

EMILY R. LEHRMAN (March 1, 1923 — January 13, 2015)

Wife of Nathaniel S. Lehrman, M.D.; mother of Leonard J. Lehrman, Paul D. Lehrman, Betty J. Lehrman; grandmother of Alison and Laura Schwartz.

At her funeral January 18, her favorite song, “Ode to Joy,” was sung on recording by her favorite singer, Paul Robeson. Arriving in U.S. in 1935 with no English, only Russian and a little Yiddish and German, she became what her colleagues called an “extraordinary” editor. Simmons ’45, Columbia MA (Russian lit) ’47, LIU MLS ’67. In 1943 she toured New England interpreting for Solomon Mikhoels, founder/director of Moscow’s Jewish Theater. Became U.S. citizen June 6, 1944; June 18, 2014 she and Nat celebrated 70th wedding anniversary.

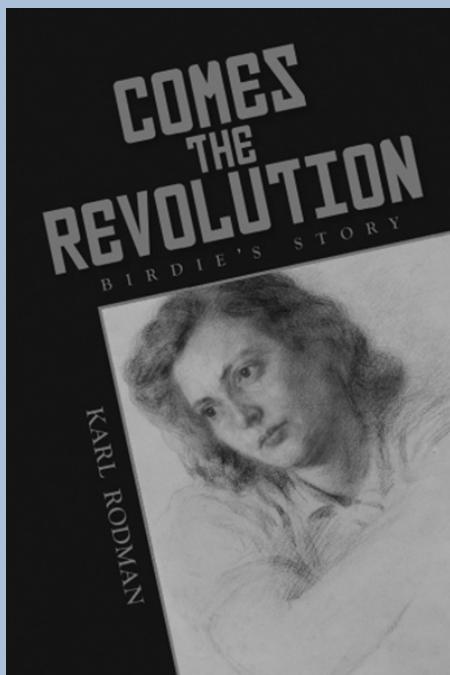
Offered a job as a public school teacher in early ’60s, she had to decline due to requisite loyalty oath. Taught Russian for adult education at Adelphi and in Roslyn, catalogued Hofstra’s Russian collection, reorganized medical library at Kingsboro State Hospital, and worked for 28 years as LIU-Post librarian. She translated into English Natalya Baranskaya’s Soviet feminist novella *A Week Like Any Other Week*, published in *Massachusetts Review*, and *Folktales of the Amur* (Abrams). With son Leonard, she translated poems and libretti by Yevtushenko, Mayakovsky, Chekhov, Sholokhov, Pushkin, and operas *A Life for the Tsar* (premiered 1979) and Dargomyzhsky’s *Rusalka* (1986), to receive its first full concert performance at Queens College November 22, 2015. A memorial plaque will be dedicated to her there.

Into Russian she translated a passage from Emma Goldman’s *Living My Life* on Emma’s arguing with Lenin about human rights. This became a scene performed in Russian in Leonard’s *E.G.* (JC concert 1987). Active in Women’s Strike for Peace, ECLC, and Great Neck SANE, she called herself “the product of two cultures.” When she left the USSR, “a friend exclaimed: ‘You are going to a capitalist country!’” And after she’d been in the U.S. a while she was asked: “You lived in a communist country!?”

Jewish tradition she distilled through a Russian lens: Chekhov via Gorky: “Look, people, how badly you treat each other.” Also via Gorky: “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I for?” She challenged people to take responsibility for being *for* something. Leonard’s “Jewish Opera Lives!” series January 20-May 13 at Community Church in Manhattan are dedicated to her memory, along with Metropolitan Philharmonic Chorus concerts at Freeport and Bryant Libraries October 18 & November 1. Donations to Doctors Without Borders and/or Planned Parenthood are welcome.

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My novel, ***Comes the Revolution***, is published! It’s available from Amazon — soft cover, \$8.⁸⁸, Kindle version \$2.⁹⁹. You can order it just by typing in Amazon.com, and then, under books, you enter “Comes the Revolution.”

I hope you’ll want to read it and that you’ll like it. It’s a fictionalized account of my aunt, who in 1931, at age 20, went off to Soviet Russia. Just before the outbreak of WWII she returned to America with her Russian-born daughter and, until her hundredth year, navigated the conflicts of Cold War America. The issues and the conflicts she struggled with, will be familiar to most of you.

The story of her life is a rollicking tale of a powerful woman. I enjoyed writing it and I hope you’ll enjoy reading it.

Best wishes,
Karl Rodman