History of Agrophysics: A. V. Kurtener Archive (Part 1)

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Abstract
This publication contains the part 1 of the journal version of the A. V. Kurtener archive. Parts 2 and 3 are published in this issue of the journal. Parts 4 and 5 will be published in the second issue of the volume 5. The first edition of this archive was first published in a book titled "A. V. Kurtener", which is part of the series under the title "Agrophysics: People and Destiny", in 2010. However, due to the language barrier, (the book is written in Russian); it was inaccessible to the international agrophysical society.

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1. Introduction

The archive of A. V. Kurtener contains documents that, directly or indirectly, descriptions events influenced on development of agrophysics during 1930s and beginning 40s. In addition, the archive contains details of A. V. Kurtener's personal life.

The first edition of this archive was made in a book titled "A. V. Kurtener", which is part of the series under the title "Agrophysics: People and Destiny" (Kurtener, 2012).

The title page of this book is shown on Fig. 1.1.

Fig. 1.1. Title page of the book "A. V. Kurtener" (Kurtener, 2012).

This book was positively taken by agrophysical community. However, due to the language barrier, (the book is written in Russian); it was inaccessible to the international agrophysical society.

This publication contains the part 1 of the journal version of the A. V. Kurtener archive. Parts 2 and 3 are published in this issue of the journal. Parts 4 and 5 will be published in the second issue of the volume 5.
2. Part 1

2. Events from 1903 to 1919

From the birth certificates of Alexander Vladimirovich Kurtener (A. V. Kurtener), we learn that he was born July 27, 1903 in the city of Mogilev, Belarus (Fig. 2.1). Parents included his father Vladimir Evgenievich Kurtener (V. E. Kurtener) and his mother Maria Alexandrovna Kurtener (maiden name Babko) (Fig. 2.2). Also, from the birth certificates, we learn that both parents were of Orthodox faith, and the baby was baptized on the 16th of August of the same year.

Information on the childhood years of A. V. Kurtener's life are very sparse. This is because after the Russian revolution in 1917, repressions began against a part of the population, which were seen as harmful and unnecessary.
Fig. 2.1. The birth certificates of A. V. Kurtener.
During the Civil War in Russia (1917-1923), the Bolsheviks widely used terror and violence against the outlawed layers of society: nobles, landlords, officers, priests, industrialists, etc. According to Wikipedia,

“At the end of 1919, a special commission set up by General Denikin determined the number of deaths from the Soviet terror conducted only in the period 1918-1919 to 1,766,188 people, including 1,500 priests, 13,000 landowners and more than 370,000 intellectuals and bourgeoisie”.

The parents of A. V. Kurtener were members of the outlawed layers of the society of nobles, landlords, officers. Therefore, my father and grandmother (Maria Alexandrovna Kurtener (maiden name Babko)) tried not to advertise their past.

According to the memoirs of my mother, Elena Ilinichna Kurtener, before the Russian revolution in 1917, A. V. Kurtener and his parents lived, mostly in Mogilev city, Belarus. A. V. Kurtener was the only child.

The parents of Maria Alexandrovna Kurtener were wealthy people (they had large landed estates and real estates in the city). They also had a noble title. They immensely loved the grandson and gave him everything that was necessary for his development. From the memories of my mother, I learned that my father received a wonderful home education. Foreign teachers were invited for to teach French, German and English and much attention was paid to mathematics and physics.

Let us note that during the First World War, Mogilev city was in fact the military capital of the Russian Empire. Mogilev city, Belarus, from August 21st, 1915 to February 25th, 1918, was the headquarters of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. The city was the seat of the last emperor (Nicholas II) (http://www.mogved.by/sled-v-istorii/1873).

Together with the Tsar and Prince Alexei, were permanently residing in Mogilev city. According to published memoirs (http://www.mogved.by/sled-v-istorii/1873), Prince Alexei was a "sweet child, inquisitive, cheerful" (Fig. 2.3). For Prince Alexei, games were organized with Mogilev children. According to my mother, my father also took part in games with Prince Alexei.

Soon the revolution began, and Prince Alexei, along with the royal family, were brutally murdered. The childhood of A. V. Kurtener ended.

Fig. 2.3. Emperor Nicholas II with children in Mogilev city, Belarus (https://joeck-12.livejournal.com/68037.html).
3. Events from 1920 to 1923

The beginning of the 1920s was the time of post-revolutionary turmoil. The old economy was destroyed, and the new one was still being created. Unemployment reigned in the country. People survived as best they could.

In 1920, A. V. Kurten was 17 and he, like everyone else, had, above all, cared for daily bread. In the home archives, I found several documents showing how he solved this problem. For example, a document has been preserved, from which it can be seen that in 1920 he worked "in a commission for the forced recruitment of people not engaged in socially useful work" (Fig. 3.1).

![Image of a document]

Fig. 3.1. Information about the dismissal of A. V. Kurtener from the commission on the forced recruitment of persons not engaged in socially useful labor.

Valuable sources are documents that contain information about the call to military service. A document has been preserved, from which it can be seen that in 1920 A. V. Kurtener was released
from pre-conscription military training for health reasons. This document also shows that in 1920 A. V. Kurtener lived in Odessa.

One of the main sources of information about the life of A. V. Kurtener is his autobiography. From it we learn that he "worked from 1920 to 1923 in various Soviet institutions, mainly as a statistician."

In home archive, there is document, from which it can be seen that A. V. Kurtener worked in the Gomel provincial statistical bureau from February 8th to October 1st, 1923 (Fig. 3.2).

Fig. 3.2. Reference, from which it can be seen that A. V. Kurtener worked in the Gomel provincial statistical bureau from February 8 to October 1, 1923.
An indirect confirmation of this information is an article by A. V. Kurtener dedicated to the statistical analysis of the nutritional status of the population of the Gomel province in 1922 and 1923 (Fig. 3.3).

Fig. 3.3. The Bulletin of the Gomel Provincial Statistical Bureau, in which an article by A. V. Kurtener was published. This article was devoted to a statistical analysis of the nutritional status of the population of the Gomel Province.
Working with statistics is in many respects similar to the work of researching. A statistician must know mathematical statistics and know the methods of applying it. It can be assumed that the experience gained by A. V. Kurtener while working in the statistical bureau influenced the choice of his future profession.

In 1922, A. V. Kurtener lived in Gomel. This is stated in the certificate of the Gomel garrison medical commission. In particular, it says that by nationality he is Belarusian, he has a "deformation of the chest" and according to Article 59, he is seen as unfit for military service (Fig. 3.4).

In the autobiography of A. V. Kurtener it can be read that in 1923 he was elected a member of the editorial board of the wall newspaper of the Gomel Provincial Bureau of Statistics. Thus, after Odessa, A. V. Kurtener spent several years in Gomel.
4. Events from 1924 to 1928

In 1924, A. V. Kurtener entered the Kiev Institute of Public Education (Fig. 4.1).

There are several surviving documents that we have found, about the student years of A. V. Kurtener. The home archives retained the review. It indicates that A. V. Kurtener is known to the author of the review from 1924 to 1925 as an outstanding student in terms of his knowledge, abilities and perseverance in his work.

Furthermore, it is said that A. V. Kurtener made three reports at the seminar on the following topics: a) the structure of the atom; b) an introduction to the quantum theory; c) thermionic effect. Then, it is noted that he carried out work on the investigation of thermoelectromotive forces of semiconductors. In conclusion, the author writes:

"All these qualities of A. V. Kurtener created in me the conviction that he should give himself to scientific work ...".

It indicates that the student Kurtener was a member of the bureau of the mathematical section (in 1926), worked in the library-reading room of the physical cabinet (from 1926 to 1928), participated in the retraining of students of the first year (from 1926 to 1927), and was a member of the editorial board for the publication of the course of prof. Pereyfera (in 1927).

The text of the certificate is shown below (Fig. 4.2 and Fig. 4.3).
Fig. 4.2. The certificate issued by the trade union committee of the Kiev Institute of Public Education to A. V. Kurtener (page 1).
In his student years, A. V. Kurtener had not only to learn, but also to solve everyday problems. One of them, apparently, was a housing problem. We can assume that to solve this problem, he cooperated with the housing office. A document has been preserved, from which we can see that A. V. Kurtener was the secretary of the board of the housing cooperative of House 30 on Reytarskaya Street (Fig. 4.4).

Fig. 4.4. The certificate that A. V. Kurtener was the secretary of the board of the housing cooperative of House 30 on Reytarskaya Street.
In 1928 A. V. Kurtener graduated from the Physics and Mathematics Department of the Kiev Institute of Public Education. In the home archives, there is a certificate of completion of this institution. The text of the certificate is shown on the next page (Fig. 4.5).

5. Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Elena Krueger, who is the granddaughter of A. V. Kurtener, for checking the text, as well as several very other important comments.

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References

Fig. 4.5. Certificate of completion of A. V. Kurtener of the Kiev Institute of Public Education.