



# AVOTAYNU®

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# Finding Joseph Furman

by Boris Feldblyum

The story began in early 2020.

Dear Sir,

I am researching my Jewish Polish family. My two uncles were possibly recruited in Lvov in 1941. Their names are Osias Fuhrman, Lvov, born May 30, 1909 and Josef Fuhrman, Lvov, born in Vienna, Austria, September 6, 1914.

Can you find one or two of them in your database?

With my best regards

Catherine Morin

Actually, the story began well over a century ago. The family of Polish Jews Kiwa Fuhrman and Tila Feuermann at one point settled in Vienna in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They had three sons. One, Solomon, went to Paris in the 1920s to study medicine. On the eve of World War II, the parents and the two other sons, Joseph and Osias, were living in Lwow, Poland, (today, L'viv, Ukraine). When war erupted in 1939, the Soviets annexed the eastern half of the Second Polish Republic, including Lwow, as per Stalin's agreement with Hitler. About two years later, on June 22, 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet Union.

Solomon Fuhrman, who was in France at the time, became a member in the French Resistance, survived the war, and until his death in 1995, looked for his brothers and parents. After his death, his daughter, Catherine, continued the quest. Thus, some 27 years later, I received her short letter: "I am researching my Jewish Polish family."

Catherine no longer was looking for her grandparents, Kiwa and Tila. She had found their names in a Yad Vashem database, in a list of Lwow Jews deported to an extermination camp in 1942. She still hoped, however, to find traces of her two uncles and, perhaps, their children who would be her first cousins. As she explained later:

My father's story has always been a mysterious one in the eyes of his children, especially as far as his brothers were concerned. He considered them lost, but knew nothing about their fate after 1939. Writing his and his family's story for my children and grandchildren seems to be some kind of duty.

Based on the brothers' ages, I conjectured that "Possibly recruited" in Catherine's first letter meant drafted into the Red Army, and this became a starting point of research. Where does one look for two Polish Jewish men, ages 27 and 32, alive on June 21, 1941? What might have happened to them? We had four possibilities:

1. Both Osias and Joseph were murdered by the Ukrainians in L'viv, in one of the bloody pogroms in the early days of the war, or later. Their names were not found on the Yad Vashem list of deportees.
2. They escaped from L'viv and perished elsewhere during the war, leaving no paper trail.
3. They indeed were drafted into the Red Army and either were killed in battle or survived the war.
4. They evacuated deep into Russia and either died there or survived, later living pretty much anywhere in the world.

It was easiest to start with the third possibility because several Russian databases on the Internet list people who fought in the Red Army during World War II, which the Soviets called—and the Russians still do—The Great Patriotic War. The oldest database, functional for some ten years, at [obd-memorial.ru](http://obd-memorial.ru), holds data on Red Army personnel killed or missing in action. In most cases, the records include links to photocopies of actual documents. This data was later combined with the all-encompassing database at <https://pamyat-naroda.ru/>, but it makes sense to query all online sources, including those with the same data, just to be sure that no data was corrupted or is missing.

Note to English speakers: Russian databases were created in Russia, so some knowledge of the language is necessary,

especially because the search is best conducted in that language. It is also useful to remember that, when it comes to names in Russian, what matters is phonetics, not spelling. In this case, Furman, Furmann, Fuhrman, Fuhmann all have one equivalent in Russian: *Фурман*.



Joseph Furman in 1960s

A search for *Иосиф Фурман* (Iosif Furman) at [obd-memorial.ru](http://obd-memorial.ru) yielded 48 records. Although his father's name, birth year,

birth place, and presumed place of conscription in 1941 are known, because of many instances of erroneous and/or misspelled data, it helps to start with minimum search parameters, examine each record found, when practical, and then narrow the search if needed.

A quick review of the 48 records revealed no match. Next, we searched for *Фурман + Иосиф + 1914*. No records. After that we searched for *Фурман + 1914* which yielded 49 records, but we found no match. We searched for *Фурман + Вена* (Vienna, Austria); no records. Next, we searched for *Фурман + Львов* (L'viv, Ukraine, draft); again, no records.

Since the official language in Lwow before the annexation by the USSR was Polish, it is reasonable to assume that the Soviet clerks may have misspelled the name Furman when writing it in Cyrillic. (The Latin letter "u" looks similar to the Russian "и", and the letter "r" looks similar to "р".) Hence, the search was repeated for possibly misspelled-in-Russian names *Фирман* (Firman), *Фигман* (Figman), and *Фугман* (Fugman). Again, no records were found.

A similar search for Osias Furman, e.g., *Фурман + Осияс*, also produced no results. A wild card search for *Фурман + Ос...* produced no records. *Фурман + Львов* (birth

place) + 1909: no records. Фурман +1909 yielded 57 records but no match.

If the two Furman brothers indeed were drafted into the Red Army and they are not found in the database of those killed and/or missing in action, it is possible that they survived the war. (The three other possibilities mentioned above, 1, 2 and 4, are not considered for the moment.)

As a result of these negative searches, the next database to query was <https://pamyat-naroda.ru/>. The query Фурман +Иосиф returned 1,642 results. Because the surname was rather common and this query returned too many records to review, the search was narrowed to Фурман +Иосиф + 1914. This query hit gold. The first search result displays, in Russian, Furman Iosif, son of Kiva, born in Vienna, Austria. It points to three documents, all award certificates. Curiously, they all are post-war records, created in 1972 and 1985. No actual documents are displayed, only extracts from a computerized database. This discovery means that Joseph Furman was living somewhere in the Soviet Union as late as 1985!

Why was Joseph Furman awarded the rather distinctive Order of the Great Patriotic War four decades after the war had ended? In early 1985, to commemorate the 40th anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany, the Soviet government passed a law awarding all surviving war veterans the Order of the Great Patriotic War. The next step seemed very simple: ask the Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense for the 1985 address of Joseph Furman.

Having “found” Joseph Fuhrman, the search was repeated for Osias Furman, born 1909 in Lemberg/Lwow/Lviv/Львов. The results are: Фурман +”Осиас”. No records. “Фурман” +”О,” 48 records but no match.”Фурман” + “Львов” (birth place) returns six results, two of which look promising: Furman, Oziden Yakovlevich, born in Lvov in 1909, and Firman, Oznash Yakovlevich, born in Lvov in 1909. Since Kiva is a variant of Yaakov, this suggested a match based on the patronymic and the birth year. The given name looks grossly misspelled.

The first document of the two, declassified in 2007, is the service record, stating that Oziden Furman was reassigned from the 13th Reserve Riflemen Division to the 32nd Construction Battalion, between August 4 and 14, 1941. His civil occupation is listed as bookkeeper, which further matches the information provided by Catherine Morin. The second document, dated September 1, 1941, is similar. It is a list of soldiers being reassigned to the 32nd Construction Battalion. In it, Furman becomes Firman, and the given name, strange to the Russian ear, becomes Oznash.

No additional records exist for this person who, based on the data, seems to be Osias Fuhrman, one of the brothers. We assume that he disappeared during the first weeks of the war, most likely killed or taken prisoner by the Germans and, as a Jew, immediately executed. We wrote Catherine about the discoveries, sending her photographic copies of the original 1941 records for Osias Fuhrman.

When researching the internet, it is vitally important to remember that, as in any type of research, web search results may be considered valid if they can be replicated. Virtually all websites and web-based information repositories undergo periodic changes, revisions, deletions, merges with other sites and so forth. It therefore is useful to save URLs of sites and search results, and make screen shots. Although this creates extra work, it affords the possibility to quickly find an intermediate step from which a new search may be started.

Catherine was elated. She wrote:

... [Solomon's]... brothers, Joseph and Osias, were drafted into the Red Army and he never heard from them again and thought they were also killed. My father tried to look for his brothers but did not know where or how and on his death bed (he died in 1995) asked us, his children to keep looking. He told us often how grateful we all should be to the Red Army for liberating Poland and the whole Europe from the Nazis.

You can imagine my shock and joy upon discovering just recently the records of both my uncles on the web... It left me speechless to realize that Joseph was still alive in 1985 and was awarded The Order of the Patriotic War!

I am asking you to share my uncle's Joseph Fuhrman's 1985 address. My hope is that he had children and I will be able to find them....

Share Joseph Fuhrman's address! The problem is that I don't have it. The 1985 record found on the internet only points to a card located in the TsAMO, the [Russian] Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense, cabinet 59, box 39. I decided to write an emotional letter in Russian, in Catherine Morin's name, addressed to the archives. She signed it and mailed the letter. Its main point was, “I ask you to share my uncle Joseph Fuhrman's 1985 address. My hope is that he had children who are my first cousins and I will be able to find them.”

By this time, spring of 2020, Russia as well as the rest of the world was fighting the COVID 19 virus. The Archives were closed to researchers “until further notice,” but our hope was that someone still was opening the mail. A month or two later, our hope was realized. Somebody at the archives did open the letter from Catherine and replied, “You must write to the archive again and attach copies of documents that prove your family relationship with the person you are seeking.”

Catherine collected all relevant documents and sent them to the Archives, along with a copy of the first letter, and we waited again.

The year of the pandemic was a reminder that we all are mortal, that “future” is a fluid concept. Things that can be done today better not be postponed. Many years ago, Rabbi Malcolm Stern said it best: “Libraries can wait. People can't!” Lately, this has become my guiding principle in research.

So, while waiting for the response from the TsAMO, we planned a number of possible search directions to find Joseph Furman or, more likely, his family who may have moved five times since 1985. We knew that even if the Archives re-

sponded positively, the task of tracing a family with a common surname would not be simple. The Furmans may still be living in the same city in the former USSR as in 1985, or they may be living in another city in Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania, or Israel, USA, Australia, Canada—any country to which Soviet Jews emigrated as the Soviet Union was disintegrating.

We ruled out Israel for now. Mrs. Morin has established that Joseph Furman never made *aliyah* (immigration to Israel); she had previously inquired in Israel and the reply was negative. It did not appear either that Joseph Furman arrived in the United States in the 1980s or 1990s; he was not listed in the HIAS database, available on the internet. A quick check of several Russian telephone directories for Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev, Odessa, L'viv, and of the comprehensive list of Refuseniks published in America in the 1980s did not produce positive results either, so we resigned ourselves to wait for an answer from the TsAMO.

At last, several months later, in November-December of 2020, Catherine received three different letters, signed by different officials and contradicting each other in content. One asked her to resubmit the request, attaching proof of relationship. The second stated that they do not store the original documents submitted in 1985 to the Ministry of Defense by local Military Commissariats and, therefore, cannot provide Joseph Furman's 1985 home address. The third letter repeated the information found by us on the internet and—surprise—provided Joseph Furman's 1985 street address in the small resort town of Truskavets in Western Ukraine. Is this a case of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing? Maybe, but it doesn't matter, as long as we have what we need.

The good news is Truskavets is a small town, with a population of fewer than 30 thousand people in 2020. We knew it highly unlikely that Joseph Fuhrman, born in 1914, is alive today, but he may have had children or grandchildren, or maybe some neighbors remember the family and know where to look for them today, 35 years later.

The bad news is that Truskavets is a small town. If it has a telephone directory, it is not available on the internet. The Jewish population, if any, was very small in the mid-1980s and even smaller today, if it exists at all. There may be descendants of Truskavets Jews out in the big world who may have known the Furman family but where does one look for them?

We updated the list of action items: Find the Jewish community in Truskavets, if one exists. Determine who lives in the Furman's apartment today. Locate anyone still living in the same apartment building. Post a message on all known Jewish genealogy forums on the internet. Search for web-based groups of Jews of Truskavets, the L'viv region, Western Ukraine. Search for Truskavets landsmanschaft, if any. Review cemetery databases. Review the Library of Congress catalogue for Truskavets-related publications. Create Truskavets email alerts on auction sites such as e-Bay, Delcampe, and Meshok. Check Ancestry. Check the U.S. Social Security Death Index(SSDI).

Why the Library of Congress? Because its catalogue is a huge repository of surnames. Even if no suitable Furman is found, the (assumed) *Tourist's Guide to Truskavets*, published in 1980, may include the names of contributors, technical editors, and such. Since Joseph Furman's occupation is not known, it is reasonable to assume that he was literate enough to be a writer or an editor. For whatever reason, Jews seem to have been over-represented in book publishing and especially in book production.

Why auction sites? Because "one never knows." It takes a minute to create an alert and a minute or two to check the email alerts when received. Here is a real-life example. Approximately two years ago, I learned about a distant relative of my mother who was a teacher in a Jewish school in the tiny shtetl of Puliny near Zhitomir in the 1930s. After World War II, he was seen in the city of Kerch in the Crimea. Upon learning about the man, I checked the auction sites for photographs labeled "Kerch" and could not believe my eyes. The same man was looking at me in a 1949 class photograph from Kerch, offered for sale! That's a story for another issue.

As the list of possible search directions grew, it became obvious that the most important step should be to find the family of Joseph Furman in Truskavets, but first, I wanted to execute a passive search and post a "seeking Joseph Furman" on English and Russian language genealogy sites. Among others, we discovered a group named "Furmans of the world, unite!" created—obviously—by ex-Soviet Jews. Ancestry contains an interesting item, an immigration record to Brazil of one Osias Furman. Most likely it is a coincidence, but we shared it with Catherine in case she wishes to inquire further. A fellow genealogist, seeing the post in a group on Facebook, alerted me to a record of Kiwa Fuhrman's stay in a Vienna hotel in the mid-1930s. This enriched our knowledge of the family, but did not help with the task at hand.

I shifted focus back to Truskavets. Though no telephone directory is on the web, there is a listing for the Jewish Community of Truskavets, the name of its chairman and his telephone number. When searching the web, we also collected telephone numbers for the city hall, the courts, police, and private businesses listed there, just in case they may be useful. These actually did prove useful because the Jewish Community number did not answer. I found a Chabad number in Zhitomir, a few hundred miles away from Truskavets where the rabbi promised to get the current Truskavets number for me.

Calling random telephone numbers in Truskavets, I reached a kind Ms. Anna who promised to walk to the 1985 Furman's address and talk to the current occupants of the apartment. Although this sounds simple, it is not simple in Truskavets because she does not own a car. The walk is about a mile each way, on snow-covered streets. A few days later Ms. Anna told me that nobody seems to live in the apartment today, but she was given a name of a postman who worked in the area for many years and may know the residents.

In the meantime, the chairman of the Jewish Community picked up the telephone! Felix Rivkin is the nicest man, but

the surname Furman did not sound familiar to him. Never mind, his wife Larisa recalled a Furman family in Truskavets. The Rivkins also happen to have an old, printed telephone directory from the 1990s, which confirms the address of Joseph Furman. They also kindly shared with me the telephone numbers of three or four people who may have known Joseph Furman. Yes, Truskavets still has a (very small) Jewish community. When it was formed in the late 1980s, it counted about 90 people. Now, maybe 20 or 30 of them remain, all in their 80s, with children and grandchildren all over the world. Felix and Larisa Rivkin promised to make further inquiries.

Two days later Larisa Rivkin called. She had gone to the local vital records office where she begged an employee to look for Joseph Furman's death record. When it was found, she asked to look for his wife's death record, but the employee refused. Apparently, one good deed per day was enough. But then, she told me, when she saw Joseph Furman's wife's name on his certificate, Larisa realized she knew her. She was known under her own surname, and had died a few years after her husband.

A few hours later Larisa Rivkin called again. She had spoken to someone else who worked with Joseph Furman and knew the family! More details were provided. Joseph Furman was slowly taking shape as a living person. He was a financial manager at a state construction company in Truskavets. His wife, Vera Rastorgueva, an ethnic Russian judging by the name, was a bookkeeper in the same construction company. She died in about 2000 or 2001 and was buried by the Jewish Community. Joseph Furman was a nice quiet man, he had a large book collection in his apartment. Every summer he went to a Black Sea resort. Sadly, the couple had no children. This fact upset me greatly because I hoped so much to find Catherine some first cousins. It would have been such a gift to all of them!

Vera Rastorgueva, said Larisa, had a sister in Moscow and a brother in Leningrad. When she died, her nephews came to Truskavets because they inherited the apartment, which they promptly sold. No one remembered whether the nephews came from Moscow or Leningrad, so the trail went cold again.

Larisa Rivkin promised to visit the cemetery in Spring, after the snow melted, and take a picture of the tombstone. They don't have a car and only can go on foot and by bus. I asked her to look at the cemetery record register, if possible. Perhaps, the name and address of Vera's relatives is recorded there. Catherine was deeply grateful and sent a generous donation to the Truskavets Jewish Community which, as we learned later, made their Passover table truly festive.

End of the road... Or, maybe not!

From: Catherine



*Vera Rastorgueva in 1960s*

Sent: Monday, February 15, 2021 9:26 AM

To: Boris

When receiving your mail, I was first somewhat dazed by thinking of all this time during which the brothers did not know that the other was alive...

Afterwards, I thought of other questions.

How long had Josef been living in Truskavetz? Are we sure that Josef had not been married with someone else before? with children? Did he ever speak of his brothers? Is there a notary who might have gathered and kept personal data when the Fuhrman-Rastorguevs bought their apartment?

These are excellent questions. The problem is to find excellent answers. Nothing is simple in Ukraine.

How long had Josef been living in Truskavets is one of Catherine's questions. The answer is somewhere in the police archives, which handles residence permits. We needed to look for someone inside the police who would agree to search for this information going back 35 to 50 years. On the other hand, such information had been archived by now, out of police provenance. Which archives, we did not know yet. The logistics of looking for this information and the costs involved are simply unknowable.

The next good question was whether Joseph Furman was married before. In the Soviet Union, marriage registration, like the residential permit and the place of employment, is supposed to be recorded in the internal passport. What happens to a passport of a deceased person? Did Joseph Furman live and marry in Truskavets? Maybe he returned to L'viv after the war. What if he had a family before the war? He, and Osias too, actually, were old enough in 1941 to have had family with children.

Joseph Furman worked at a state-owned construction enterprise, most likely until he was 60 (retirement age in the Soviet Union). If the documents survived, they would have been moved to an archive, but which one? Yet another question to ponder was about the apartment sales records after Vera Rastorgueva's death. What was the procedure in Truskavets 20 years ago?

Curiously enough, the easiest answer was to the "what happens to the passport?" question. It was right there, in the Ukrainian version of Wikipedia: "A passport of a deceased citizen is surrendered to the office of the civil records registrar, which, after registering the citizen's death, transfers it to the passport service of the police." I really did need to look for someone helpful inside the police.

So, I revised the action item list again. It seems that any next step involving any official organization would require at least minimal vital data information for Joseph Furman and Vera Rastorgueva—such as their birth and death dates. With these dates as a starting point, we would try to obtain whatever information exists on them that may be kept in the passport office, such as date and place of marriage and previous address.

These could be learned from the tombstones or a ledger at the cemetery but the cemetery was still covered with snow. By now, Feliks and Larisa Rivkin were sincerely involved in the search. Mrs. Rivkin traveled to the cemetery, but could

not find the graves. Everything is disorganized, she told me. There was still snow on the ground and the cemetery was overgrown. She learned that the cemetery register had been lost. She promised to go there again when the weather is better.

A few weeks later, a text message and photographs of the tombstones arrived on my telephone. Larisa wrote:

They both looked as I remembered, especially Joseph. He was very handsome. I did not quite recognize Vera because I only knew her later in life and in the photograph, she is much younger. Today, was my fifth time at the cemetery. I finally found the graves and was very happy.

As I had hoped, the exact names and dates were engraved on the tombstones, so I could now proceed with the plan. According to local customs, portraits of Joseph Furman and his wife are engraved in marble on the headstones.

Not knowing where the official inquiries may take us, another action item was added to the list. I wrote a polite letter in Ukrainian, in Catherine's name, addressed to the current owners of the apartment and asked Larisa Rivkin to slide it under the apartment door. It was hoped that the current owners of the apartment may have some knowledge of the "nephews" who sold it to them. A similar letter, addressed to the unknown relatives, was written to be put in a bottle by the gravesite.

Acting on the assumption that real estate transactions in 2002 Ukraine (the year of Vera Rastorgueva's death) required legal help, I started calling all public notaries in Truskavets whose telephone numbers were listed on the internet. Two potentially useful tidbits of information came out of this. First, there were three lawyers in Truskavets 20 years ago who conducted real estate transactions in the town, but none would reveal any confidential information to me. Secondly, old records are stored in an office charged to keep track of the real estate inventory for the entire region, and it is not in Truskavets.

After figuring out the official name of the office, I found two or three telephone numbers on the internet, but none of them worked. After a few days of this effort, I start calling Truskavets city hall, all numbers previously found on the internet. My spiel was simple and straightforward: "Hello! My name is... I am calling from America. When I buy or sell my apartment here, the transaction is handled by a lawyer, and all records are stored in the local court. Where in Truskavets are these records stored?"

I had no luck until one lady said, "Oh, it's not in the court. There is an office in charge of keeping track of the real estate inventory for the region. I work with one of their employees occasionally." With my heart jumping, I asked: "Would you be so kind as to share his name?" "Sure, here it is," she responded. "And the telephone number?" I felt I was pushing my luck—and was rewarded. "Here is his mobile number."

I immediately dialed the number. A man picked up. After hearing the story of Catherine Morin looking for the family, he asked the names, address, the date of the transaction and promised to see what he can do. I quickly wrote down the

gist of the conversations and made a note to call him in a week before he forgets the matter. Before I even finished writing, my cell phone buzzed. A new text message read, "Vera Rastorgueva's nephew's name was Vladimir Ukrainsky," followed by a 2002 address in St. Petersburg. It was hard to believe my eyes. After so much effort! Just one phone call to the right person and WE HAD IT!

Quick excitement died just as quickly, replaced by consideration of next steps. What if this Vladimir person had died, moved, did not care to preserve his aunt's memories, and put everything in the trash? What if he was not really a nephew but one of those opportunistic Russians who came to the knowledge of the situation somehow and went after the money?

St. Petersburg is a good place to conduct research. Several telephone directories are available on the internet so the first steps were easy. Unfortunately, Vladimir Ukrainsky was not listed in any of them. We considered four possibilities:

- He did not have a telephone.
- He used a telephone registered to a previous owner of the apartment. (A telephone was a valuable commodity in the Soviet Union and as a rule was not disconnected when people moved out).
- The telephone was registered to his wife, if he had a wife.
- He lived in a communal apartment, where a telephone was shared with other families and was registered to the apartment.

Since the telephone search provided no direct results, I performed a web search in Russian. It resulted in one candidate, a man with the same name who teaches English in one of the universities. Unfortunately for us, it was mid-summer by this time, when the university staff around the world is on vacation. Nobody picked up the telephone in the foreign language department. I called almost every day for three weeks and finally a nice young woman picked up. Our conversation could be summarized as follows: "No, he is not here. Why don't you call back in two weeks when the school year begins?" "Of course I will," I reply, "but since we are talking, maybe you can share his home number." "That's fine," she replies. Bingo! Then I pushed my luck further: "And his cell phone, by any chance?" "Sure, here you are."

I immediately called the home number. Nobody picked up. Not again! The cell number connected though. "Hello?" I apologized for the intrusion and explained that I was looking for a man with his name who lived at No. 10 Red Guards Avenue some 20 years ago. "Yes, I did live there," he replied. "Have you ever been to the Ukrainian town of Truskavets?" I continued. "Yes." "Does the name Vera Rastorgueva mean anything to you?" "Yes, of course! She was my aunt. What is this about? Can you call me back in a half an hour? I am going through security at the airport."

Can I call him back? If only he knew. Half an hour later, I told Vladimir Ukrainsky the story of Catherine Morin who lives in France and is looking for her father's brothers. He shared with me that he was close to both Vera and Joseph, in

fact he calls him Uncle Iosif. He remembers him well, and he has "many photographs." He knew that Solomon was in the French Resistance and that Uncle Iosif was looking for him and once even wrote a letter to Charles de Gaulle.

This gave me a pause. Both brothers were looking for each other...!

Vladimir also had heard of the other brother, Osias, who "was executed in Lvov, along with the parents." And yes, Joseph Furman was married before his marriage to Vera Rastorgueva, but he never heard of any children. He lived in L'vov back then. Ukrainsky's flight departure was announced; we agreed to speak again after he returned back to St. Petersburg.

Catherine's reaction to this exciting development was understandable:

*"Wonderful, but so sad!!"*

Two brothers, looking for each other for 40 years after the war had ended; dying two years apart. Two brothers, living a few hundred miles from each other, two hours airplane flight, with the Iron Curtain separating them. The reason they did not find each other is obvious to me. The "workers' paradise," the "land of victorious socialism" did everything possible to separate its citizens from the rest of the world, from restoring familial connections. In fact, a question in many Soviet official documents was "Do you have relatives abroad?" Solomon Fuhrman may have made numerous inquiries with international organizations such as the Red Cross. Most likely, his letters were duly filed away and answered in the negative. Joseph Furman may have written to General de Gaulle, but his letters most likely were intercepted by the KGB. We may never learn exactly why the brothers did not find each other. What's left are a few photographs and documents that Vladimir Ukrainsky preserved and which, curiously, may provide an opening to a Part Two of this story.

According to Vladimir Ukrainsky's recollections, his uncle indeed was married to another woman, when he lived in

L'vov, before Truskavets. Ukrainsky remembered no talk about children from that first marriage, but diligent research must be supported by a written record. At our request, Ukrainsky wrote a short memoir about his uncle, which follows this article.

One of the documents that Vladimir shared was a 1947 reply from the personnel department of the State Bank of the USSR to Joseph Furman's inquiry about the fate of his brother. Interestingly, he is named Otto Kivovich in that document and not Osias Yakovlevich. After consulting with another Vladimir, Moscow researcher Vladimir Paley, one of the nicest people in the genealogical community, we learned that the records of the former State Bank are preserved in the Economic Archives in Moscow. We asked them for help locating the original 1947 inquiry which may provide additional details about the missing brother. No reply has come as of this writing.

Another curious detail about the personnel department's reply is that it was addressed to Joseph Furman in the town of Khanlar, Azerbaijan. It means that Joseph Furman lived there right after the war, perhaps married there. Will there be a Part Three?

We definitely may have a Part Four—in Brazil. Remember, an Osias Furman immigrated to Rio de Janeiro from Uruguay, in 1956, with a wife and a son? The name Osias is rather uncommon. Most likely, he is an unrelated person, but on the other hand, he may be a cousin.

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