable means... have been pertinaciously applied to this object for the longest period of recorded time. Egyptian Pharaohs, Assyrian kings, Roman emperors, Scandinavian crusaders, Gothic princes, and holy inquisitors have alike devoted their energies to the fulfillment of this common purpose. Expatriation, exile, captivity, confiscation, torture on the most ingenious, and massacre on the most extensive scale, with a curious system of degrading customs and debasing laws which would have broken the heart of any other people, have been tried, and in vain."

Lord Beaconsfield,
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

ISBN 978-1-940220-58-1



M-GRAPHICS PUBLISHING

www.mgraphics-publishing.com
info@mgraphics-publishing.com