**Aziz:** I am pleased to welcome Asya Utkurovna Sultanova to our Oral history project. She is a candidate of economic sciences, a medical specialist by speciality. She works in a very large Russian company Lukoil as a medical services manager. She participates in our project as a person of great interest to us, but also as a representative of a very famous family. This family is involved in important historical processes in the historical destinies of our state, and as far as the father is concerned, it is also about world politics. Our project is people's memories of the past, and the most important thing is how people perceive this past. Your subjective opinion is important to us, your story about your family and it will give an idea to future generations who will be interested in our time about important pages of the history of the 20th century. Let's get down to our conversation. Tell us about your roots, about your family, about your grandfathers and how it influenced your dad's biography and your life path.

**Asya:** Good afternoon. Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to you for expressing your interest in our family in this way. Thank you for the opportunity to talk about it. There are many like us and each of us is the result of what is behind us. I would love to share my family's story. My mum's parents are a real intelligent family of scientists. My grandfather came from Mangan, born in 1914. At that time it was customary to write that he was born in a working family. But according to family lore, my great-grandfather was a very prosperous, wealthy man. It was the first cotton processing factory in Namangan. Even those roots define innovation, organisation, moving forward to something new. What my grandfather then epitomised was the concentration that all his students, friends and associates talk about. After the revolution, my great-grandfather gave all his property to the new authorities and emigrated to China. And my grandfather stayed here. The family was not very well off. He graduated from slave labour school and immediately went to Tashkent to enter the medical institute. He successfully entered and graduated. At that institute he met my grandmother. My grandmother was Armenian by nationality. The story of her family is extraordinary and shows the formation of our development. My grandmother's presence at the medical institute is a direct product of the development of our great silk road. Her father came here at the invitation of the Emir of Bukhara to develop oil wells. Such a master from Baku, an engineer, came here with a caravan. Large caravans were being auditioned and had a conversation with our rulers, at that time, with the Emir of Bukhara. The Emir asked the head of the caravan to bring him a master oil engineer. And my great-great-grandfather came here. My great-great-grandfather got married here, gave birth to my great-grandmother. My great-grandmother stayed here, and her father emigrated to Yerevan. His family stayed here. My great-grandfather fled from the 1915 massacre here, in Chardzhou. There he met my great-grandmother and my grandmother, Asya, was born.

**Aziz:** are you named after your grandmother?

**Asya:** yes. It was a large family, they had 7 children, but all the girls got higher education. They received their education here, at the Tashkent Medical Institute. And my grandmother met my grandfather, Irgash Atakhanov. It was an extraordinary love and my mother was born. When my mum was 10 years old, my grandmother died of tuberculosis. My great-grandmother brought her up. This international upbringing is felt, this different genetics. My grandmother was a gynaecologist. She worked at the Mordukhovich department. They were the first generation of scientists who came here in 1924. My grandfather studied at Slonim's.

**Aziz:** Slonim is a coryphaeus.

**Asya:** yes, he is buried on the territory of TashMi. Even then it was said that he was a brilliant student and defended his PhD. Immediately after graduating from the institute, he was drafted into the navy. For 5 years he served as a doctor in the Black Sea Fleet. Our guys from Uzbekistan. That's how integration was. At TashMI he taught hospital therapy and military field therapy. All the developments were from his own experience.

**Aziz:** grandfather was the successor of this scientific school of Russian medics who came and laid the foundation of local domestic medicine.

**Asya:** yes, that's really true. Therapy is not of this region. Having defended his PhD by 1941, he was not even 30 years old young man, he was appointed Director of the Blood Transfusion Institute. It was very responsible and important. Tashkent was an evacuation city, there were many hospitals here, and it was necessary to provide blood for all hospitals and send it to the front. It was very difficult and important. My grandfather, such a young candidate of sciences during the war time headed such a serious medical institution. In my experience of studying the times of the Great Patriotic War, everyone talks about our huge contribution of the whole nation, but little attention is paid to the contribution of people from the home front.

**Aziz:** who ensured our victory in the rear.

**Asya:** This is the famous Tashkent - the city of bread. Our pride. People stood behind it. I can proudly say that my second grandfather was among these people.

**Aziz:** there is an opportunity to remember and talk about it.

**Asya:** after the war, my grandfather went to the Moscow Institute for Advanced Training of Doctors, to write his doctorate. There he studied under such coryphees as Kosirsky. The medics will understand me. All the textbooks on haematology were written there. He successfully defended his doctorate and returned. And here he is already actively engaged in scientific activity. At the age of 33, he's a Doctor of Science.

**Aziz:** it's very rare in medicine.

**Asya:** he dealt with marginal pathology. The digestive system, the haematopoietic system and in 1957 at the All-Union conference in Tbilisi, the classification of inflammatory bowel diseases developed by my grandfather was approved. And it is still used today. In those days there were such as Turakulov, Musabaev, Atakhanov.

**Aziz:** titans.

**Asya:** these were the titans who, through their activities, gave a foundation not only to Uzbek medicine, but also to Soviet medicine.

**Aziz:** and the world.

**Asya:** unequivocally. My grandfather, from 1957 to 1965, the time of the Cold War, travelled to France, Japan, Italy to international medical forums where he was invited. Their writings were printed. It was very interesting, and they were interesting there, not only in the USSR. Grandfather lived very little, only 53 years, he was a correspondent member of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR and a correspondent member of the All-Union Academy of Medical Sciences. When he **passed away, a** monument and a bust were sent from Moscow. He was very much appreciated. He enjoyed colossal authority. The Institute of Regional Pathology was started to be organised together with Turakulov. Turakulov is a great scientist and he brought this work to its logical end. This institute is an indicator of our science.

**Aziz:** it is still working.

**Asya:** my mum used to talk about the evenings that the Academicians used to have. My grandfather was a scientific secretary of the Academy of Sciences and all the academicians of that time used to gather at our house. They would invite Mukkaram Turgunbaeva, who would dance and sing to them. They had a great knowledge of art, knew writers, knew composers, artists. They invited them, socialised with them. They were the intelligentsia, the elite. If you were an Academician, you had to be a well-rounded person. He passed this on to his students. Grandfather was a very energetic person, he organised a lot of things. His pupil Budulai Ismailovich knew history so well that when he came to Leningrad and visited the museum he found an inaccuracy there and told the museum workers about it. These were our extraordinary fellow countrymen.

**Aziz:** it is very interesting what you said. It is important for understanding that era, for characterising those people who shaped the spiritual life of our country in those years. Now tell us a little bit about your paternal line. It is very interesting from the point of view of global history.

**Asya:** My paternal line was a little different. My grandfather was from a family of wealthy people. My great-grandfather was a big landlord. He was not a bai, but he had land on which he worked from morning till evening. He had four wives, a large family, a wealthy man. All of them worked hard. After the revolution, they were kukulised and my great-grandfather was shot. Grandfather turned out to be an ordinary man from an ordinary working family. At the age of 16 he went to work in a factory.

I know why I know that. Because my dad was very interested in it. And he managed to publish a little booklet about his father. It's more for us to know who we are and where we come from. And already at the factory he was actively involved in social activities. And in the trade union. He didn't study at the institute, but he was a very talented man. He grew very quickly in the public sphere. At the age of 30 he was already deputy Commissar of Local Industry and he had many public positions. In 1941 at the call of the Party he became People's Commissar of Local Industry, he was responsible for the process of evacuation of enterprises here. And two years later he became secretary of the City Committee.

**Aziz**: it was a very difficult position.

**Asya:** As my grandmother told me, she didn't see him for weeks. My grandfather received a certificate from Akhunbabaev during the Great Patriotic War. You remember what the NKVD was like. You had to go through so much. You had to be a very careful, competent, organised person.

**Aziz:** mistakes were not forgiven

**Asya:** yes. the way they worked back then, mistakes were not forgiven. And it wasn't just my grandfather who worked like that. It was a whole generation of selfless people.

**Aziz:** your maternal and paternal ancestors.

**Asya:** I'm proud of it. The result of their activity is the Victory. This is the contribution of our state to the general victory. The preservation of intellectuals and writers and scientists and industry.

**Aziz:** this is the foundation on which we live today.

**Asya:** this then gave the country an opportunity to stand on its feet. In 1946, he was appointed Authorised Representative of the Commissar of Uzbekistan in Moscow, i.e. Ambassador.

He worked there for several years and returned here as Minister of Trade Industry, Minister of Local Industry, then he became a Deputy. Until 1966, he was in government positions. He participated in delegations, represented Uzbekistan. He was a responsible party worker. In 1967 he died. Both grandfathers saw me, but I did not have time to communicate with them.

**Aziz:** you live with these memories. After my grandmother died, my grandfather remarried and my mum still had both brothers and sisters. And we're all very friendly. We all try to support the Atakhanov and Sultanov legacy together.

**Aziz:** I realised two things from your story. That your dad had a backstory that predetermined his government career. And that's why you became a medic.

**Asya:** imagine 1938, Uzbekistan. This year my grandmother is graduating from the Institute of Party Construction of Legal Law. She herself was from Khorezm. She never talked about her parents. My mum, when she was in Khorezm, brought up the archives and all we know is that her house was inside the Ark. It's the only thing we know. So independent, beautiful, she came here and went to the institute on her own. This is a woman with a huge backbone. You could see it in her. She had a hard life. But she was always a very strong-willed woman. Very focused. My dad was 50/50. Grandad met her at the town council and in 1938 they got married. And when she had 4 children, she of course stayed at home and watched the children. As my aunt told me, the commander-in-chief of the family was my grandmother. She did a lot for the formation of her sons. Grandfather worked hard. It was an ordinary standard family. Everything about the children's education, not to mention everyday life. Grandma was an insanely good cook. Education, how, where and why to study was determined by grandma.

**Aziz:** your dad's remarkable genetic data. Let's talk about Utkur Tukhtamuratovich. It is clear how he was formed.

**Asya:** Dad was born into a well-to-do family. His father's example was always in front of him. That work is first and foremost. He was the eldest in the family and was told that he had to be positive and maintain the family image. His 2 brothers are also outstanding individuals, but their youth was different. Thanks to their grandmother, they all graduated from a Russian school. They were sure to have extra lessons with tutors. Dad was fond of Yesenin, Mayakovsky. Going through documents, I found a lot of transcribed poems. It was the golden elite of youth. And at the same time, he was the first public director of the Friendship Cafe in the square. That is, all the evenings, graduations, where the director and compere was my dad. When we watch the film Moscow does not believe in tears, where stilyagi in tight jackets, singing songs, that's how my dad was.

**Aziz:** a real man of the 60s.

**Asya:** Yes, a typical representative of the advanced youth of the 1960s. He studied in Tomsk, at the Polytechnic Institute.

**Aziz:** he went to the Polytechnic Institute for mechanical engineering. He's here. As my grandmother used to say, my dad never helped his brothers. He used to say about them: "Whatever he passes, that's the grade he'll get. And my grandmother ran around tutoring. During his exchange course he went to Tomsk. And there he graduated from the institute and defended his diploma. There he was invited to stay to work in a closed bureau. But since he was the eldest son, and grandfather said go back and besides, he had already met my mum. As my mum said, she was ready to leave at any time to join him. But he was always drawn and brought back to this land. He was not the kind of patriot who beat his chest and said: I love my people... etc. But every day he proved it. He came back and went to work at the 84th factory.

**Aziz:** advanced production.

**Asya:** he was from Tomsk at the time, with a very good degree. And at the same time he teaches at the Polytechnic Institute. In the design bureau he does science. But he inherited his grandfather's organisational skills, and he very quickly began to rise in his career. He became the head of the design bureau, then deputy shop manager and was transferred to a large department 102. Our happiness is in our teachers and he is noticed there by Sivets Dmitry Nikolaevich.

**Aziz:** a very big figure

**Asya:** a legendary figure. General director of the Tashkent aviation plant named after Chkalov. A person very important in Soviet aircraft construction. And very surprising and visionary. Very intelligent. It was a plant of union subordination. All the management staff were people of non-Uzbek nationality. From what Dad said, he saw in Dad the future director of the plant. He promoted him. For many years he taught daddy how to work. How to work with documents, how to achieve results, how to control, how to monitor. It was a school for Dad. He was formed there as a specialist and as a personality.

**Aziz:** how many years did you work at the plant?

**Asya:** from 1967 to 1991.

**Aziz:** a huge period.

**Asya:** he went through a lot. But I'll tell you what I think. My impressions. How factory life was. It was a huge family. It was the merit of the general director and the whole staff. There were kindergartens, hospitals, holiday homes, etc. These are the May holidays we went to. These are the most vivid childhood experiences. This is what Madaniyat and marifat were. That time for me differs by many factors from today. It is culture and educated people. The work on oneself. Interest in life.

**Aziz:** I understand the phrase of a Russian journalist about your dad. She wrote that he was the only high-level official in Uzbekistan who stood up when a woman entered the office.

**Asya:** yes. I've been told that too. On both sides of our family there was the cult of women. But also a factory upbringing. There were very gallant men there. Dad was a very companionable man, the soul of the company. Moscow sent him on a long business trip to France. There was a project. Between the USSR, France and Germany. They were making a machine for aeroplane construction. My dad and three Russians went from the USSR. My dad was born on the day of the capture of the Bastille, the 14th of June, and his dream was to celebrate his birthday with the whole of France. When he turned 40, he celebrated his birthday in France. The original business trip was for six months. When my dadgot there, he did an analysis and wrote a report and the project was extended for a year. Both France and Germany paid the USSR forfeit. Dad proved that their side had not prepared the documents. A year later, when he returned to Moscow, he received an offer to stay in Moscow and become head of department in our trade representative office. Representative Office**.**

**Aziz:** did he know French?

**Asya:** yes. when he was told he was going to France, he started learning French.

**Aziz:** that characterises him too.

**Asya:** until the last month of his life, he was always studying something. Imagine this: the USSR. Moscow. And he's offered a job at the Trade. Representative Office . It's probably a fairy tale for everyone.

Mum starts packing her bags, but Dad refuses the offer. And he goes back to the 84th factory. That's his inner devotion to his country.

**Aziz:** this characterises him as a man.

**Asya:** he was secretary of the Party Committee for a long period. The whole history with Brezhnev passed through our family.

**Aziz:** let's explain this incident.

**Asya:** the exceptional qualities of our then head of state, Sharaf Rashidovich, who stood firmly in defence of his cadres. Did this happen with our other leaders? In our family Sharaf Rashidovich is very much respected. Viktor Nikolayevich Sivets dies. And when this perturbation starts, at that time Dad was Deputy General Director for Capital Construction, but due to certain circumstances, Dad was not appointed General Director. A very good man, Dad's friend, Zhuravlev, becomes general director. After some time Dad leaves the plant and becomes the head of the defence industry. And 1991 happened, when Dad worked in the defence industry, that was also a very interesting experience for him. Everyone was going through the story of Independence, Usmankhodjaev, the cotton case, the inspection from above, everything passed through our family and when Karimov Islam Abduganievich came to the leadership of the country, Dad worked as a general director at that time.

**Aziz:** as a historian, I want to say that he and the leader of the country had a huge burden on their shoulders. They had to not just lead, but to create from scratch a huge number of state structures that did not exist at all. In addition to the reforms that had to be carried out, they had to create the state, the structure of governance.

**Asya:** Independence was unplanned in advance, we were put before the fact and had to deal with this independence from scratch. Another interesting fact. There were many calls to my father with offers to invite him to work at any factory, to move to Russia. But Dad said: No, I am still working here and I don't want to go anywhere. And one historic train journey to Moscow happened. Dad found himself on the same plane with Islam Abduganievich, and the fact that they used to work together at Tapoich a long time ago, they met and had a conversation for 3 hours and Dad was then appointed Minister of Foreign Economic Relations.

**Aziz:** which did not exist at that time. This sphere did not exist in Uzbekistan at all.

**Asya:** times were terrible. I listened to my parents talking. When my dad would come and say: "There's only 3 days of bread left in the country. Mum would say: What are you going to do? Imagine, there was a country, the Soviet Union, where everything was well-established, and suddenly everything collapsed and each republic had to independently establish all ties, economic, trade. And we had to prove that we could. Dad and his whole team worked around the clock. Those Turkish loans. It was hard, but terribly interesting. It was the first time. It was the first time the Head of State had visited abroad.

**Aziz:** first time loans. How to get one? I had no experience.

**Asya:** we have an idea to publish a book about Dad for his 85th birthday. We started collecting memories from his associates. And I'm very pleased to read it. Everything was based on his charisma, his reputation, his charm. Dad came to work in foreign trade, knowing nothing. There was only a department from the foreign trade of the Soviet Union. And there were 3-4 people working there. And guys from there told me: Sultanov, an industrialist, came to work in the defence industry, what does he know? He came with one notebook, sat down and said: I'm listening to you. Dad was never afraid to come and say: Teach me.

**Aziz:** that's an outstanding quality.

**Asya:** he piled up books and spent nights studying, he was always working on himself. Because he respected himself not to fail in his work. When I defended my PhD, he was the Prime Minister. Can you imagine, the daughter of the Prime Minister coming to the University to take her PhD? My dad called my spouse and said: I ask you that on Sunday, the two of us with Asya for a whole day together. He came, he brought with him all the books of Islam Abduganievich, from morning till evening he was with me and I knew all his works. When I came to the exam, I was given a ticket and told that I could just sign, I said: No, I'm going to answer. I have to tell it all. And when I received the certificate of passing the candidate's minimum, the chairman of the commission said: I am very grateful to youthat you passed the exam in such a way.

**Aziz:** Your dad rose very quickly. He became Deputy Prime Minister in a year?

**Asya**: The President of our country gave my dad all the instructions. Visits, loans, and that's why the Committee became a ministry and Dad became Deputy Prime Minister.

**Aziz:** he became Prime Minister very quickly.

**Asya**: in 1995

**Aziz:** from 1992 to 1995, in 3 years he, an engineer, became Prime Minister.

**Asya:** yes, it was very hard.

**Aziz:** moreover, with all due respect to the previous Prime Minister, he started the economic system of Uzbekistan.that you passed the exam in such a way.

**Aziz:** Your dad rose very quickly. He became Deputy Prime Minister in a year?

**Asya:** The President of our country gave my dad all the instructions. Visits, loans, and that's why the Committee became a ministry and Dad became Deputy Prime Minister.

**Aziz:** he became Prime Minister very quickly.

**Asya**: in 1995

**Aziz:** from 1992 to 1995, in 3 years he, an engineer, became Prime Minister.

**Asya:** yes, it was very hard.

**Aziz:** moreover, with all due respect to the previous Prime Minister, he started the economic system of Uzbekistan.

**Asya:** well, for 3 years the country survived. Especially after we were "squeezed" out of the ruble zone, everyone was concerned. Dad realised that he didn't know what would happen tomorrow. We should talk and write about it and tell young people about it. Very interesting memories of his associates about state visits. Who knew Uzbekistan? And my father made the Queen accept Islam Abduganievich. And we had to enter this international cotton community on our own. Shaykhov Alisheraka recently told me how principled my dad was when signing the debt. And that document in America did not suit the Prime Minister of Uzbekistan at all. Everyone signed it then, except my dad. When my dad was told, how will we go without the signed agreement? Dad said, "Well, I'll resign. And in the morning, before the flight, the American side came and said: We sign your terms. That's his integrity. I would really like our future generation to know that you have to be principled. And if you know and are sure of what you are defending, you will win. Dad was always learning. His weakness was that he didn't know the Uzbek language. But he worked on himself. His associates can't understand why Dad was in the car industry. It was an industry that had to be revitalised. Very interesting meetings with Rockefeller, with representatives of the world bank, and with Prince Charles. Dad used to say about him: Very strange person. It was a very interesting, full life.

**Aziz:** but it's heavy.

**Asya:** heavy. And it took a toll on his health. He was like Don Quixote, in the last years of his life fighting for his Tapoic plant, which was closed. And now they say: Why did we do that?

And he said, since it didn't work out, I'm going to retire. It's a very interesting life. When he started to feel bad, we had to go to Turkey for a check-up, and I see him writing something in his notebook. He was always writing down political events, statements, until his last day. And I say to him: what are you doing? He says: I'm learning Turkish. I said: Why do you need Turkish? You'll have a translator there. And when I was sorting out his papers I found a notebook where he wrote down Greetings, compliments to women, international position, all phrases in Turkish. That's self-respect. Dad had this idea of self respect**.**

**Aziz:** at the end of our conversation, I would like to ask, what do you do now? Do you like your job? Is it interesting?

**Asya:** yes, I am interested. I'm doing a very interesting thing right now. Organising medical services for the working population. That is industrial medicine. Now in our health care system there are very interesting programmes for childbearing, for supporting the child population, for supporting women, but with the working population there are none. This is voluntary insurance. It's something that's just starting to be done now. But we have been doing it for 10 years. Both in Bukhara and in Karshi. And we do training there. I like the ethics in Lukoil. If you remember, every enterprise has its own medical. Sanitary unit. I left the sanitary unit of the national bank. I now realise that today and tomorrow is outsourcing. That's when you hire a local facility to take care of your staff. Firstly, you give money to these medical institutions, let them earn money, but no medical institution will cover all the needs of your employee, and when he has the opportunity to turn to different specialised polyclinics, he is really protected.

**Aziz**: in conclusion I want to say that you embodied 2 lines of your family both medicine and organisational work.

**Asya:** people ask me what kind of doctor are you? I answer, I am an organising doctor. I am very proud of that.

**Aziz:** we lack organisers in this field. There is no competent management.

**Asya:** we need to learn it. Again I'm going back to my dad. You have to open textbooks every day and see how it is done in Russia, in their organisations. I hope it will be the same for us.

**Aziz:** let's stop here. Thank you very much for the conversation, it was very interesting. And it was a pleasure to talk to you.

**Asya:** me too.