

PART III
RUSSIAN GOSPEL TEMPLE
CHAPTER 9

Joseph Lokteff, choir director



Russian Gospel Temple Choir

Russian Gospel Temple Choir
17th and Potrero
San Francisco, CA

First Row: (left to right) Pastor Alex Shevchenko Sr., Peter Ilyin, Lily Soboleff, Raya Pustobaeff, Susan Shevchuk, Tava Soboleff, Nida Lokteff, Nellie Krapivkin, Luba Pustobaeff, Luba Shevchenko, Vera Brachinoff, Choir Director Joseph Lokteff

Second Row: Nilla Samosvatoff, Alice Brachinoff, Vera Dubenko, Kathy Prasoloff, Ruth Ilyin, Luba Solovieff, (unknown), Tamara Fedoroff, Raya Soboleff, John Iliyn

Third Row: Alex Riltzeff, Ben Shevchenko, Boris Prasoloff, Alex Shevchenko Jr., Fedor Dubenko, Stanley Wigowsky, Alex Shevchuk, Paul Ilyin, Peter Dubenko, Alex Souhorukoff, Peter Dumanovsky

[Note: Maiden names are used for the women.]

<https://wigowsky.com/images/misc/choir.htm>

Title Song, God Eternal



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eysonJNGGLA>

1st Album – God Eternal

Side 1:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4cDOYMbT10>

Side 2:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-7WM8rSzDw&t=2s>

2nd Album: 2nd side
Tidings from Heaven (Christmas album)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11o6J721ZNY>

3rd album - Children's Choir

Side 1:



Side 2:



Side 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IjXASQLFI0>

Side 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgkhzyxwEvs>

4th album - Combined Choirs

Side 1



Side 2:



Side 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvJFfxgZycM>

Side 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GimWyU31wAc>



Хор «Птички», возраст 3—5, управляет Лилия Ильина.
 "Nestling" choir, age 3-5, teacher Lily Ilyin.



Хор «Яркие звездочки», возраст 6—8, управляет Ниджа Виговская.
 "Bright Stars" choir, age 6-8, teacher Nida Wigowsky



Хор «Плюшки», возраст 9—12, управляет Сара Букарева.
 "Swallow" choir, age 9-12, teacher Sarah Bukareff.



Хор «Молодые гедеоны», возраст 9—12, управляет Любовь Шевченко.
 "Young Gideons" choir, age 9-12, teacher Luba



Хор «Приятное созвучие» (специальный детский хор, состоящий из более музыкально одаренных детей; поет в три голоса).
 возраст 6—11, управляет Иосиф Т. Локтев.
 "Sweet Harmony" choir, age 6-11, consisting of children who are more musically gifted than others. They sing in three parts; director Joseph T. Loktett.



Хор «Храбрые воины», возраст 13—15, управляет Петер Ильин.
 "Brave Soldiers" choir, age 13-15, director Peter Ilyin.





Lokteff and Wigowsky families in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco @ 1970 Stanley married Nida Lokteff and thus the 2 families had a bond. Joseph Lokteff created a choir

There is an interesting story about how Joseph and Marusia fell in love and got married while living in Gulja, China. The story is told in episodes in Peter Iliyn's book about his father, Vanya Iliyn: "Out of the Far Corners." Here is a photo and several excerpts from the book:



Joseph and Marusia Lokteff, April 4, 1942

On page 116 in Peter Iliyn's book, we are introduced to the couple, Joseph and Marusia.

On page 140, Part 3, we find out what happens with the relationship between Joseph and Marusia.

"Who sent it?" Misha asked.

Marusia, looking down at the floor, answered, "Joseph."

"Who's Joseph?" I asked.

"Humph!" Aunt Maria mumbled. "What's that Baptist sending you gifts for?"

"Aren't you going to open it?" Uncle Mitrofan asked, smiling.

"What's a Baptist?" I asked.

Marusia suddenly ripped the package open and pulled out an old sweater. She had a puzzled, almost hurt look on her face as she lifted the sweater up to her chin. Aunt Maria roared with laughter.

"Now that's one ugly sweater!" she yelled, slapping her knee.

Her eyes glistening with tears, Marusia looked at Aunt Maria with deep pain and with something else that I couldn't quite place.

Uncle Mitrofan stood and said, "Maria, stop laughing!" He turned toward Marusia, who was now clutching the sweater against her chest. "Marusia," he began.

"He loves me!" Marusia muttered, still looking at the floor.

Then she looked up at Uncle Mitrofan, tears streaming down her cheeks, and with deep conviction in her voice, she shouted, "And I love him too!"

Uncle stepped toward Marusia, who turned and fled.

"What was that all about?" I asked.

That evening, Misha told me the rest of the story. Joseph Lokteff had first met Marusia five years ago. His parents ran a nylon and sock factory in Gulja. They owned three houses and were much better off than most of the Russians. Joseph hired several of Marusia's girlfriends to do the finish sewing of the toes in the socks. Eventually he asked Marusia to help and then promptly fell head over heels for her. Marusia had never had a boyfriend and approached this relationship with a little skepticism. But soon she, too, fell in love with Joseph.

The problem was with Aunt Maria and some of the church leaders. Joseph attended the Baptist church. Misha then explained that there really wasn't much difference between the Baptists and us, the Pentecostals. The way he saw it, the main difference was how we prayed and what we believed about the Holy Spirit. Otherwise our church services were quite similar. Some of Misha's best friends were Baptists.

"Anyway," Misha continued with the story, "according to Aunt Maria, there was no way that Marusia could marry outside our church. Aunt Maria had done everything possible to end Marusia's relationship with Joseph."

I had often heard Aunt Maria scheming with other women about finding another suitable husband for Marusia. Aunt Maria had even said things like, "How can a normal young man ever marry someone with a crippled arm?" Many times Marusia would be sitting in the next room, listening to all of this. But Marusia had the "I'm in love" look in her eyes, and I noticed her getting more and more bold with Aunt Maria. I couldn't wait to meet this Joseph.

Misha wanted me to learn a profession, and he persuaded Uncle and Aunt to send me to a cobbler's trade school. It was actually a small shoe store owned by a local man who also taught apprentices how to make shoes. Ever since Papa died, I had wanted to learn how to make shoes, to be just like Papa. I began my six-month apprenticeship in July of 1941.

Part 3 enters the World War 2 era, when alliances were created, and China and Russia were vying for territory around where Vanya and his family lived in Gulja. There is another personal story, however, that takes center stage in this book. It is the continued saga of Joseph Lokteff, who comes to Mitrofan to ask for Marusia's hand in marriage. Mitrofan makes a crushing condition: Joseph, a Baptist, must marry in a Pentecostal church. Joseph, in a gallant move, comes a week later in a wagon and steals Marusia away to a Marriage Registration house, where they are legally married in the eyes of the law. However, to make it sacred and legal "in the eyes of God" (and the church community), Joseph and Marusia had a solemn wedding on April 4, 1942, in Joseph's house, and the officiating pastor was Ionko from the Pentecostal church.

were permitted to meet with each other only in groups. We were told this would protect us from the temptation to sin.

Marusia wanted to become a seamstress and convinced Aunt Maria to allow her to study at a local shop. I wondered whether this had something to do with Joseph, whom I had already met several times. I could tell that Marusia really liked him, and I liked him too. Joseph was an excellent musician and an exceptional choir director. I didn't quite understand why Aunt Maria didn't like him; I thought he would make a great husband for Marusia.

One day Joseph came to our house, but instead of wanting to see Marusia, he asked to speak to Uncle Mitrofan. Misha and I crept up to the door to hear their conversation.

"I . . . I would like to . . . to speak with you a . . . about Marusia," Joseph stammered.

"Alright," Uncle Mitrofan said.

"I love Marusia and would like to ask you for her hand in marriage," said Joseph, who suddenly sounded sure of himself and didn't stammer.

"You would like to marry Marusia?" Uncle Mitrofan questioned.

"Yes, I would."

"I will agree under one condition," Uncle Mitrofan replied. "That she not be married in your church."

"But why?" Joseph sounded shocked and crushed.

Misha and I could hear Uncle pushing his chair away from the table. The conversation was over. Misha beckoned me to follow him as he turned and ran outside. We watched Joseph shuffle away, shoulders drooped and with a puzzled look on his face.

Several weeks later, we heard Marusia say that Joseph fell ill and requested the wedding be postponed. Aunt Maria, emboldened by this postponement, tried desperately to get Marusia to marry Alex

Mahovski. Alex and his parents attended our church, and I often saw him at youth meetings. Alex was quite short and pudgy and even more shy than Marusia. Aunt Maria started inviting Alex and his parents over for dinner, always seating Marusia right next to Alex. But Marusia did not like Alex. She would always ask Aunt if Joseph could come for dinner, but the answer was always the same: "No!"

One day I overheard Marusia's conversation with Aunt Maria.

"Because you are just a poor orphan with a crippled hand. That's why you need to marry Alex," Aunt Maria fumed.

"But I don't love him!" Marusia exclaimed.

"What does love have to do with this?" Aunt Maria shouted. "You live in my house, under my roof. You don't have a choice in this matter."

"I will not marry Alex," an emboldened Marusia replied. "Joseph will come for me. God told me so."

I was stunned by Marusia's boldness. And I didn't have to wait too long to see the results.

Less than a week later, Misha met me as I came bounding through the door. "Have you heard about Marusia?" Misha said.

"No," I said expectantly. "What happened?"

"She's getting married!" shouted Misha with a big, wide grin on his face.

"Please don't say she's marrying Alex," I retorted.

"She's marrying Joseph, her prince, who came and stole her away on a wagon!"

And out came the story. Since Aunt Maria was no longer allowing Joseph to visit Marusia at our home, one day, a week or so earlier, Nadya Vodopyanova had come for a visit. Aunt Maria didn't suspect anything and was not at all concerned when Nadya asked Marusia to step outside. Unbeknownst to Aunt Maria, Joseph's friend was

waiting in a wagon for Marusia. Nadya literally pushed Marusia into the wagon, and away they rode as fast as possible.

One block from the house, Joseph joined Marusia in the wagon, and they darted off to the marriage registration office. Within an hour they were legally registered to get married and had set a date for their wedding: April 4, 1942.

Marusia married Joseph in a wonderful ceremony held at Joseph's house. Aunt Maria did not attend the wedding, though Uncle Mitrofan did. Both Misha and I were in the wedding. The couple were married by Ionko, the assistant pastor of our Pentecostal church. Then, two weeks later, on April 25, Misha and Nadya also got married. Suddenly I was once again living alone with Uncle and Aunt, but I was very happy for my older brother and sister.



**Russian Gospel Temple Choir Director, Joseph Lokteff
(with wife Maria in Woodburn, OR 1976)**

[Maria Lokteff \(Aug 20, 1919 - Jul 1978\)](#) [Joseph Lokteff \(Sep 20, 1913 - Mar 17, 2003\) \(89\)](#)

Joseph Terentievich Lokteff

Birth 20 Sep 1913 - Chelek, Russia

Death 17 Mar 2003 - Hubbard, Marion County, Oregon, USA

Mother: Tatiana Vasilevna Ushakov

Father: Tirenti Dimitrivich Lokteff

https://www.myheritage.com/names/joseph_lokteff

Joseph married Pelage "Polya" T Lokteff (born Kravchenko), 1979 – one year after his first wife Maria died in a car accident.



Joseph, Polya at Joseph's daughter's Helen's wedding



Joseph T. Lokteff (1913-2003)

Addendum:

Joseph Lokteff's nephew Mike Lokteff (son of Joseph's brother Daniel Lokteff) wrote a book, which might be of interest to the Lokteff family or to those wanting to hear Daniel Lokteff's story about his life in China. They came to California and lived in Bryte (presently West Sacramento). They attended the Baptist church.

<https://www.amazon.com/River-Faith-Amazing-Journey-Freedom/dp/B0B9QS2D6Y> (read sample)

