

TRANSLATIONS OF INTERVIEWS MADE WITH RESIDENTS OF MINSK, BELARUS

Track 1: What did you know about America as a child?

1. What I knew about America when I was a child? I knew that it is very hard to live there. Also I heard such words as “American Tragedy” – that is a book written by American writer. I also heard a name: Angela Davis and that people were writing letters to support/protect her – and I also wanted to write a letter to protect someone in America. I had pencils made in a factory named in honor of Sacco and Vanzetti – so the story of these persons was the first story I have heard about America.
2. I do not remember that much. When I was a child I did not thought much about America. Typical childhood. Everything was nice and great, the sun were shining, there was nothing to care or worry about. At school mostly I studied English culture and America was a bit too far. What I remember is Martin Luther King, Michael Jackson and nothing more. Later getting interested in reading I found much more. First book about arts was about Andy Warhol. That is how Pop-Art attracted me.
3. My childhood memories I associate with the book by Beecher Stowe “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” which tells about slavery the Americans used for oppressing people which lived there before others came. Later I recall connecting with nuclear threat constantly coming from America, the Arms race, etc.
4. Chewing gum, skyscrapers, lots of cars and people, then cowboys - that’s all for now.
5. It was a political world map hanging over my bed and my first impression was a funny shape of the country.
6. Before I was 10 years old I had not heard about USA as a country and its existence at all, because I was born on Kolyma river - It was a village so far away. Later with communist education when I just entered pioneers organization I was surprised why they do not make revolution in USA like in Soviet Union.

track2: What did you learn at school about the USA?

1. I do not remember that much we learned at school about USA, actually there were not that much to learn about. I am 72 years old that was too long ago.
2. My recollections are about mass hysterics connected with arms race and conflicts. My childhood was in times of Brezhnev’s stagnation, Andropov’s reaction and beginning of Perestroika. Fear of USA, which was “threatening Peace all over the world,” as they said on TV and Radio. School studies were very ideological, most bright thing was Independence war in USA – it was the only positive historical lesson – it was like fight for revolution, for just case and it was before than Great French revolution. Most lessons was about slavery, subjection and killing of native Americans – that is why in our children games we played roles of American Indians.
3. Most interesting things I learned not in school mostly from friends, newspapers, books.
4. At our school there was the only car, Studebaker, and since there was no any other factory at the village we all guessed what mighty factories in America, so USA and Studebaker were strongly associated to us – it was just the second world war. That car was delivering firewood for school. We learned at school that there are states, black people, which used to be lynched by bad Americans, and about American help during the 2nd World War and that all people are very rich there, no one knows why.
5. I learned at school that there is a president, a parliament, kind of military aggression to USSR and all socialist block. Capitalists, very good industry, varies climate zones, rich and poor people.. I was mostly interested in geography rather than politics... beautiful canyons.
6. I remember practically nothing what I learned about America at school.

track3: What associations do you have for Boston or Massachusetts?

1. What I feel when I hear Boston or Massachusetts, I associate instantly with “Boston tea-drinking” and with first settlers in particular Massachusetts colony.
2. Perhaps it is bad, but I have no associations. I know Boston is a city.
3. ...I have association with cigarettes } ... “Boston tea-drinking” during a war between north and south states.
4. I remember about American Indians and bisons.
5. – no that is not that much about Boston.
6. Universities, states...
7. No direct associations, empty vocals.
8. Hard to say... I know these are states in America, but what is happening there – I don’t know.
9. When I hear Boston, I associate it with those friends who emigrated there, and Massachusetts I associate first of all with science as it is a scientific center.