

ATTACHMENT #29

**SONYA'S TALE: RUSSIA, TZEDAKAH, KVETCHING &
IMPOVERISHED DESPAIR**

Discussed in conversations of Barney R. Radov and Clare Levin

Those left behind in Russia – having survived starvation, World War I, civil war and pogroms – faced life in a Ukraine under increasing attack by Stalin, who instigated something of a genocide against those unhappy with communist rule. The civil war which followed the Russian Revolution left over 1.5 million people dead in the Ukraine, the Great Famine killed another 3.3 million, and the Terror of the 1930s killed another three quarters of a million Ukrainians. (It is ironic that the Great Famine, a combination of general crop failure, expropriation, Stalinist terror, and banishment or murder of those complaining, often called the Holodomor, is sometimes blamed on Jews. Because some Jews were communists, as were many more Russians and Ukrainian non-Jews, Jews were blamed for a famine they themselves typically fell victim to. As Snyder recounts in *Bloodlands*, a newspaper reporter for *Pravda* residing in Moscow, whose Jewish family lived in Ukraine, received a letter in 1933 from his father: “This is to let you know that your mother is dead. She died of starvation after months of pain.” Her last wish was for their son to recite the *Kaddish* for her. Blaming the many for the sins of the few is at the traditional heart of anti-Semitism).



Passers-by no longer paying attention to the corpses of starved peasants on a street in Kharkiv, Ukraine, in 1933.



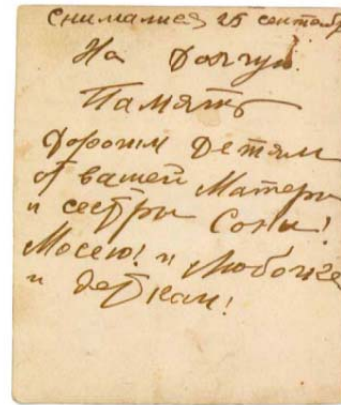
Holodomor Memorial in Kiev.

Tragically, hardly anything is known of the life of the family left behind. A little information does come from a letter from Luba's mother and her sister Sonya. The letter is an appeal for money, one suggesting dire straits, and interestingly, it reflects the tone of a similar letter, also addressed to Luba and her husband Morris Radov, from those who had it made out, but were living, if not in political terror, in economic squalor in Brooklyn, namely Cherna Bass and her family.

The two letters, lost for decades, were found in 2013. The first, below, is a typical picture postcard of the old type: namely, not displaying interesting scenes, but more like the holiday greetings cards of today, showing a picture of the family. Morris is referred to by his Hebrew name, Moshe, and Luba by her full Russian name, Lyubochka.



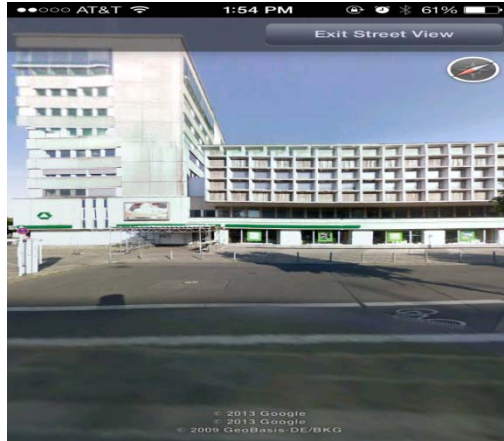
Снимались 25 сентября
 На долгую память
 Дорогим детям от вашей матери
 и сестры Сони.
 Мосею и Любочке
 и деткам.



Taken on Sep, 25.
 For lasting memory
 To dear children from your mother
 and sister Sonya.
 To Moshe and Lyubochka and kids.

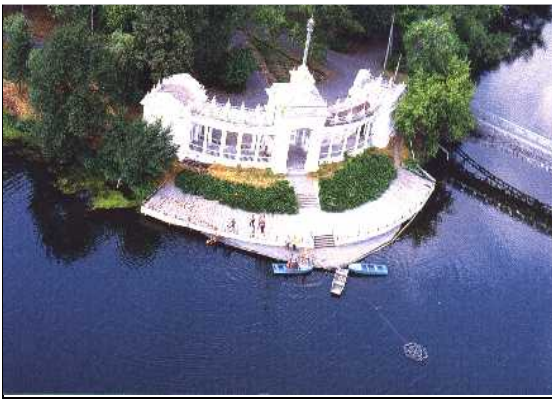
The envelope shows a Russian return address, with the Erie, Pennsylvania mailing address showing that Sonya had been married to an E. Belostotsky and had moved with her mother to a new city. She was then living in Krivoy Rog at 35 Karl Liebkecht St. Whatever the attractiveness or, undoubtedly lack of it, of that residence, today, per Google maps, the curb appeal has changed dramatically.





35 Karl Liebknecht St.

Krivoy Rog (now Kryuyi Rih in Ukrainian) is near the Ekaterinoslav of the Radovs, now Dnipropetrovsk. It was founded in the 18th Century by a one-eyed Cossack named Rih. Despite a beautiful riverfront, it is ugly, industrial and plagued by Stalinist architecture. Today, covering a length of 80 miles (the largest in Europe) and having 660,000 people, because of abandoned mines, old factories and terrible pollution, it is considered to be almost unlivable



Krivoy Rog, at the confluence of the Inhulets and Saksahian Rivers



Industrial Krivoy Rog



Map of Modern Ukraine



More Industrial Krivoy Rog

Jews came to Krivoy Rog under pressure by Stalin, who declared it to be a Jewish National Administrative Region in 1928. The earlier Jews, who had been there since the 1860s, were generally craftsmen, while those who came in the 1920s and 1930s were mainly factory workers. Of the approximately 13,000 Jews in Krivoy Rog when W.W. II began, the Germans murdered over 7,000. However the Central Database of Shoah victims for Krivoy Rog shows only one Bolostosky, Isaak Yitzkhah (b. 1900). Jews remain in the city today, with a synagogue.



Heroes Memorial at Krivoy Rog



Krivoy Rog Synagogue

It is said in Jewish folklore that people die twice: first at the time of their physical death and again at the time when family and friends cease to speak their name. With the recovery of Sonya's picture, her second death is now erased.

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