

Dr. Samuel Ellsberg, Physician and Leader
by Claudia Ellsberg



Samuel Ellsberg was born in Moscow on 11 November 1871. His parents, Borach "Benjamin" Ellsberg and Esther Faas originally came from Wilno (today's Vilnius, Lithuania) but moved to Moscow when reforms introduced during the reign of Tsar Alexander II made this possible. In 1888, Borach brought Samuel to the United States. He entered Medical School at New York University, graduated in 1895, and served as a General Practitioner in New York City for the next 45 years until his death at the age of 69 on 21 May 1931.

Dr. Ellsberg was not only a fine physician, but was widely recognized for his philanthropic activities. He and his wife kept open house for writers, politicians and members of the Russian 'Intelligentsia.' His daughter Esther later reported that among these guests was David Ben Gurion, who is said to have met his future wife in the Ellsberg's home. Dr. Samuel Ellsberg was a social democrat and a socialist all his life, a leader in labor and educational movements among Russian immigrants and deeply involved in Jewish affairs.

Other well-known members of the Ellsberg family are Admiral Edward Ellsberg, known for his work in raising the S-51 submarine, and Daniel Ellsberg of Watergate fame. Alternate spellings used in Vilnius are Elyashberg, Elisberg and Eliashberg.

Below, left to right: Borach Ellsberg, Esther Faas Ellsberg, Samuel Ellsberg as a young man.

