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Born: Bialystok, Poland, March 20, 1932.

His family escaped when they got a transit visa issued by Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese consul general to Lithuania. They traveled by train across Europe and Siberia to Vladivostok, a seaport in Eastern Russia, then on a junk to Japan.

In 1941 the family came to the United States and settled in Chicago. Melamed earned a law degree and practiced law. At the same time he did groundbreaking work in the commodity futures field. In 1969 he was elected chairman of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, a post he held for 27 years.

Quote: "I was 7 at the time. The visa spurred my parents to trek across Siberia; the Trans-Siberian railroad had one track. It took two weeks. When we got to Birobidzhan, where Stalin used to banish Jews, my father showed me that it was 40 degrees below zero. And he explained" how weather got that cold.

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