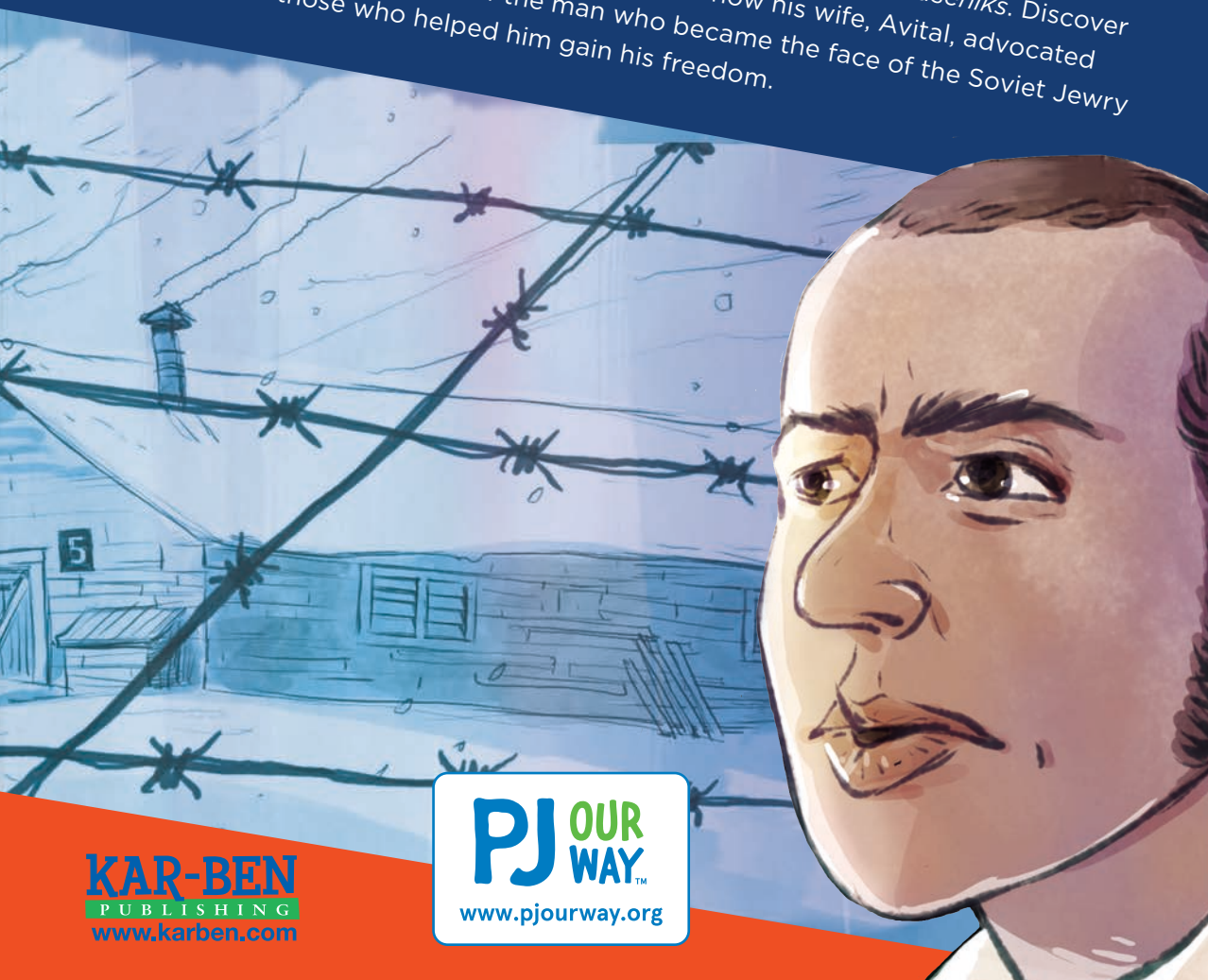


HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST ANATOLY "NATAN" SHARANSKY

was born in 1948 to a Jewish family in Ukraine, a part of the Soviet Union. In 1977, he was arrested and later imprisoned for wanting to leave the Soviet Union and go to Israel. His struggle became the struggle of all Soviet Jews who wished to leave. With the help of his wife, many Jewish activists, and world leaders, he eventually succeeded in immigrating to Israel, paving the way for the release of other Soviet Jews who wished to live in freedom.

With this graphic novel, follow Sharansky's story, from the awakening of his Jewish identity and the desire to live in Israel to his years of imprisonment. Learn about the American Jewish community's involvement in supporting Soviet *refuseniks*. Discover how Sharansky kept his spirits up behind bars and how his wife, Avital, advocated for his release. This is the story of the man who became the face of the Soviet Jewry movement and those who helped him gain his freedom.



Copyright © 2021 by Lerner Publishing Group, Inc.

All rights reserved. International copyright secured. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without the prior written permission of Lerner Publishing Group, Inc., except for the inclusion of brief quotations in an acknowledged review.

KAR-BEN PUBLISHING®
An imprint of Lerner Publishing Group, Inc.
241 First Avenue North
Minneapolis, MN 55401 USA
Website address: www.karben.com

Photo Acknowledgments

Photos on page 62 are courtesy of: Harry Lerner (top); Yaakov Saar/Israel National Photo Collection (middle); Amos Ben Gershom/Israel National Photo Collection (bottom).

Main body text set in Comicrazy.
Typeface provided by Comicraft.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Hoena, B. A., author. | Dickmann, Daniele, illustrator.
Title: Natan Sharansky : freedom fighter for Soviet Jews / Blake Hoena ; illustrated by Daniele Dickmann.
Description: Minneapolis, MN : Kar-Ben Publishing , [2021] | Includes bibliographical references. | Audience: Ages 8–11 | Audience: Grades 4–6 | Summary: "The story of Soviet Jewry refusenik and human rights activist Anatoly Natan Sharansky"— Provided by publisher.
Identifiers: LCCN 2020016337 (print) | LCCN 2020016338 (ebook) | ISBN 9781541588998 (library binding) | ISBN 9781728404684 (paperback) | ISBN 9781728417561 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Graphic novels. | CYAC: Graphic novels. | Shcharansky, Anatoly—Fiction. | Jews—Soviet Union—Biography—Fiction.
Classification: LCC PZ7.7.H64 Nat 2021 (print) | LCC PZ7.7.H64 (ebook) | DDC 741.5/973—dc23

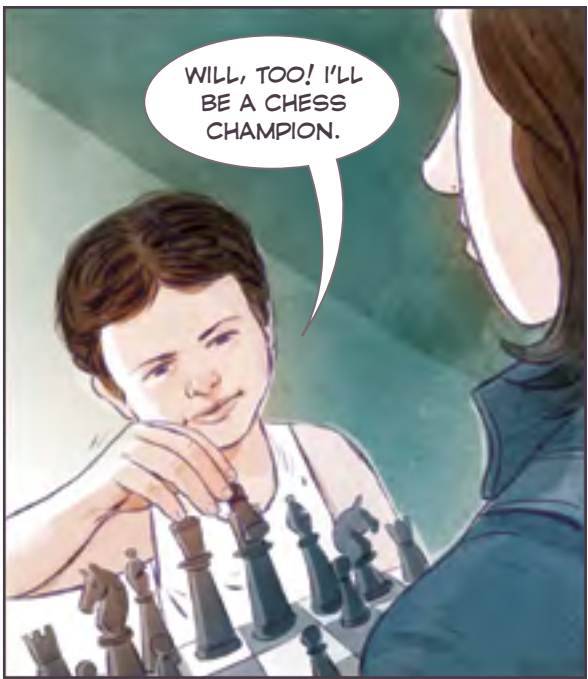
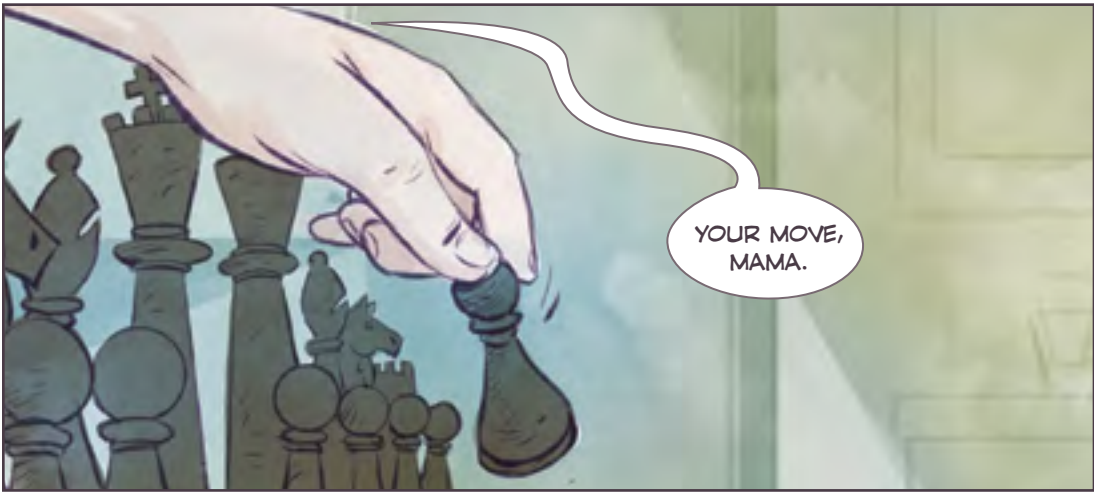
LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2020016337>
LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2020016338>

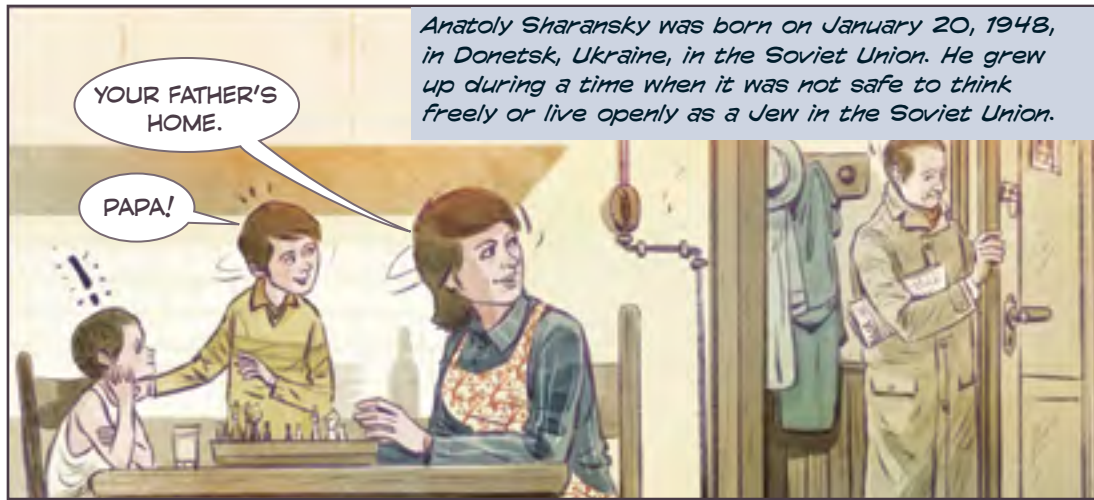
Manufactured in the United States of America
1-51268-50287-6/17/2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One	
YOUNG CHESS PRODIGY	4
Chapter Two	
BIRTH OF A REFUSENIK.	14
Chapter Three	
ARREST!.	28
Chapter Four	
THE GULAG	38
Chapter Five	
ALIYAH	54



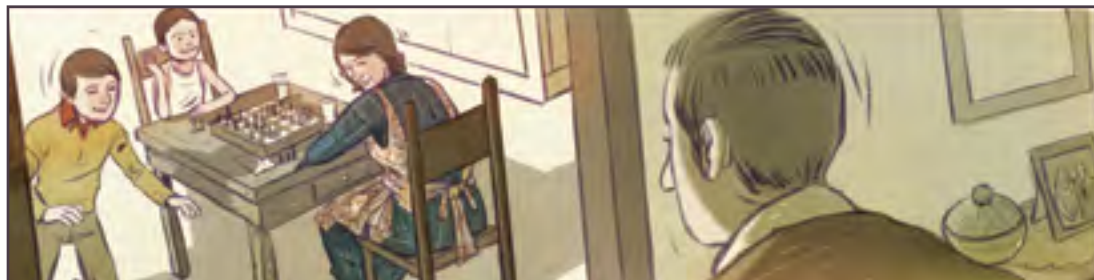




Anatoly Sharansky was born on January 20, 1948, in Donetsk, Ukraine, in the Soviet Union. He grew up during a time when it was not safe to think freely or live openly as a Jew in the Soviet Union.

YOUR FATHER'S HOME.

PAPA!



PLAYING CHESS, AGAIN, I SEE.

ANATOLY'S GETTING BETTER.



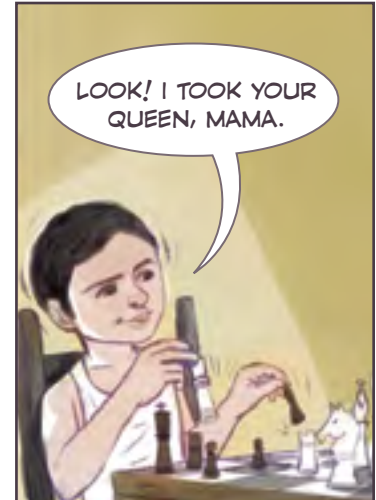
PAPA, IT SAYS HERE THAT YOU'RE JEWISH. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

At the time, Joseph Stalin was secretary general of the Soviet communist party and head of the Soviet Union.

Under Stalin's rule, anti-Semitic policies discriminated against Jews. Jews weren't allowed to hold certain jobs or get into some universities.

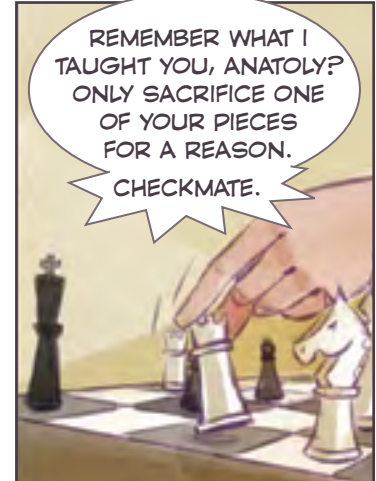


IT'S JUST WHO WE ARE, ANATOLY. YOU, ME, LEONID, YOUR MOTHER— WE ARE ALL JEWISH.



LOOK! I TOOK YOUR QUEEN, MAMA.

Many Jews, like Anatoly's parents, did not openly practice their religion. It was too dangerous. Anatoly grew up not knowing what it meant to be Jewish.



REMEMBER WHAT I TAUGHT YOU, ANATOLY? ONLY SACRIFICE ONE OF YOUR PIECES FOR A REASON. CHECKMATE.

In the spring of 1953, Anatoly's father had important news to share with his sons.



BOYS, I NEED TO TELL YOU SOMETHING.

WHAT IS IT, PAPA?



PREMIER STALIN DIED TODAY. HE DID TERRIBLE THINGS TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE. WE ARE NOT SORRY HE IS GONE.



BUT WE CAN'T LET PEOPLE SEE US CELEBRATE. THEY WOULDN'T LIKE IT. SO IN SCHOOL TOMORROW, YOU MUST ACT SAD, LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE.

OKAY, PAPA.

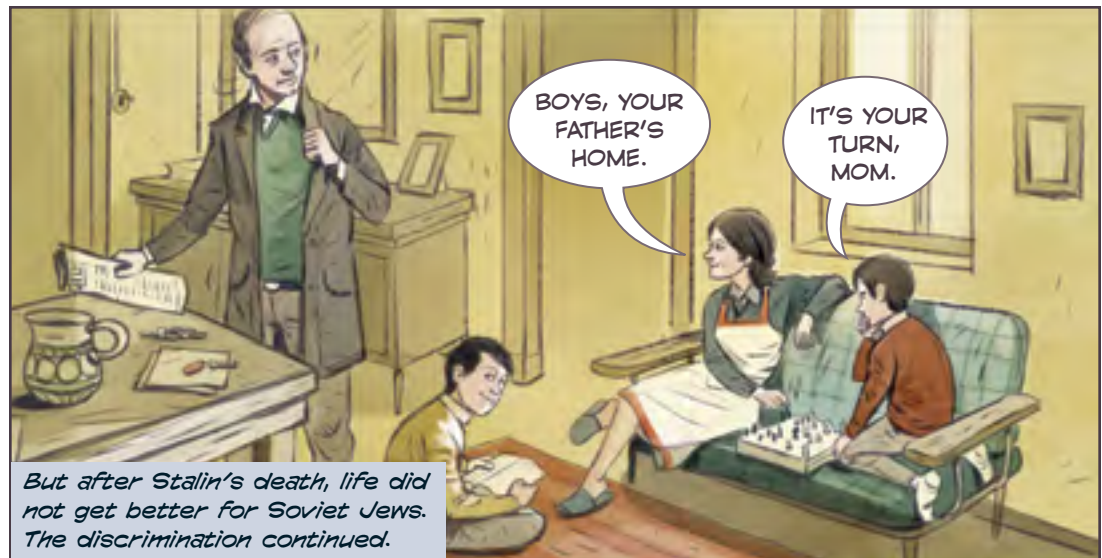
I WILL, PAPA.

The next day, Anatoly did as his father told him.



CLASS, LET'S SING A SONG PRAISING OUR GREAT LEADER, JOSEPH STALIN, WHO DIED YESTERDAY.

ARE OTHERS PRETENDING TO BE SAD TOO, OR ARE THEY ALL TRULY SAD THAT STALIN IS GONE?



BOYS, YOUR FATHER'S HOME.

IT'S YOUR TURN, MOM.

But after Stalin's death, life did not get better for Soviet Jews. The discrimination continued.



WAS THERE BAD NEWS TODAY?

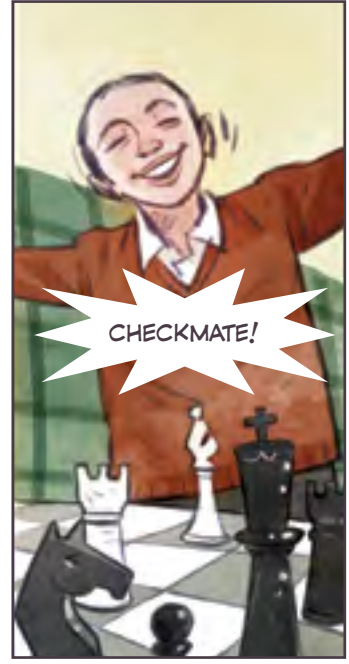


THERE WAS A RIOT IN KIEV. SEVERAL JEWISH MEN WERE KILLED.

ANYONE WE KNOW?



NO, I DON'T BELIEVE SO.

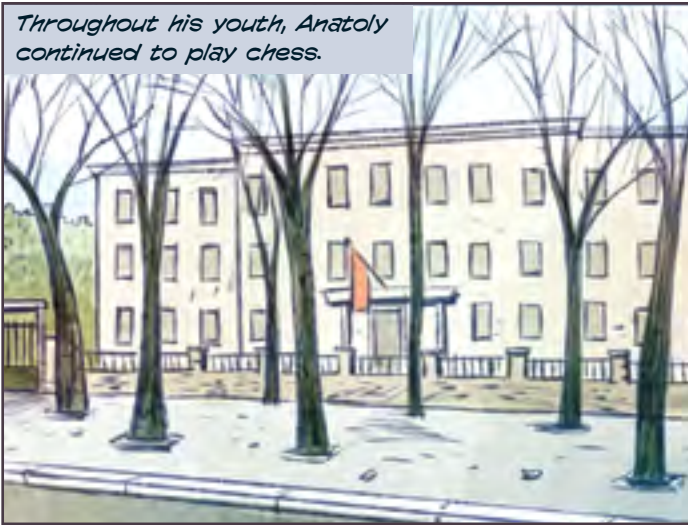


CHECKMATE!

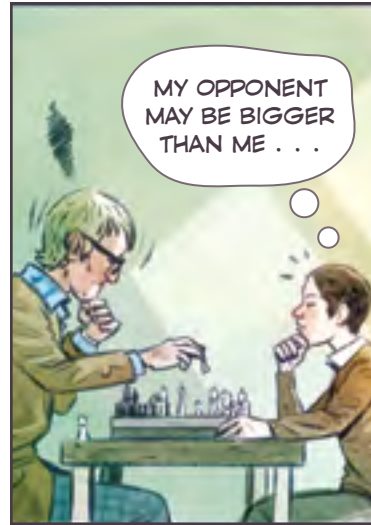


GREAT GAME, SON!

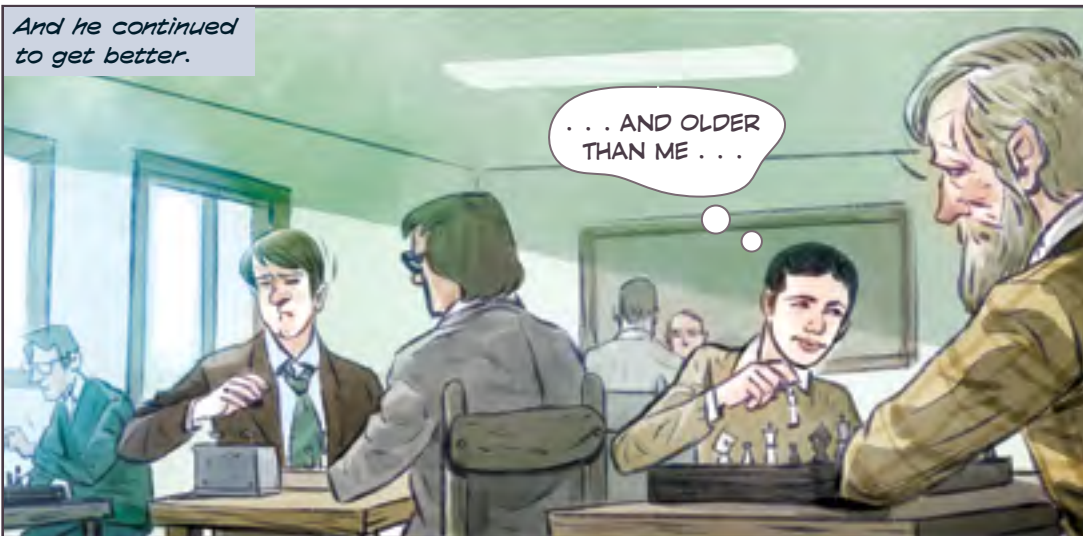
ANATOLY, YOU WON!



Throughout his youth, Anatoly continued to play chess.



MY OPPONENT MAY BE BIGGER THAN ME . . .



And he continued to get better.

. . . AND OLDER THAN ME . . .



Much better! As a teenager, he played in a tournament in his hometown of Donetsk.

. . . BUT I CAN STILL BEAT HIM.



CHECKMATE!

Anatoly won, beating adult players.

Growing up, Anatoly considered himself Russian. He joined the Komsomol, the Young Communist League, as a teen. But there were always reminders that Jews were treated differently.



YOU JEWS ARE WEAK.

YOU AREN'T LIKE THE REST OF US!



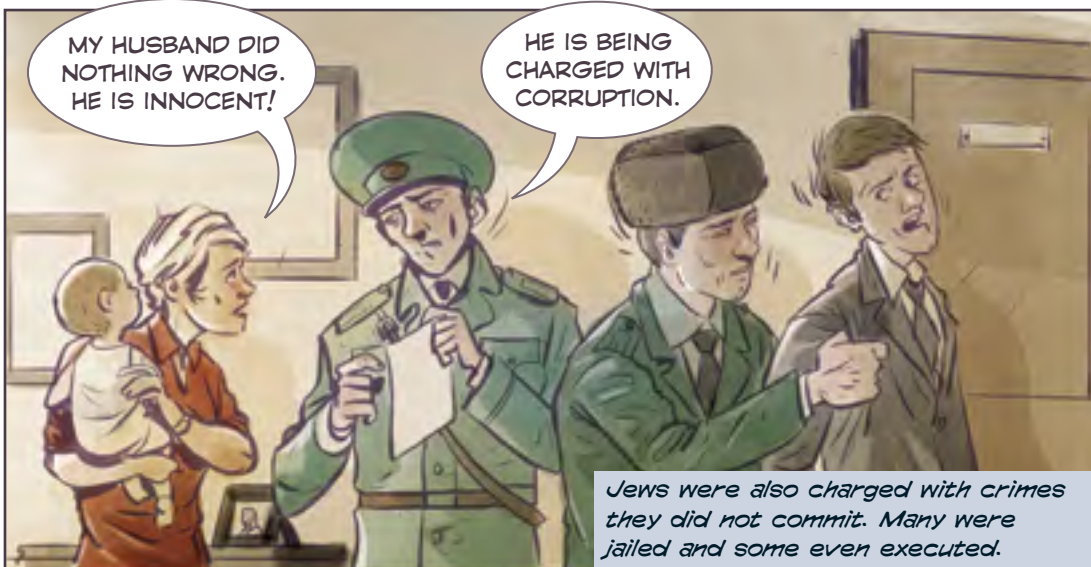
YOU DIDN'T GET INTO THE UNIVERSITY? BUT YOU HAVE EXCELLENT GRADES.

THAT DIDN'T MATTER ONCE THEY READ "YEVREI" ON MY ID PAPERS.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the Soviet government made it difficult for Jews to practice their religion. Synagogues were shut down. No Hebrew books were published in the Soviet Union. Jews could not openly speak Hebrew or Yiddish.



At one point, there was even a ban on matzah, the unleavened bread eaten during Passover.



Jews were also charged with crimes they did not commit. Many were jailed and some even executed.

Soviet Jews lived in a country where they were being silenced. But other people were hearing of the harsh treatment of Jews and beginning to speak out on their behalf. Around the world, members of the Jewish community joined the fight.



Protesters marched through the streets of New York City to draw attention to the struggles of Soviet Jews. They marched silently to demonstrate how Soviet Jews were denied the right to speak freely.

