

Kotzin, Ginsberg and Hurwicz Families: Moscow Connections by Ted Kotzin

I have several Kotzin relatives who lived in Moscow from before the Russian revolution up to at least 1961. Whether anyone is still there I don't know, although my Israeli cousins say there was no contact after 1961 and no relative came to Israel even when it was possible to do so



Moscow Women's Institute, est. 1872, now
Moscow State Pedagogical University.

First, my father Tobias Kotzin had three uncles with Moscow connections.

The most significant one was Dr. Maxim Kotzin, born in Kaunas (Kovno) in 1862. He became Professor of Hygiene in the Moscow Women's Institute, was one of the founders of the Pasteur Institute of Moscow, and was involved with sanitation and with the construction of the Moscow Water Works.

He died about 1936, and there is a rumor that he may have been a victim of Stalin's purges of that period. He married Sophie Ginsberg around 1892. She was important in her own right; she was a librarian, historian, and archivist, dealing with Jewish, Zionist, educational, and other topics. She was born in 1873, lived in Moscow from 1877, was still alive in Moscow in 1961. They seem to have had a son, Meyer, who also lived in Moscow.

A second uncle was Dr. Isidor Kotzin, 1857-1933, who had a medical degree from St Petersburg. He practiced in Kaunas, but two sons, Boris and Gregor, lived in Moscow at least until 1959.

The third uncle was Dr. Jacob Kotzin, 1860-1929. He was a pharmacist with a degree from Moscow University. He came to America with my grandfather Theodore and his family in the 1880s. The family story is that he returned to Russia around 1902 because he was not interested in running an American-style drugstore with a soda fountain! A daughter, Helena, married Leon Ginsberg, a nephew of Sophia (Maxim's wife); they lived in Moscow and had a son Boris. Leon Ginsburg died in 1946, but Helena, Boris, and a grandson were living in Moscow as of 1961. Helena's sister, Sonya Vizansky, had immigrated to Israel (then Palestine) in 1931, but was able to visit the Moscow relatives in 1959; contact seems to have been cut off around 1962.



<http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Moskva/>

I also have some more distant relatives with Moscow connections. Another Max Kotzin, who changed his name to Hurwicz, was the son of Tevye Kotzin, Maxim's first cousin, and grandson of Misha-Beer Kotzin, Maxim's father. He moved from Warsaw to Moscow in 1915, during World War I. He died there in 1927 and his wife in 1935. They had seven children, some who stayed in Moscow and others who came to America or Israel. One son, Adek, had two sons in Moscow, one of whom was Leonid (Leo in America) Hurwicz, born 1917. Leo came to America in 1940, became a famous economist at the University of Minnesota, and was a Nobel Prize winner in economics in 2007; he died in 2008.

There were other relatives in Moscow who were also descendants of Misha-Beer Kotzin; I have names but not much more information.