Mark Newmarks
Family History

The Glusker-Newmarks in Historical Context

by Mark Newmark

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We speak of the Newmark-Gluskers as a term of convenience, to refer to the descendants of Eliyohu Ya'el Newmark and his wife, Chana Rivka. The bond between the Newmarks and Gluskers was first made when Eliyohu and Chana Rivka's daughter, Leah Newmark, married a man named Jacob Glusker in Byelorussia. The two families were further fused together in America in the next generation when two of Leah Newmark/Glusker's nephews, Max and Sam Newmark, married two of Leah Newmark's daughters, Sophie and Mae Glusker.

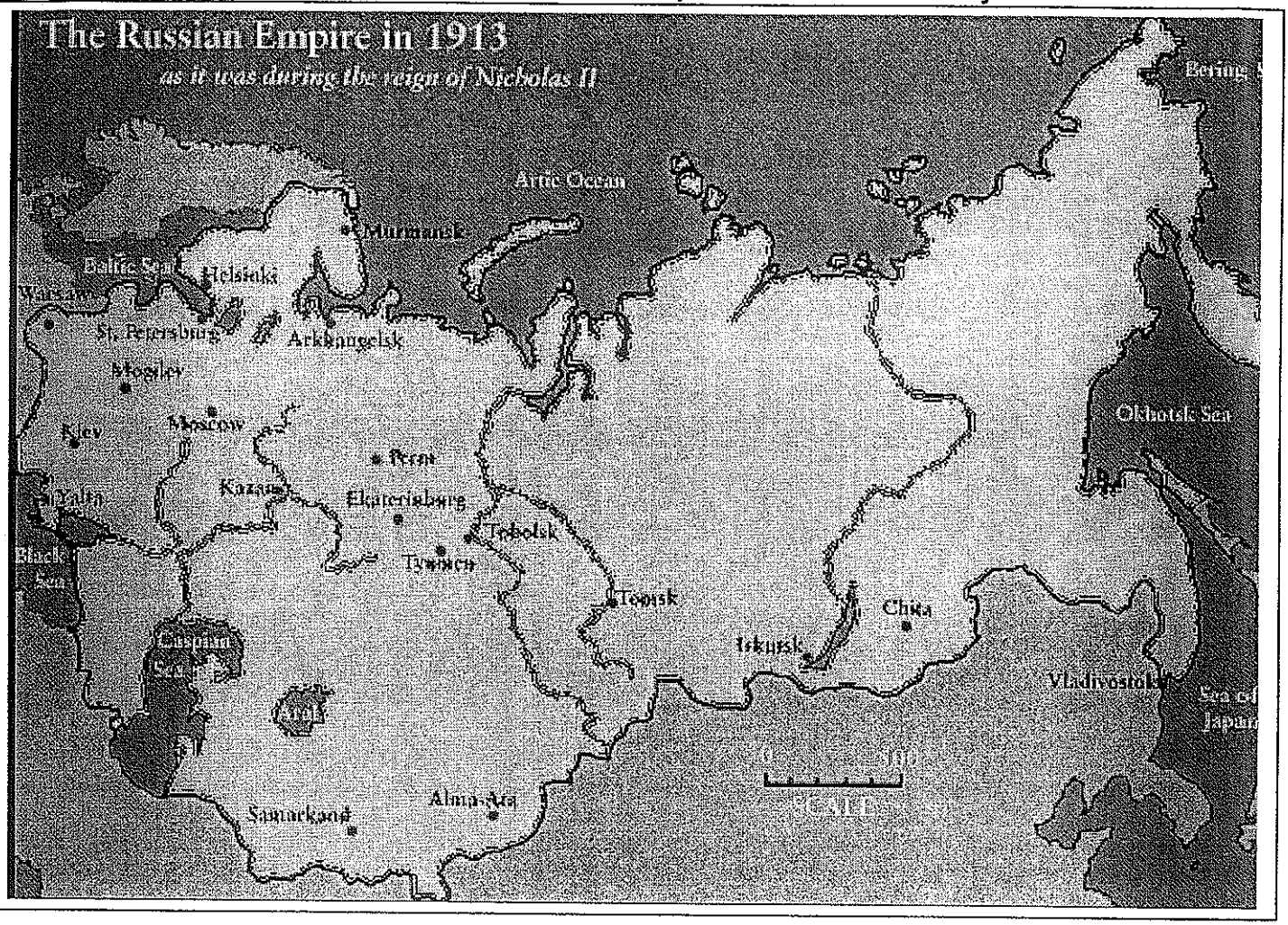
This is the story of how members of the Newmark and Glusker families in the Old Country were participants, witnesses to, and victims and beneficiaries of events and conditions of their time. Interwoven into the story are some incidentals about others that were related to Newmarks and Gluskers through marriage.

In the nineteenth century, the Newmarks and Gluskers lived in the Russian Empire. The Russian Empire of the nineteenth century was far larger than modern Russia. The Russian Empire of the nineteenth century included modern-day Lithuania, Byelorussia, Ukraine, and Poland, places where various members of our family lived. (See Map 1)

Eliyohu Ya'el Newmark, his wife, Chana Rivka, and all their children were born in that portion of the Russian Empire known as the Pale of Settlement. (See Map 2). Catherine II (Catherine the Great) created the Pale in 1791. The Pale was quite a specific area. It refers to that area of Poland and that area of the Ottoman Empire annexed by Russia in Catherine the Great's military campaigns. In time the area of the Pale expanded to include the areas of the Russian Empire that had been annexed from the Kingdom of Poland-Lithuania and Ukraine.

Although we only have information about the Newmarks and Gluskers from the second part of the nineteenth century, the Newmarks and Gluskers probably lived in the area of the Pale for several hundred years. They, like the vast majority of Jews in that area, probably came to the area as refugees in the Late Middle Ages from Western Europe where outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence and outright legal expulsions were rife. Ironically, unlike today, the rulers Central and Eastern European territories were generally far more tolerant of Jews than rulers in Western Europe. As Jews moved eastward from Western Europe, many of the Jews who lived in the old Kingdom of Poland moved eastward into the less populated areas east of them, territories that belong to modern day Lithuania, Byelorussia, and Ukraine.

Map 1: Map of Russian Empire in the 19th Century



In the sixteenth century, the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania came to be formally fused into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

This joint Commonwealth also included the whole of modern Byelorussia. The Commonwealth then conquered the territory of modern-day Ukraine, absorbing that into the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth came undone in the eighteenth century and its territories were carved up in three successive partitions in the eighteenth century, divisions that saw the disappearance of Poland, Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Lithuania, with the Austrian Empire, Kingdom of Prussia, and the Russian Empire each taking part of that territory. The Russian Empire got the whole of Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Lithuania and the eastern portion of what had been the Kingdom of Poland. These were the areas with the highest concentration of Jews in Europe. Thus, by the end of the

nineteenth century, more than five million Jews (more than half the Jews in the whole world) found themselves living in the Russian Empire.

Map 2: Map of the Pale of Settlement



From all this, we may conclude that although we speak of our family as coming from Russia, none of the family who emigrated to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were from Russia proper, but rather from the Pale of Settlement within the Russian Empire. Further, we may responsibly suppose that in the period before they lived in the Russian Empire, they probably lived in the Commonwealth of Lithuania-Poland.

The early 19th century was a period of tremendous demographic migration for Jews living in the Russian Empire. (See Map 3) Eliyohu Newmark was a product of the times in this sense. Born around 1850, he was raised by foster parents in Roslavl, a fairly large town. (See Map 4) He was an educated man and worked as both a rabbi and shokhet (kosher butcher). Some scandal with a married woman is rumored to have caused him to leave Roslavl. He ended up in the Mogilev Administrative District of Byelorussia within the Pale of Settlement. There, he married a woman named Chana Rivka. The small town in which they had their children was Samotevich. (See Maps 5 & 6). In Russian, Samotevich was a *mestechko*, little place. In Yiddish Samotevich was a shtetl. Shtetls were not so small as one might think and generally numbered several thousand inhabitants. Samotevich probably had between 2,000–3,000 inhabitants in it in the late nineteenth century. Like most towns in the Pale of Settlement, Samotevich included both Jews and Gentiles.

Eliyohu and his wife, Chana Rivka, raised their 10 children in Samotevich and so Samotevich may be said to be the shtetl from which the Newmark-Gluskers are descended. When they grew up, most of Eliyohu and Chana Rivka's ten children moved away from Samotevich.

Of those ten children of Eliyohu and Chana Rivka, three moved to other parts of the Pale. Two moved to other places in Byelorussia. One of their sons, Yankov Michl/Jacob, moved to Novozybkov, a rather large town in Russia. (See Maps 4 & 5) One of their daughters, Leah, moved to Lipovka, a shtetl in Byelorussia outside of Khotimsk.[1] (See Maps 5 & 6) Another of their sons, Leibe, left the Byelorussian part of the Pale to live in Ponemun, a shtetl 10 miles from Kovno/Kaunas, in the Lithuanian part of the Pale. (See Map 7)

Six of Eliyohu and Chana Rivka's children left the Pale before the outbreak of World War I. One (Reizl/Rose) moved with her family to Russia (St. Petersburg). (See Map 8) Five (Hannah/Anna Newmark/Epstein, Sora/Sarah Newmark/Shulman, Zaleg/Zelig, Morris, and Leah Newmark/Glusker) emigrated to the United States before 1914.

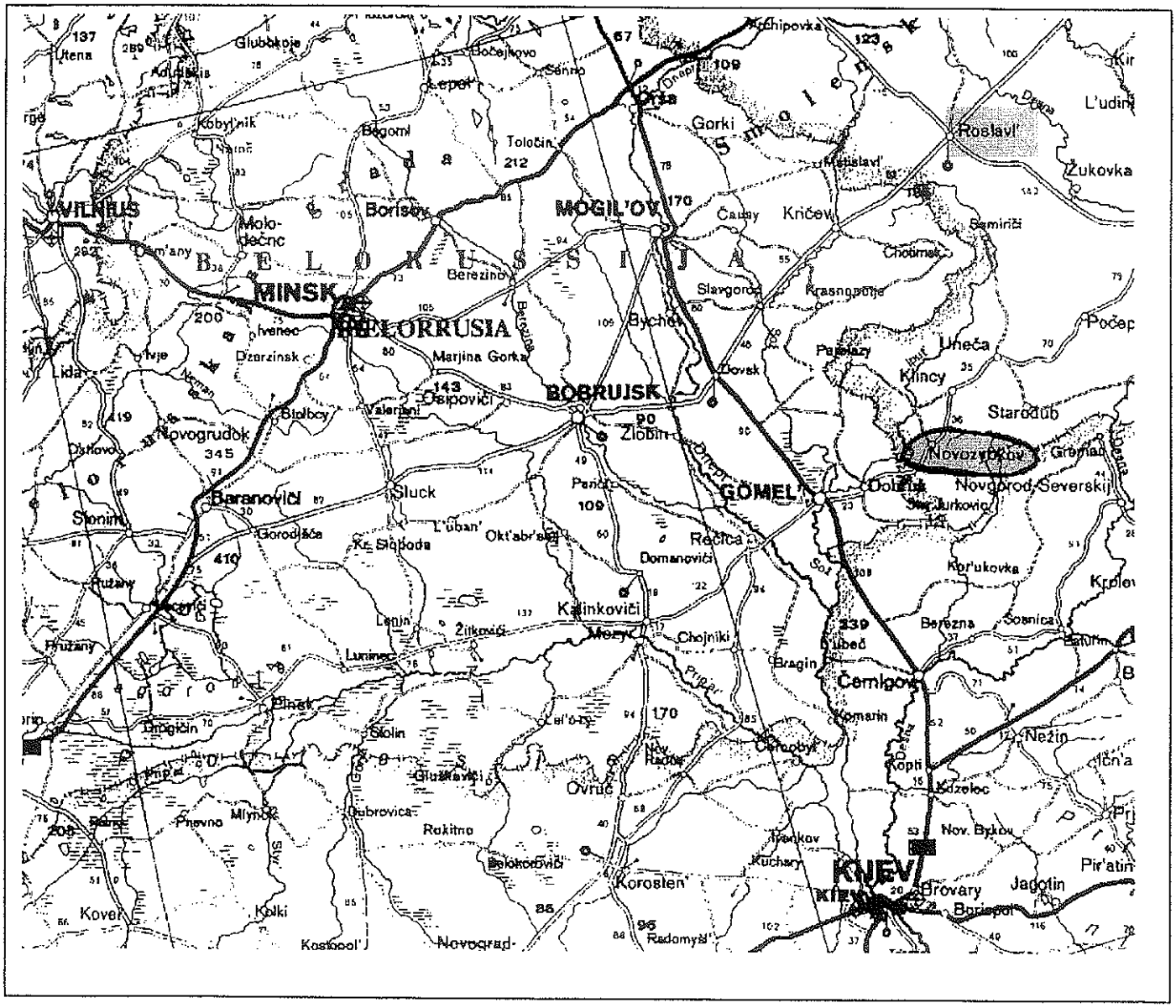
Only two of Eliyohu and Chana Rivka's ten children, Zalman Mordechai and Rochl/Rachel, were still in Samotevich at the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

[1] There are two towns named Khotimsk in Byelorussia. The Khotimsk which Leah Newmark lived near is the one pictured on Map 5.

Map 3: Map showing the migration of Jews in the 19th Century



Map 4: Map showing Roslavl and & Novozybkov

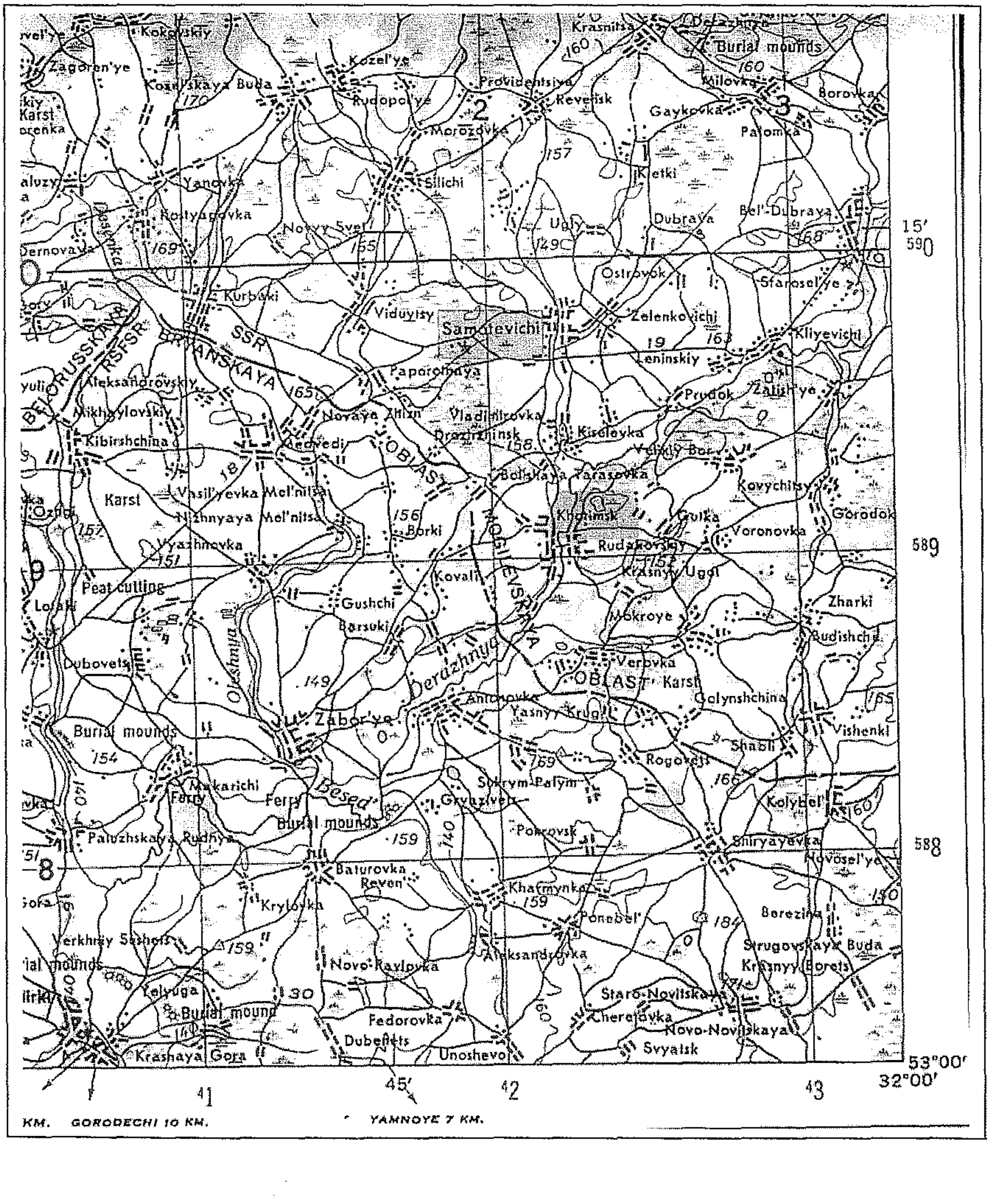


During most of the 19th century, Jews were required to live in shtetls in the Pale of Settlement (See Map 3). During the reign of Tsar Alexander II (1855 - 1881), though, Jews were allowed to make an application to live in large cities not only in the Pale, but also to large cities in Russia. Most applications were rejected, but some so-called useful Jews were granted the right to live in large cities. Several members of our family moved to big cities. Eliyohu's daughter Reizl/Rose went to live in St. Petersburg and Eliyohu's son Leibe went to Kovno.

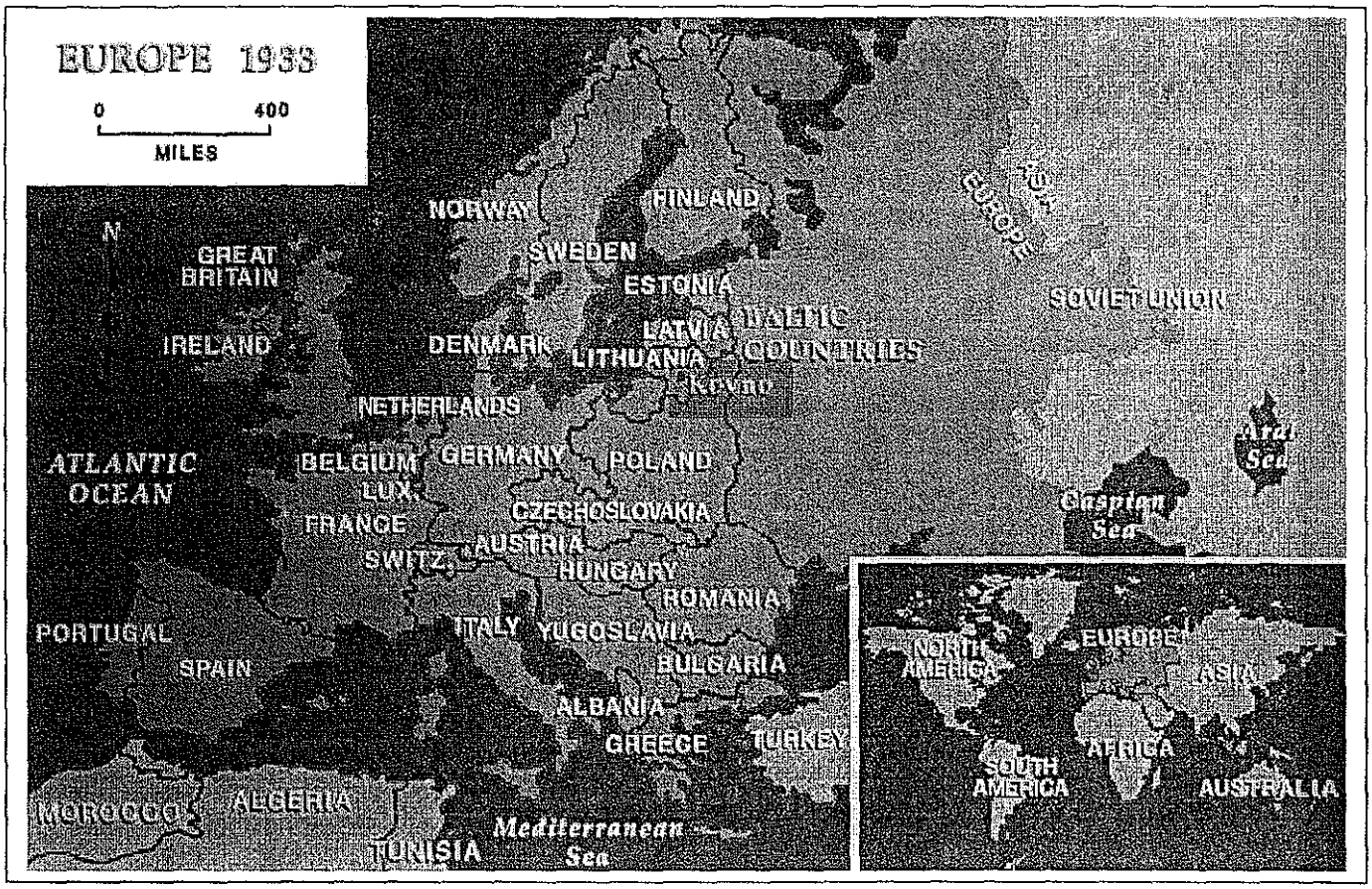
Map 5: Map showing Samotevich, Khotimsk, Novozybkov, Surazh



Map 6: Map showing Samotevich and Khotimsk in Byelorussia



Map 7: Map showing Kovno



Map 8: Map showing location of St. Petersburg



The first language of the Newmarks and Gluskers in the 19th and 20th century was Yiddish, a Germanic language that was a remnant of their origins in Western Europe. As a foreign language, many of those living in Samotevich and Khotimsk spoke some level of Russian, though with Ukrainian mixed in and with some Ukrainian pronunciation. Those living in Kovno may have spoken Lithuanian, rather than/in addition to Russian. Many of the men – and perhaps some of the women – would also have been able to read religious prayers in Hebrew. They would not, however, have been able to speak Hebrew and few would have been able to write in Hebrew. When they were among one another in the Old Country, members of the family would have spoken Yiddish.

Most Jews who lived in the Pale were very poor. At the end of the 19th century, about one-third of the Jewish population in the Pale had to rely on some form of payment from Jewish welfare organizations. Eliyohu and Chana Rivka Newmark and their children and grandchildren seem to have been rather better off than the majority of their neighbors. Leah Newmark/Glusker seems to have done especially well, renting two different plots from a local landholder and employing up to 100 local Gentile girls at harvesting time. Economically most successful of all was Eliyohu's son Leibe who had contracts provisioning the tsarist army around Kovno and who owned a bottling factory.

For the Newmarks and Gluskers who grew up in the Russia Empire, relatives often played key parts in one another's economic and political lives. For instance, Max Newmark worked as a kosher butcher for his grandfather, Eliyohu. One of Max Newmark's uncles, Leibe, provided him a job in Lithuania. Another of Max Newmark's uncles, Yankov Michl/Jacob, provided Max and his brother Sam with money for them to take to America. And two of their uncles living in America, Zelig Newmark and Morris Newmark, paid for the tickets that brought Sam and Max to the United States. In turn, Max and Sam paid for the passage to the United States of their seven siblings and their parents, Zalman Mordechai Newmark and Tsippe/Sylvia Chavin/Newmark.

The primary breadwinners in the family were often not the fathers in the family, but the wives and children. Jacob Glusker, for instance, spent his days praying, studying the Talmud, and discussing religious matters at schul, while his wife and daughters worked in the small dried good store in Khotimsk.

To survive, members of the family often had to be resourceful, working away from their homes taking on a number of different types of work. Max Newmark worked as an apprentice shokhet in Novo Meste and sold cigarettes to soldiers in Lithuania. In Byelorussia, he worked with his brother Sam as a logger and also as a skinner, skinning lambs that had died during the winter and selling the leather. One of Max and Sam's sisters, Lillian Newmark/Fogel, moved to a village ten miles from Samotevich when she was sixteen so she could take care of the plowing of an acre of land that the family rented and also oversee a man and three girls who were hired to help in the farming of that land. Later, after the

Bolshevik Revolution of October/November 1917, she taught young Jewish children to read and write in Hebrew and in Russian. She also smuggled scarves from Moscow, which her mother, Tsippe/Sylvia Newmark sold to peasants in a nearby village in return for flour.

In terms of shtetl hierarchy, the Newmarks enjoyed quite high status. Much of their status derived from the fact that there were two rabbis in the family. Eliyohu was a rabbi and shokhet in Samotevich. Additionally, the father-in-law of Eliyohu's oldest son (Zalman Mordechai) was also a rabbi. The father of Tsippe Chavkin (Zalman Modechai's wife) was a rabbi in Zhilonkevich, Zhilonkevich being just next to Samotevich.

Many members of the family seem to have considered themselves to be of reasonably high status. For instance, when Eliyohu and Chana Rivka's daughter, Hannah/Anna, married Getsel/Harry Estrin, none of the members of the Newmark family attended the wedding and Hannah/Anna was essentially disinherited. The apparent cause for this disinheritance seems to have been the belief that Getsel was too low class to marry into the family. Getsel was a musician, a low-class profession in Russia. Similarly, when Lillian Newmark/Fogel, the grand-daughter of Eliyohu and Chana Rivka, fell in love for the first time, her aunt told the boy (named Levi) that she disapproved of him and that if he loved Lillian, he would discontinue seeing Lilllian (which he did). Lillian's aunt did this apparently because she felt that Levi was not rich enough. And when two of Eliyohu's grandsons, Max Newmark and Sam Newmark, were contemplating what profession to choose they ruled out shoemaking and tailoring because those vocations would have been socially unacceptable for young men who grandfathers were rabbis and heads of their congregations.

As this last comment suggests, status was not simply a reflection of wealth in the Old Country. Education and one's position in the religious community played an important part in one's own status and in the status of one's family. Several of the early members of our family seem to have been of rather high status. Eliyohu Newmark worked as both a rabbi and shokhot, which were pretty much the highest status occupations to have. Eliyohu's son Zalman Mordechai also worked as a shokhot and also as the town's chazan, having his own torah and prayer books in the house. Another of Eliyohu's sons, Leibe, owned a bottling plant and enjoyed government contracts to provision soldiers around Kovno. Additionally, the father-in-law of Zalman Mordechai) was also a rabbi. The father of Tsippe Chavkin (Zalman Modechai's wife) was a rabbi in Zhilonkevich, Zhilonkevich being just next to Samotevich.

For those in our family living in the Russian Empire in the 19th and early 20th centuries, one of the cruelest aspects of life was service in the tsar's army. The military had little to offer Jewish men as Jews were forbidden by law from becoming officers and Jews were savagely treated in the military. They were,

however, often drafted into the army. The policy of drafting Jews into the military began in 1827 when Nicholas I called for Jewish men to serve in the army for 25 years. He did so not only to build up the size of his army – a preoccupation for him – but also to divorce Jews from their Jewish environments and assimilate them into Russian culture, being provided a Christian education in the process. Not all Jews were required to serve. Rather, each Jewish community was required to meet a quota. Jews were extremely reluctant to serve and Jewish communities often had to kidnap Jewish boys/men between the ages of 12 and 25 to meet quotas. This system of quotas was repealed in the late 1850s.

The repeal of the quota system did not mean that Jews were exempt from military service and Jews were periodically drafted into the tsar's. Eliyohu's son, Zelig, ran away from the army. Eliyohu's grandson Max Newmark left Russia in large part, he said, because he knew he would be drafted and he did not want to serve in the tsar's army. Enlightening in this story is his explanation of why he did not want to serve in the tsar's army. Max Newmark explained that he feared serving in the tsar's army because to do so would have required him to eat pork! Max Newmark's brother Boris gouged out his leg in an attempt to avoid militarily service. The husband of Eliyohu's granddaughter Mae Glusker/Cherin, Sam Cherin, had his eye poked out to avoid military service. Boris Newmark and Sam Cherin were two of thousands of young Jewish men who so feared service in the tsarist army that they turned to self-mutilation or exposing themselves to conditions in which they would contract TB so as to make themselves unfit for military service.

This is not to suggest that no members of our family served in the military. Leibe Newmark served in the artillery of the tsarist army in Poenan/Ponemun, Lithuania, Poenan/Ponemun being about 10 miles from Kovno/Kaunas. (See Map 7) And when Boris Newmark's self-inflicted leg wound healed, he was drafted in the Red Army. There are differing accounts as to how Boris left the army. Lillian Newmark, Boris' sister, gives an account of going to the military authorities and making up a story that Boris was the sole breadwinner of the family and that his return was necessary for the survival of the family. Her recollection of events suggests that Boris was released as a result of her pleading. Boris recalled a rather different series of events, explaining that he simply walked away from his unit with Lillian to rejoin the family in Samotevich.

Most of the men in our family would have been literate. In 1897, for instance, it has been estimated that 65% of the Jewish males aged 10 or older were literate. Statistically, few of the women Gluskers or Newmarks would have been literate. It has been estimated that less than 40% of Jewish females aged 10 or older were literate in 1897. Although that level of literacy may sound low by modern standards, the Jewish rate of literacy was approximately twice that of non-Jews in the Russian Empire at the end of the 1800s.

One should take any estimation of literacy rates in the Russian Empire with a grain of salt. What did it mean to be literate? Was one literate if one could read? Or did literary require being able to read and write? Was literacy a function of one's abilities in Russian or did mastery of Hebrew or Yiddish count? The difficulty in ascertaining literacy is underscored by an amusing ship's manifest, recording the passenger information of Leike Nanes, the father-in-law of Eliyohu's grandson, Irving Newmark. In the manifest, Leike's vocation is recorded as "scholar." However, the manifest also records Leike as being illiterate.

Since the Newmarks and Gluskers were descended from a rabbi, Eliyohu, they probably had higher literacy rates than was the average. They would have received their education at the cheder, a non-state supported school. Theoretically, Jews were also allowed to attend state-supported schools, but few Jews went there as these schools indoctrinated their students in a Christian education. Some members of the family did, however, get their education in state schools. Eliyohu's grandson Morris Newmark went to state school in Samotevich after the Russian Revolution of 1917 until he emigrated in 1923.

In the Old Country, people married very young. Eliyohu's son Zalman Mordechai, for instance, seems to have married when Zalman was only about 17 and his wife was about 15. Such early marriage meant that there was ample time for nuclear families to grow very large. And very large they grew. Eliyohu Newmark and his wife, Chana Rivka, had ten children who survived to adulthood. One of their sons, Leibe Newmark, had eight children who survived to adulthood. Another of their children Zalman Mordechai Newmark, had nine children who lived to adulthood. One of their daughters, Leah Newmark/Glusker, had six children to survive to adulthood. Interestingly, the birthdays of these many children were not celebrated in the Old Country and next to none of Eliyohu Newmark's children or grandchildren knew their birthdays. When they came to the United States and were asked for their birthdays, they simply made them up.

Life for our family in the Old Country before the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 was generally quite traditional. Theirs was still a world that revolved around the religious calendar, with Sukkot, Simhat Torah, Purim, Pesach, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Shabbos being celebrated. Theirs were kosher households. Marriages were arranged ones, with daughters and their dowries being bargained for like commodities. Theirs was largely a pre-industrial society. Eliyohu's grandson Max Newmark recalls that in 1909 he was the only one in his nuclear family to have seen a train or a car, the only sign of technology in Samotevich being the bicycle owned by the daughter of the manager of the government-owned still and liquor store. In such a pre-industrial world, superstition often reigned supreme. For instance, Eliyohu's daughter Leah Newmark/Glusker and Jacob Glusker had four sons who did live through their infancy. They then had five girls in succession before Leah gave birth to another son, Albert. Leah and Jacob were so concerned that some force was going to kill

Albert that they dressed Albert in girls' clothes and gave him, to their elder daughter Anna, to look after.

We know something of the living conditions in Samotevich. Eliyohu gave his eldest son, Zalman Mordechai, a log cabin with a thatched roof in Samotevich as a wedding present. Zalman Mordechai lived in that house with his wife and 9 children lived in that log cabin. The house consisted of a living room, a table with a place for twelve people, three benches, six chairs, one dresser, one bedroom with two beds, a big clock, and a mirror on the wall. The clock attests to a certain degree of prosperity.

The kitchen in that house had a large oven leading to a chimney. The oven had a layer of bricks on top of it and up to ten people used to sleep on top of the oven, as the Byelorussian winters are cold and the oven was the cabin's only source of heat. (See Photograph 3)

The shtetl had two wells, one of those two wells being directly across the street from Zalman Mordechai's house. There was a synagogue in the shtetl as well as a bathhouse. The women used the bathhouse on Wednesdays, the men used the bathhouse on Fridays. Eliyohu's grandson, Max Newmark, and Max's son, Leonard Newmark, went to Samotevich in 1972. Leonard took photographs of the village. (See Photographs 1-3).

The Russian Empire in which our family lived at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century was profoundly anti-Semitic. Although anti-Semitism has been endemic in this region for as long as Jews have lived there, pogroms against the Jews were sporadic. From the 1870s, militant pan-Slavic nationalism fueled intense anti-Semitism. That anti-Semitism took the cruel form of pogroms following the murder of Tsar Alexander II in 1881, a murder that had Jews being used as a scapegoat.

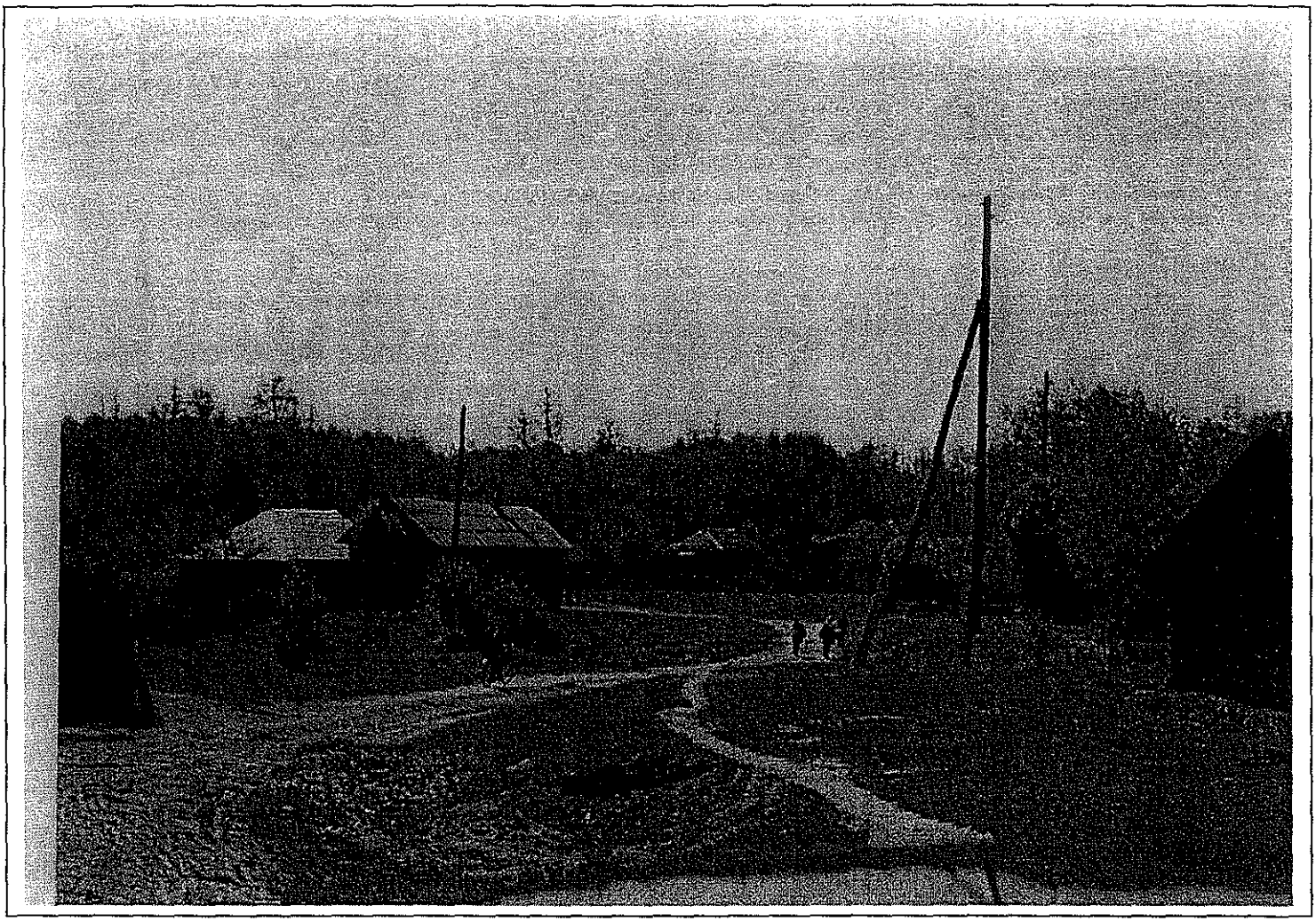
A new set of Temporary Laws passed in 1882 formalized this anti-Semitic sentiment. Jews were prohibited from living in villages, from transacting business on Christian holidays (including Sunday), and from working in the civil service, one of the few avenues of upward mobility available to people living in the Russian empire.

Another wave of pogroms was launched in the late 1880s following a train accident involving Alexander III and his family. The train accident was interpreted as a sign from above to persecute Jews.

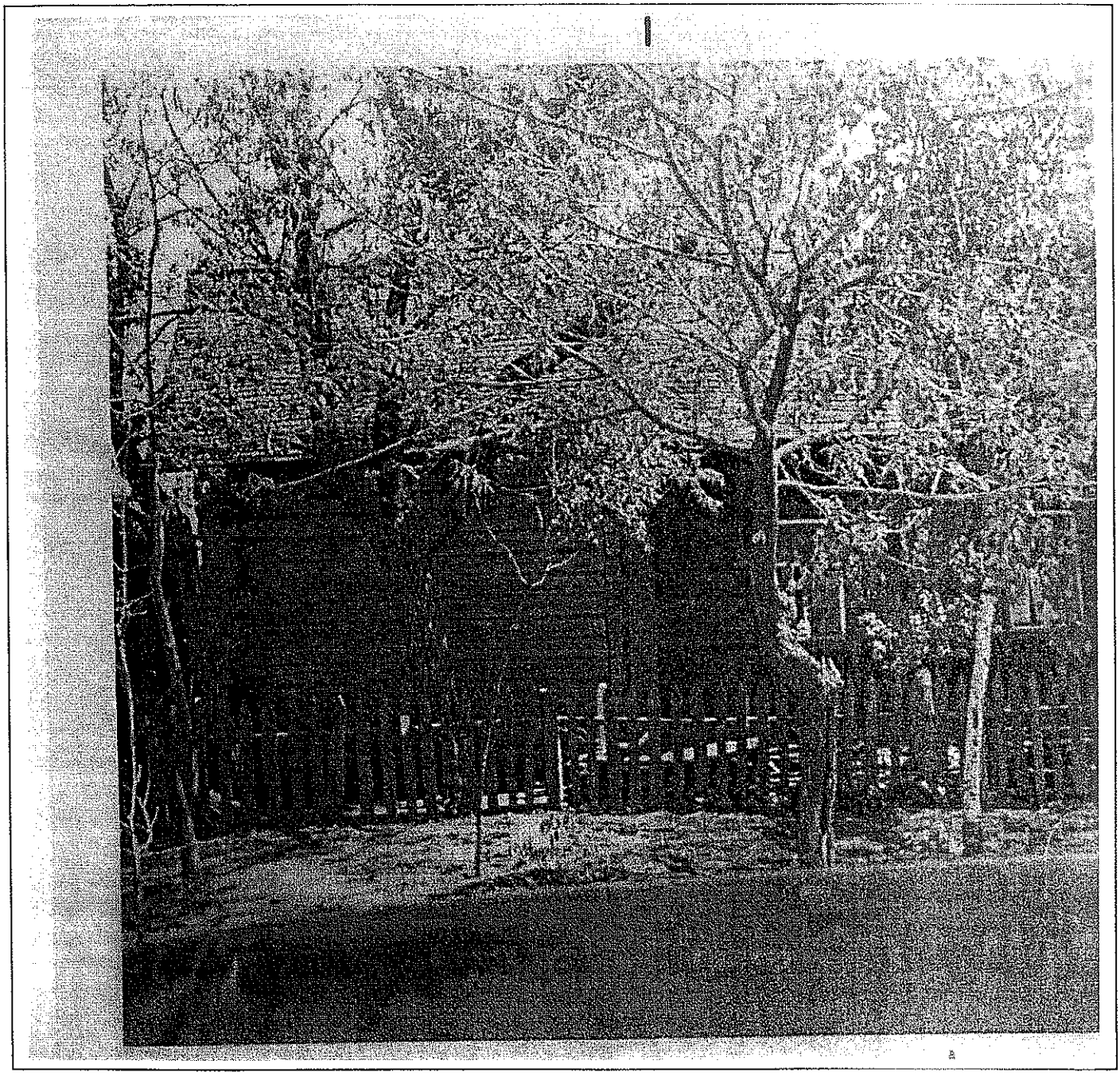
In 1905, another wave of pogroms was launched, this time in reaction to the so-called Revolution of 1905, an attempt to compel the autocratic tsar to agree to a constitutional monarchy.

In light of their miserable economic condition, anti-Semitism among their gentile neighbors, the anti-Semitism of the Russian tsars, and the threat of pogroms, many Jews turned to somewhat radical politics. Some, like Leon Trotsky, turned to Bolshevism, a secular system which advocated the violent overthrow of tsarism and the imposition of a new system in which the workers/proletariat would rule supreme. Bolshevik meetings were held in the woods outside Khotimsk and Eliyohu and Chana Rivka's daughter, Leah Newmark/Glusker, and perhaps her husband, Jacob Glusker, were active in this Bolshevik movement.

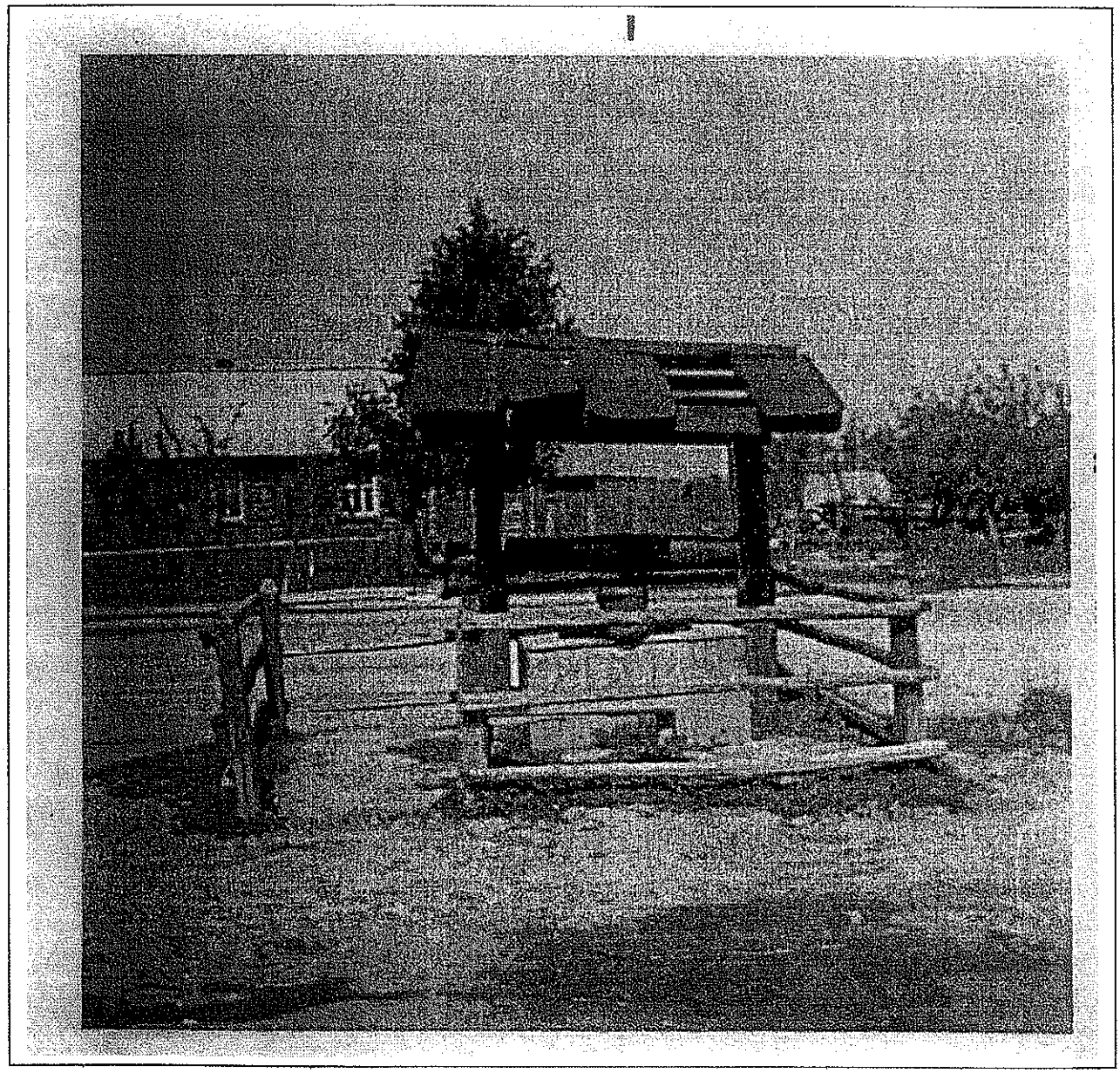
Photograph 1: Photograph 1: Photograph of Samotevich taken by Leonard Newmark in 1972



Photograph 2: Photograph of Eliyohu & Chana Rivka's house
in Samotevich. Photograph taken by Leonard Newmark in 1972



Photograph 3: Photograph of Zalman Mordechai Newmark & Tsippe Chavkin/Newmark's house in Samotevich. Photograph taken by Leonard Newmark in 1972



Some turned to Bundism, which set up defensive systems against pogroms and advocated that Jews should remain within the Russian Empire, but should be given cultural autonomy. Some, like Eliyohu Newmark, embraced Zionism, which advanced the idea that anti-Semitism could not be tempered and that the only hope for a future lay in the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. Eliyohu not only embraced Zionism, but also was one of only several hundred people to attend the First Zionist Congress convened by Herzel in Basel, Switzerland in August of 1897. What was said at the First Zionist Congress later become of extreme historical importance. The Protocols of Zion, a forged document that set off a whole wave of pogroms in the 20th century, were said to be the minutes of that First Zionist Congress.

Following the First Zionist Congress, Eliyohu Newmark was so committed to Zionism that he ran off in 1903 with one of his sons to go to Palestine, abandoning his wife and the rest of the family in Samotevich. There is some uncertainty as to which son he took. Some say he took his son Morris; some say he took his son Zelig.

The emigration was not a success. While in Odessa, en route to Palestine, Eliyohu lost the money that was to have paid the passage for him and his son to Palestine. The story goes that he lost this money to a scheming woman. Perhaps a prostitute? Perhaps not. This was not Eliyohu's first purported scandal with a woman. One may recall that he was said have come to Samotevich because of some purported misconduct with the wife of a leading citizen in Rosslavl. Whatever the circumstances of the loss of money en route to Palestine, Eliyohu felt too humiliated to return to his wife and family in Samotevich. Instead, he settled in a place called Novo Meste where he worked as a shokhot and rabbi. It's uncertain where this Novo Meste is as it is a common place name in that part of the world, Novo Meste meaning simply, New Place.

At the end of the 19th century, the Newmarks and Gluskers were among more than five million Jews living in the Russian Empire. They were not a happy lot and hoped for something better. Relatively few Jews went to Palestine in the late 19th century and early 20th centuries. More than two million of Russia's five million Jews left the Russian Empire for America between 1881 and 1914. Most of the children and grandchildren of Eliyohu Newmark went to America. None of Eliyohu's descendants went to Palestine in the late 19th or early 20th century. That said, in the 1960s one member of the family, Jacob Glusker, a grandson of Eliyohu Newmark, did leave the USSR for Israel.

The first member of the family to leave for America seems to have been Eliyohu's son Zelig. Zelig apparently paid for his passage with money that he had earned from his work as a barber. Zelig left early in 1906, landing in St. John's Newfoundland in Canada. He then crossed the Canadian-American border in

January 1907. It might be noted that the ship that brought Zelig to America was the SS Mount Temple. The SS Mount Temple gained some notoriety when various people claimed that it was the so-called mystery ship that passengers aboard the Titanic saw as the Titanic was going down.

The next member of the family to leave for America was Zelig's younger brother Morris. Morris left Russia later in 1906 aboard the SS Batavia that landed directly in the United States.

Next to come were probably Eliyohu's daughters Sora/Sarah Newmark/Shulman and Hannah/Anna Newmark/Estrin. These two daughters presumably came together between 1906 and 1913 with money supplied to them by their brothers Morris and Zelig.

Next were Jenny Glusker/Wilensky and her sister Anna Glusker/Kahn, granddaughters of Eliyohu Newmark. They arrived in the United States in 1912.

In 1913, two groups of the family came to America. On September 6, 1913, Jacob Glusker, his wife Leah Newmark/Glusker, and the four of their children who were still living in Byelorussia (Sophie Glusker/Newmark, Mae Glusker/Newmark, Mary Glusker/Cherin, and Albert Glusker) left on the SS Teutonic from Liverpool, England, arriving in Quebec, Canada, on September 6, 1913. They then made their way down to Chicago. There is some evidence that a friend of the Glusker family, Simon Hutton helped bring them to the United States. It's unlikely that Jenny Glusker/Wilensky and Anna Glusker/Kahn would have made enough money in one year to bring their parents and sibling over to the United States within just one year of Jenny and Anna's arrival. Further, Sophie Glusker used to remark that she could never thank Simon Hutton enough for all that he had done for her family.

On December 13, 1913, Max Newmark and Sam Newmark, two of Eliyohu's grandsons, arrived in New York.

Sometime before 1913, Eliyohu's daughter Hannah/Anna Newmark/Estrin and her husband Getsel/Harry Estrin also emigrated to America. Eliyohu's daughter Sora/Sarah Newmark/Shulman presumably came with Hannah and Getsel as she cam to the U.S., is not recorded as having come with any of the other members of the family, and would doubtfully have gone on the journey to the U.S. on her own.

From 1914 to 1917, the Russian Empire was engaged in World War I, fighting against Germany. The tolls of the war were heavy on Russia and in 1916 the tsarist government abolished the Pale of Settlement.

Early in 1917, there was a successful revolution against the tsar. Later in that same year, the Bolsheviks launched a coup against the Provisional Government

that had been installed after the abdication of the tsar. The Bolsheviks pushed for the withdrawal of the Russian Empire from the war and Trotsky was able to obtain a peace settlement with Germany in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

Lenin had hoped that the Bolshevik Revolution that occurred in October/November of 1917 would usher in a period of less religious zealotry. He even issued an address proclaiming the emancipation of Jews from tsarism, denouncing pogroms, and abolishing the Pale of Settlement.[2] According to Lenin, anti-Semitism was an "attempt to divert the hatred of the workers and peasants from the exploiters toward the Jews."

As it turned out, though, the Bolshevik Revolution was followed by a period of lawlessness and banditry. A week after the October/November Revolution, mobs burnt their homes and murdered five landowners and their families. Much of that banditry then devolved into pogroms. In the small villages that surrounded Samotevich, pretty much all the Jews were killed. Within Samotevich itself, members of the family protected themselves by going to the home of their Gentile neighbors, neighbors who took them in.

In March, 1918, a legislature in Byelorussia declared Byelorussia to be an independent country. At the start of 1919, though, the Soviet Red Army successfully invaded Byelorussia, establishing the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic. Those Jews remaining in eastern Byelorussia now faced another set of turmoil as the USSR was plunged into two wars. There was both a Soviet-Polish War in 1919-20 (fought significantly on Byelorussian soil) and also a violent Civil War in 1918-21. That Civil War in turn launched yet another series of pogroms. Those pogroms during the Civil War combined with War Communism, which privatized private holdings and outlawed private commerce, were ruinous for the Gluskers and Newmarks living in Samotevich.

The Civil War ended in 1921, the Bolsheviks having defeated the Whites and Greens (peasants who opposed both the Reds and Whites). The end of the Civil War ushered in a period of relative peace, though not prosperity. At the end of 1921, regular postal service was resumed between America and Byelorussia. Affidavits and letters of invitation to America were soon proffered for Sam's and Max's seven siblings as well as their parents, Zalman Mordechai Newmark and Tsippe/Sylvia.

The next emigration from Russia came, then, in 1923 when Max Newmark and Sam Newmark paid for the passage of their seven siblings (Lillian Newmark/Fogel, Boris Newmark, Dorothy Newmark/Friedman, Louis sNewmark, Irving Newmark, Morris Newmark, and Sarah Newmark/Slan) as well as for their parents, Zalman Mordechai and Tsippe/Sylvia. That group of nine left Riga

[2] The Pale of Settlement seems to have been abolished twice, first by Tsar Nicholas II in 1916 and then by Lenin.

aboard the SS Polonia on June 10, 1923, and arrived in Castle Garden, New York on July 4, 1923.

Not all members of the family were delighted by the prospect of going to America. Eliyohu's son Zalman Mordechai Newmark was horrified by the idea. He was horrified not because it would mean leaving his home; not because it would mean leaving his friends, neighbors, and relatives; not because it would entail an arduous and expensive trans-continental journey; not because he would have to learn another language. Rather, he was horrified because he thought that moving to America would mean having to work on Saturday and thereby giving up the Shabbos. Nor was Zalman Mordechai's daughter Lillian Newmark/Fogel without regrets. She was pleased by the fortunate opportunity it provided her family and the chance to see her brothers, but she was not eager to leave the man she had fallen in love with, a 25-year old man named Fifel.

And in 1934 when Max Newmark went to different parts of Eastern Europe (Byelorussia, Russia, and Lithuania) to visit relatives, Max could not persuade his Uncle Leibe Newmark to emigrate to the United States.

By 1934, some members of the family still living in the Old Country found themselves in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Those living in the USSR were the branch living in Novozybkov (the family of Eliyohu's son, Jacob/Yankov Michl), that branch living in St. Petersburg (the family of Eliyohu's daughter, Reizl/Rose), and that branch that stayed behind in Samotevich (the family of Eliyohu's daughter, Rochl/Rachel). There was also a branch of the family living in Kovno, Lithuania. In 1934, Lithuania was not part of the USSR. At the start of World War II, Lithuania was invaded by the USSR and remained a part of the USSR until the USSR was disbanded in the early 1990s. That branch of the family living in Lithuania was the family of Eliyohu's son, Leibe.

What happened to these four branches?

Of the branch living in Samotevich, all probably perished. According to a 1926 census, there were 378 Jews living in Samotevich. Rochl/Rachel, her husband Ite, and their children were among those 378. Just how many children Rochl and Ite had is uncertain. They had at least two daughters. Judging by a family photograph shot in Samotevich by Max Newmark in 1934, there were five daughters and one son in total. Rochl died in 1939, apparently before the outbreak of the Second World War. We do not know the fate of her husband or their children . Presumably he met the same fate as the remainder of the Jewish community in Samotevich. In October 1941, the Nazis launched their full policy of extermination against the Jews of the Mogilev district of Byelorussia, the district in which Samotevich lies. When the Nazis came, the Jews of Samotevich were herded into the synagogue. The doors of the synagogue were shut, the synagogue was set aflame, and the Jewish inhabitants of Samotevich were burnt alive. In 1974, Leonard Newmark, one of Eliyohu's great-grand sons, returned to

Samotevich and photographed the remains of the synagogue (See Photograph 7).

Of that branch living in Novozybkov, all were presumably among the two million Russian Jews killed in the Holocaust.

Of that branch living in St. Petersburg, we know that Reizl/Rose had a husband and two daughters. Reizl/Rose died of starvation/disease, along with over half a million others, during the Siege of Leningrad (the name for St. Petersburg in the USSR) in 1941/42. We do not know the fate of her husband and two daughters.

Of the branch living in Lithuania, most (including Leibe) were victims of the Holocaust, probably killed either by the *Einsatzkommandos*, the Germans charged with killing Jews, or by ethnic Lithuanians. Three of Leibe's children/Eliyohu's grandchildren living in Lithuania did survive. Sarah Newmark/Levine (Sarah the Greene) survived by returning to the United States with Max Newmark after Max visited the USSR in 1934 in an effort to bring some remaining family members over to the United States. Leibe's son Jacob somehow survived and ended up emigrating to Israel in the 1960s. Liza Newmark/Rosen somehow survived. In time, she joined the Communist Party and moved to Rostov-on-Don in Russia. Liza Newmark/Rosen married another Jew, Grisha Rosen, and they had children and grandchildren.

As we intermarry with Jews from other parts of the world, with Catholics, with Protestants, ... we will no longer be able to talk about our family being an immigrant family from the Pale. Over the generations, the story of our family will become increasingly complex and entangled with the story of many other families with significantly different histories. In time, the story of our family, our *mispocha*, will become increasingly remote. Perhaps, some of us will continue to speak of us being immigrants from Byelorussia, the story of our family's roots in Samotevich devolving into lore. Such is the natural progression of time.