One Man’s Last Story (continue)

“Leo Povovo and I both attended Moscow State University, he was going into engineering, and I was going into journalism. I often look back and wonder why I didn’t see the fact that he would later turn me in. The reason I say that is he was always encouraging me to switch careers because he thought a career in journalism won’t be very productive. “ said Boris.

“Why would he say that,” questioned Ivan.

“Well I wasn’t willing to spread the propaganda that came out of the government. I wanted people to know the truth, and to lift the blindfolds off of people so they could see a better life for themselves. I learned the hard way that blind sheep don’t like to see.”

“Is that why when my brothers choose to join the Communist party you didn’t protest,” questioned Ivan.

“Exactly right Ivan, I figured maybe like many people do they had to learn the hard way. But then again I guess some never learn regardless of what happens around them,” stated Boris.

“Tell me more about some of the people you met in the camps,” asked Ivan.

“Okay let’s see here there was a squad member of mine named Anton Sokolov. He was put in the camps due to pretty much the same thing I was in for. Simply, daring to express an opinion that didn’t align with communist values. We had both been told that our views weren’t what they called Russian values. I remember Anton would often say “To hell with them what do they know about Russian values for Christ sake their putten men in camps for free thought” Then if their was no guard people would laugh. “

“Go on” Ivan said. As he finished writing Boris last few words.

“It is strange to think about, but he looked alot like your oldest brother Arseni. If my memory serves me well after he got out of the camps he went to the coast all the way out to St. Petersburg. He used to be a very patriotic man, but spending over twenty years in living hell had left him wanting to leave the country. Once he was in St. Petersburg I believe that he went to Canada,”

“How did he get out? I thought they didn’t let people out of the country,” questioned Ivan.

“Well Anton was one of those guys who always knew a guy. A friend of his was advisor to one of the customs people. This friend helped him get a fake passport so he could leave. Anton offered to help me get out of the country. I sometimes wonder why I didn’t leave along with him. “

“Do you know where in Canada he lives in Canada,” questioned Ivan.

“I think he lives somewhere in Nova Scotia. Then there was a friend of mine who I went to college with who was in the camps. His name was Abram Kuznetsov. I was honestly surprised to see him in the camps because he majored in something that probably wouldn’t have attracted much attention. I say that because he chose to major in chemistry, and most of the Communists kept a more watchful eye on people like me and Leo because we were journalists. He told me on the first day that I was there that he had chosen to leave his comfortable position at Moscow State University and joined the underground resistance. “

“Do you know what happened to him,” questioned Ivan.

“There is something you should know about Abram Kuznetsov. He was known for having a rather sharp tongue probably because of his years in the military. A week before my release he got into a dispute with one of the guards over the searches. The guard sentenced Abram to the cells for two weeks. On the day I was to be released I heard that he had passed in the cells despite his strong will to live to tell the tale. “

“How many people died in the camps?” questioned Ivan.

“The highest death toll has been estimated at 1.6 million, but some estimate lower at around 1,053,829. Sometimes I hear the Communists say we aren’t as bad as the Germans, but that doesn’t really matter. A life is a life no matter what people do trying to justify their actions,” stated Boris.

That’s when Ivan noticed that they both had finished their cups of tea. Before his father could say anything I got up and refilled both cups of tea. Ivan couldn’t help but think about all that he had learned from his father in the past couple of hours.