

“To dare write a letter”: multi-lingual correspondence of exiled anarcho-Esperantist Sergei Gaidovsky

Sergei Mikhaylovich Gaidovsky (Haidovsky, Sergej Hajdovskij, Peĉenego) was born in St Petersburg in 1893, ethnic Russian [1]. He was a major figure in the anarchist current of the Russian and Soviet Esperanto movement.

Gaidovskiy was close to Tolstoyans in his youth [2]. In 1915 he joined the Petrograd Vegetarian Society, which listed him as retired collegiate registrar (lowest official rank in the Russian Empire) living in Panteleymonovskaya Street (now Pestelya Street in central St Petersburg) [3].

Gaidovsky joined anarchists since the 1917 revolution, participating in the anarchist movement in Petrograd / Leningrad [2]. In 1919, he co-founded the Esperanto Section of the Third International (ESKI), and later contributed to the La Nova Epoko [New Epoch] magazine of the World Non-National Association (SAT) under the pen name Peĉenego

[4].

The biographical note by Anatoly Dubovik records that Gaidovsky was repeatedly arrested starting from 1925, subjected to political isolators and exile [2]. An Esperanto history website says that Gaidovsky was first arrested for his anarchist activities as early as 1921, then in 1923, adding that in 1925 he was arrested along with his wife and exiled for three years [5]. (One Gaidovskaya is listed by Memorial as a female anarchist who was held at a political isolator and subjected to torture in 1923-1924 [6]).

First three messages published here were sent from Dzhambeyta in Uralsk Gubernia (now the village of Zhympty in Kazakhstan) in 1926 [7]. The rest of the correspondence on file [8] was sent from Samara between 1929 and 1932. Apparently Gaidovsky was exiled there for a three-year term that ended in 1931. The postcards and letters were written mostly in Russian and English, with some words and expressions in French, German, Spanish, Latin, Italian, Esperanto marked in **bold** (also used to indicate switching between languages in the original).

They allow an insight into the struggles faced by anarchists in the USSR - censorship, unemployment, regular arrests and banishment. Whilst the more clandestine matters of organising are kept out of correspondence, for obvious reasons, the postcards help us figure to what extent exiles were aware of the movement's progress abroad, as well as some of the everyday difficulties they faced.

On June 26, 1937, Gaidovsky was arrested once again. At the time, he lived in Kuybyshev (formerly and now again Samara), was not a party member, and worked as a journalist, according to information collected by Memorial. On November 27, a troika under the Kuybyshev Region NKVD directorate sentenced Gaidovsky to death by the firing squad under articles 58-8, 58-10 and 58-11 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR (counterrevolutionary activities). He was executed on December 3, 1937, and buried in Kuybyshev. On June 12, 1989 the Kuybyshev Region prosecutor's office rehabilitated Gaidovsky [1].

[1] <http://lists.memo.ru/d7/f491.htm>

- [2] Biographical note by Anatoly Dubovik <http://www.makhno.ru/forum/calendar.php?do=getinfo&day=2015-12-3&c=1>
- [3] <http://www.vita.org.ru/veg/history/report-1915-spb-2.htm>
- [4] Article on the history of "La Nova Epoko" by Ulrich Lins <http://www.enxarxa.com/esperanto/LINS%20Drezen%20Lanti%20kaj%20la%20Nova%20Epoko.pdf>
- [5] <http://historio.ru/ukraina.php>
- [6] <http://socialist.memo.ru/lists/bio/15.htm>
- [7] Folder 46 of the Senya Fleshin (Flechine) Archive at the IISG in Amsterdam: Correspondence of The Joint Committee for the Defense of Revolutionists Imprisoned in Russia (Berlin, 1923-1926). <https://senyafleshinpapers.wordpress.com/2014/12/29/flechine-folder-46/>
- [8] Folder 56 of the Senya Fleshin (Flechine) Archive at the IISG in Amsterdam: Correspondence of The Relief Fund of the International Working Men's Association for Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists Imprisoned or Exiled in Russia (Berlin and Paris, 1926-1932) <https://senyafleshinpapers.wordpress.com/2014/12/29/flechine-folder-56/>

[Sergei Gaidovsky (or Haidovsky) was an Esperantist, as was his wife Alexeieva (Alekseeva). They were arrested in September 1925 in Moscow (The Cheka seized "some manuscripts, translations and a typewriter": *Bulletin of the Joint Committee* Nov-Dec 1925, p1.) and exiled for three years to Djambetta [Dzhambeyta] in the Urals (see *The guillotine at work*, p563) Gaidovsky was connected with the Kropotkin Museum, and the confiscated material included a manuscript copy of Borovoi's book *Anarchism* (Goodwin, *Confronting Dostoevsky's Demons* quoting Senya Fleshin in *Delo Truda*). While in exile they were "again arrested and kept in prison without any charge against them for over two weeks." She was "placed in a cell occupied by ordinary, non-political prisoners, all of them men." (*The guillotine at work*, p548 quoting *Bulletin of the Relief Fund of the IWA for Anarchists and Anarcho-syndicalists Imprisoned or Exiled in Russia*, 1, December 1926.)]

14.01.1926

[Picture postcard showing boat *Statendam*, in English. Addressed to M. Klavansky (i.e. Mark Mratchny) in Berlin, Germany. Postmark indiscernible. Location marked as Djambeita [Dzhambeyta], Ural[skaya] Gub[ernia].

Dear comrade,

With great pleasure I confirm the receipt of three copies of l'Humanité (1/IX, 23/X, 24/X) as good as previously sent two packets of the same news-papers of November (received 13/XII).

I am very thankful for these kindly granted materials, especially for the first one, which being quite fresh was of great interest to me and to our colony. With best greeting & wishes of the happy new year, Yours fraternally S. Hajdovskij.

Flechine46 (150-151).jpg

01.05.1926

[Letter in English. Addressed to Marthe Alperin for M. Steimer in France. Location marked as Dzhambeyta, Uralsk Gubernia.] [note: Marthe Alperin is Mollie Steimer's birth name.] Dear comrade[,]

Your letter was as agreeable [sic] as unexpected present for me. You can easily imagine how monotonously and solely goes our life in such a wild and desert corner of the Socialistic Asia, especially when you are deprived of the right to work and take part in any sphere of the social life.

For me personally, who being on liberty was connected chiefly with international revolutionary and anti-authoritative movement, my present exile is most unpleasant just because of this breaking off my relations with my European friends.

Now, each letter, each magasin [sic], or newspaper that comes sometimes to me from abroad and breaks this depressing silence of the exile is the very holiday to me. Such was also your letter.

I will be very glad to correspond with you though I am afraid that my scanty & insufficient knowledge of English possibly will not allow me to express my thoughts satisfactorily.

With fraternal greetings, S. Hajdovsk...

Flechine46 (180-181).jpg

11.07.1926

[Picture postcard, showing boat *Veendam*, in English. Addressed to Marthe Alperin for M.

Steimer in France. Postmarked Dzhambeyta.]

Dear comrade,

Your letter from 31/V received. I have read with attention all the news about the [British] general strike in Russian newspapers (with but a short interruption in May when I was imprisoned for two weeks. The labour mouvement [sic] in England was always of great interest to me, because I highly estimate that respect and consciousness of personal dignity, which is so characterising for English social life on the contrary to my own native land.

The newspapers have also brought me the information about Petlura's killing*. This act does'nt [sic] seem to be very actual now, when Petlura has already accomplished his rôle and belongs to the history (if it was not only the act of personal revenge).

However I would be glad to know from you about the course of the case. With best greetings, S. Hajd.

* Anarchist Sholom Schwartzbard shot Ukrainian nationalist leader Symon Petliura dead in Paris in 1926. Flechine46 (141-142).jpg

[Typed German text, probably a translation or transcription. No date, but from folder 46, so presumably 1926.]

Dear friend, I received your letter [literally: wrap, as in wrapped newspaper] at the right time but could not reply 1) as the postal service had not been working all through the month (April) and 2) as I had been arrested for refusing to cooperate with a police enquiry or sign various pledges and was kept in the local prison here for two weeks without charges being brought. The same happened to my wife, who was put in a cell with male criminals (don't be surprised, this is Asia...). We strongly objected and made a lot of noise. Right now we are free, temporarily. But they intend to take us to trial for dishonouring state representatives for calling them "gendarmes" (cops) during our protests. They are ashamed not of their actions that exceed those of the Tsarist police, but of having their actions named. Anyway, we are free again and I can thank you with this card for thinking of me. "Sennaciulo" [Esperantist organ] is systematically and deliberately silent about L.L. Now that we may endanger Russian comrades that are in prison due to their free thinking and speech - now they may hold the VI (SAT Congress)

[Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda, World Non-national Association, Esperantist group] in Russia without worry. No one will prevent it. Russian SAT-members such as Ernst Drezen are strong and influential enough to silence their opponents with help from the police.

With the exception of the "Worker-esperantist" I have received [nothing] in the last two months. Greetings to you and all friends and like-minded people, Your S.H. [S. Gaidovsky added in pen]

Flechine46 (149).jpg

29.05.1929

[Postcard in English with some French, Latin, Russian and Italian. Addressed to V. Eichenbaum (pour Mollie), 85, Cité-Jardins, Jennevilliers, France (i.e. to Mollie Steimer c/o Voline). Postmarked Samara 30.5.29.]

Dear friends, am very glad to confirm the receipt of your last postal wrappers (two wrapp. with ten copies of "Nation", one with style-magazines and a fine portrait of Faure and previous banderole with **Nouvelles Littéraires**) as well as Mollie's letter dated 13.V. Great thanks for all this. It is very good that you are using now my own address because the other one is not so sure. His owner, my friend, after two months of isolation was expelled out of his office and now is obliged to settle on the ground and to occupy himself by kit[c]hen-gardening. He likes his new occupation being a religious **libertaire** [French: libertarian] but I am afraid the weather is too unfavorable this year. From the beginning of the spring till now there was no rain. Two weeks ago Moscow authorities interdicted Moscow Vegetarian Society and its Bulletin after 20 years of existing. It was founded by Lev [Leo] Tolstoy. The other big vegetarian s[ocie]ty, that of Leningrad, escaped such an end by the **sui generis** [Latin: unique in its characteristics] suicide. It expelled the word "vegetarian" out of its name and now the latter sounds as follows "The society for propagation of vegetative-milk diet" (**plant and milk diet**). It stands "on the Marxian ground" and recommends the

rational diet especially to the Red Army in spite of the Moscow flabby pacifists-Tolstoyans. As a reward they publish printed organ "Hygiene of Nutrition", in which sometimes they are permitted even to use the termin [i.e. term] "vegetarian" though bitterly compromitted [i.e. compromised]. The Nation generally is allowable to Russia. I regularly received it during 1927. Thanks also for subscription to **Vie Ouvrière** of which I received only one No of 1st of May and the following are missing, but that is no fault of yours. We have read recently the article of Malatesta concerning the **platteforme** [Italian: the Platform] and the pamphlet "Ten years of..."* (collective work). Did you send any Jewish reviews, as you intended? Brotherly greetings from yours, S. H.

Nothing except the mentioned publications was received, nor discovered.

* "Bolshevik dictatorship in the light of anarchism. Ten years of Soviet rule" by A. Borovoi, V. Barmash and N. Muzil, who smuggled the manuscript abroad in 1927, published anonymously by P. Arshinov in 1928 in Paris.

<http://www.aitrus.info/node/2757>

Flechine56 (20-21).jpg

12.07.1929

[Postcard in Russian with some English and French. Addressed to V. Eichenbaum for M. in France. Translated by Szarapow.]

Dear friends,

Please accept apologies for being late with response by a couple of weeks. This happened because my affairs became better. On the occasion of summer holidays and due to "decreasing quality of production" (which is how shoddy work is described here), my services were needed. And they were needed so badly that it was deemed possible to overlook some sensitive circumstances and invite me*. I work very much (up to 16 hours per day). I compensate excessive unemployment in the past and in the future. I regularly receive **La Vie Ouvrière - merci** [French: thank you]. A friend of mine supplies me with **Nouvelles Littéraires** weekly, so there's enough reading matter. Of the interesting things nothing got through, which is annoying.

Have read about collection for N. M.** In Moscow, they live unwell, over a dozen people are sick***. We have heat and lack of rain. Apart from trouble for the forthcoming harvest, it also lowers our quality of life, as it is hard to work in such heat and sultry weather. How's Mollie's health and Senya's departure? We wish you cooler weather than the one we have, and fresh energy. How's Sasha's book****? Hello to friends. Yours, S. G. Hello to Senya from Senya.

* Presumably it was hard because Gaidovsky was serving an exile term.

** Nestor Makhno?

*** Probably Gaidovsky hints at arrests.

**** Presumably Alexander Berkman's "Now and After: The ABC of Communist Anarchism"

Flechine56 (22-23).jpg

3.09.1929

[Postcard in English, addressed to V. Eichenbaum (for Mollie) in France, note (by Voline?) in Russian: "This is for Yanya [i.e. Jacques Doubinsky]. The postcard got lost at Mollie's, and now I found it by accident. This is Gaidovsky, he has a new address."

Postmarked Samara.]

Dear friends[,]

Am very thankful for your last p.card (from Mollie) and magazines [sic] (L[about] Defender, **Revista Blanca** and two Spanish booklets, New Republic). Especially useful is Spanish literature of that kind because I am studying a little Spanish for such cases and on the other hand such books have much more chances to get through all difficulties of the route. Now I am awaiting for the book of Sasha, which, I hope, will be sent registered.

At the moment you will receive my lines, I think Mollie will already be in Berlin and send therefrom her new address. No interesting news here. I am working hard enough, but it is certainly much better, that [sic] to be without any job at all as it occurs often with our friends. With brotherly greetings, Yours S. H. Please to note my new address: Frounze str. 44, log 1.

Flechine56 (14-15).jpg

24.09.1929

[Postcard in Russian. Addressed to V. Eichenbaum (for M.) in France. Postmarked Samara. Translated by Szarapow.]

I only had time to confirm the receipt of **Labour Defender** and **Revista**, when a book about Reclus arrived, along with a little letter from Mollie, in which she informed about her departure to join Senya [Fleshin] in late August. It has to be presumed that she is in Berl[in] already, and after the first impressions she would find a free moment to tell her address and drop a couple of words about her health. I regularly receive **La Vie Ouvrière**, which is now, due to the conference, more interesting than usual. For now I work as before, i.e., very much, so there's hardly any time left for myself and a book, or a newspaper. The weather and the moods we have are autumnal. Hello to friends. Please note my address: Frunze street, house 44, flat 1, and do not write at the old one, or it will get lost. Yours, S. G.

Flechine56 (10-11).jpg

[Note: address has been underlined after receipt]

13.01.1930

[Postcard in Russian, with some Latin, German and French. Addressed to S. Flechine in Mommsenstrasse, 45, Berlin-Charlottenburg, Germany. Stamped Samara.

Translated by

Szarapow.]

Dear friends,

Received your message with pleasure. I am guilty of the same sin, because I knew your address (the temporary one) from Zilb*, but I did not have enough strength to

dare write a letter. The work has been too overwhelming, there's no time left. On the other hand, I see the example of comrades who do not manage to work, and it seems even worse than being cluttered and fatigued. And so we keep fluctuating between two poles of human disharmony: slavery and back-breaking work, or hegemony and idleness. But one wants **tertium** [Latin: the third thing] which for now is **non datur** [Latin: not given; "tertium non datur" is formal logic principle] - simply work and freedom. Z. says that you live in the poshest part of Berlin. It's nice to be dealing with such bourgeois. Do write. Maybe you would come across "History of philosophy" in verse, published for Christmas 1927. It was written by Hugo Kaiser, published by **E. Luther, Hadmersleben**. Back in the day, I read a review in **Frank[urter] Zeitung** and got interested. It costs three marks. I did not receive Sasha's books. If it was sent by registered mail, it would be returned with the reason provided (**interdit** [French: prohibited] etc.) But maybe it wasn't sent. I had one little parcel from A. Schmidt, **rue Scribe** [street in Paris]- who is to be thanked, Mollie or the sender directly? Cordial greeting from all of us, and we wish you success and health. S. My address [one word indecipherable], write, and if you want to, you may send mail to be called for.

- * Probably Semyon Mikhaylovich Zilber (1897-1937), anarchist since 1915, repeatedly arrested by Soviet authorities, executed in Tomsk on October 20, 1937. Aid fund papers (folder 82) say that he served an exile term in Samara until April 1930.

Flechine56 (18-19).jpg

21.03.1930

[Postcard in Russian. Addressed to S. Flechine in Berlin. Postmarked Samara.

Translated by Szarapow.] Dear friends,

Allow me to thank you for **Geschichte der Philosophie** [German: History of philosophy], which was just received and which satisfied an old whim. In response, I am sending you a batch of Russian newspapers, which would help you not forget the Russian language, and maybe even prove helpful in acquainting yourself with the Russian reality, although for the latter purpose the newspapers are generally very much an imperfect means. Oh well, the reality is always hard to perceive, which is why people argue so much about it in philosophy and in politics. Even the people who are subjected to influence of one and the same reality comment on it and perceive it in different ways. And we are now quite confused - where is good, where is evil, where is left and where is right. You wake up in the morning and you think - what day is it today, is it Saturday? But what if Saturday was already abolished by a Glavnauka* commission? For example, last week it was springtime, sidewalks and paved roads dried, and merry little creeks ran everywhere. And now the city is covered in snow, the trams were not running for two days, the windows of my room are covered with frosting, in order to get out into the courtyard or into the street you have to take a shovel and dig a corridor from the door through the snow. That's the sort of deviations even the nature makes, let alone the mortal people. So, how are your work successes? Has Mollie settled already? We are all healthy, and would be glad to hear from you as well. Hearty greeting, and once again, thank you for your friendly attention. Yours, S.

- * Main directorate for scientific, scientific-art and museum institutions, under the RSFSR People's Commissariat for Education.
Flechine56 (8-9).jpg

22.08.1930

[Postcard in Russian, with a little German and English. Addressed to S. Flechine in Berlin. Postmarked Samara. Translated by Szarapow.]

Good friends, we recently received a parcel with **AJZ** and **Berl[iner]** [Ill.?] **Z[eitung]**, and after that a letter from Mollie. I was very glad that you posted a message about yourself without waiting for a prior reminder from us. By that, you have pushed my hand, and today, apart from the postcard, I am sending you a parcel with the pamphlet "A Shot in Paris" about the Petliura case* which was published recently. Also, the publisher "Zemlya i Fabrika" has published this year a translation of the book by Eu[gene] Lyons "The Life and Death of S[acco] and V[anzetti]" and recently "The letters of S[acco] and V[anzetti]" (253 pgs.), and "Gosizdat" published "Boston" by [Upton] Sinclair in two volumes. "Molodaya Gvardiya" published "Under the Black Flag" by M[ikhail] Chudnov (221 pgs.), memoirs by a former anarchist from the epoch of [19]18-[19]19, a member of the Bakunin detachment in the south. The tone of the book is vulgar, reminding sometimes of "Yolop" by M. Chess (1924)**, with an overtone of historical slander, and the talentless foreword by Gorev*** completes the picture. But the books about S[acco] and V[anzetti] are very good. Today, by the way, is the anniversary [of their execution in 1927]. I contributed an article to the local newspaper (once a year, on this day, I permit myself such literary collaboration. Of course, a number of passages were cut out from it, including the very mention of who they were, but the references to the books were left, and that's the main thing - maybe someone would read them, and the books do leave an impression. My silence also had some justification. In June (from the 3rd to the 17th) just before the congress**** all of our friends, starting with myself and numbering five people, were preserved in a basement [i.e. arrested] and thus deprived of a chance to write. The attempt to create a [criminal] case failed. We all work again at the old places. You know our lineup: myself with a female friend, Shura L. is also in a couple, Vera Yakovlevna (the islander), and just recently I. Shornik (the Odessa man)***** arrived from Parabel. Zilb is in Moscow. This year, we nearly all are working (Sh[ornik] has not yet managed to find [a job]) and somehow fighting against our stomachs, these eternal rebels. Life, of course, is hard, stealing absolutely absurdly a mass of time (hours every day) for queueing up, walking around the market, searching for the elementary food items - bread, salt, milk, vegetables etc. But for now we still live in the spirit, and our bastions cannot be taken via the stomach. I have already read about the congress***** in an Argentinian newspaper, but we did not know yet that a city was decided on. It would be very interesting to know about the details and the talking points of reports about democracy and R[udolf] Rock[er] about nationalism. We heartily wish Mollie success in her diplomatic affairs concerning the visa, and mental and bodily vivacity. **Best greetings from all your friends. S. H.**

* The pamphlet "A Shot in Paris (the Petliura murder case)" was published in Moscow in 1930.

** "Yolop: Pages from the Life of Starov" by M. Chess (real name Mikhail Mitelman, 1899-1979), a "film-novel" in which the narrator is a convicted anarchist, published by "Priboy" in 1925

*** Boris Gorev (1874-1937 or 1938), social-democrat, historian, political writer. A number of his publications were on the history of anarchism, including "Anarchism in Russia: From Bakunin to Makhno" (1930).

**** 16th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), held in June-July 1930.

**** Izrail Abramovich Shornik-Supornik (1900-1938), born in Odessa, anarchist since 1917. During the Civil War worked in the Odessa anarchist federation "Nabat", in 1920 was a member of underground anarchist groups in Odessa. Between 1920 and 1927 was arrested four times, from 1927 served an exile sentence in Narym territory. In 1933 returned to Odessa and restarted work in the anarchist underground. Executed in 1938.

(Biographical note by Anatoly Dubovik <http://www.makhno.ru/forum/calendar.php?do=getinfo&day=2008-6-8&c=1>)

***** Apparently the 4th IWA Congress in Madrid, which was to be held in November 1930, but was delayed until June 1931.

[Note re: Chudnov. Pod chernym znamenem; zapiski anarkhista / M N Chudnov.

[Moskva] Molodai a gvardii a , 1930. <http://www.worldcat.org/title/pod-chernymznamenem-zapiski-anarkhista/oclc/40493264>

Flechine56 (28-29).jpg

20.10.1930

[Postcard in English. Addressed to S. Flechine in Berlin. Postmarked Samara, 23.10.30.] Dear friends[.]

Thankfully confirm receipt of magazines [sic], especially of those without title ("Road" & bulletin of IAA). At the same time am sending you four rolls (three with different Russian papers[.] central and provincial, one - with two Russian magazines [sic] "Revolution & Culture" and "Our Achievements" – "Nashi Dostizhenija") and separately two books (registered) "Under Black Standard" of Chudnov and "Anarchism in Russia" of B. Gorev, the both of them appeared not very long ago. Now, please note my new address: Pionerskaja 43 kv. 1. We have two rooms and pay for them 40 roubles monthly. Heating, light, water etc. are not included and require more expenditure from us. We are living in three. One of us earns monthly 42 rbls., the second 56 rbls. and only the third works out more than hundred rbls. Lodge crisis is over every's imagination. Two our comrades arrived here three months ago and till now they cannot find any room for themselves. And how are you, friends? I hope your struggle for visa is now finished successfully and you are permitted to stay in Berlin. What news about the congress? Is it not delayed until November? We read all that we can about Spain at present moment. I have just found and read anew your letter from Aug[ust] 11. I can only assure you dear Molly [sic] that our life here is much more

dreary and hard, at least in all concerning material side of the life, than your one. In every case I wish you good health and humor and press your hands warmly in the names of all friends of yours. S.

[Note: "Road" could possibly be "Road to Freedom" (New York). IAA is the German acronym for the International Working Mens' Association.]

Flechine56 (-1).jpg

4.05.1931

[Postcard in Russian with some English. Addressed to S. Flechine in Berlin, postmarked

Samara. Translated by Szarapow.]

Dear friends,

Sorry I was not exhibiting signs of life for some time. There were specific reasons for that. Your printed-matter parcels, it seems to me, arrived punctually and brought joy by both their contents and circumstantially, as a sign of friendly attention and memory. I sent you a couple of books and several magazines and newspapers. We all work a lot, hurriedly and a little chaotically, as is inevitable in "transitional" time, especially taking into account age-long traditions of Russian work methods. We have dry springtime here. Thin vegetation is only just covering itself in green fluff but the city is already filled with clouds of dust - an idiosyncratic and abhorrent peculiarity of our Samara. How's Mollie's health and your successes in general? My yet another three-year period [i.e. exile term] has finished but I do not know the results yet - the superiors do not display any haste, as usual. Hello. S.

Flechine56 (2-3).jpg

16.07.1931

[Postcard in Russian with some English. Addressed to S. Flechine in Berlin.

Postmarked

Samara. Translated by Szarapow.]

Dear friends,

We are very much grateful to you for amiable and valuable to us literary memory. Your parcels are arriving apparently in entirety, and gladden us a lot, from "**Koralle**" through to "**Revista B[lanca]**" - the latter is particularly pleasant in the summertime [i.e. after the republic was established in Spain in April 1931]. Also received was a nice letter from Mollie with a promise to share the results of her holiday excursions over the Pyrenees [i.e. to the 4th Congress of IWA]. With much interest and impatience we await news and resolutions. After all, it is hard to judge by "**Revista**" about comparative strength and development of these or those moods and views, and it is easy to figure that they are varied. I'm sorry that the papers being sent are disparate, and that I'm not doing that regularly. I am temporarily out of work now, and I buy and read central newspapers irregularly. I will probably be working soon, and then I'll try. I sent a couple of books, I hope you will get them. We also read the pamphlets about **birth control** and §218*. But I repeat, the most pleasant is the "**Revista**", in which we were fully immersed, vocabularies in our hands and

excitement in our hearts. We would be glad to receive such gifts in the future too. We all live and work (my case is the exception) successfully. Hearty, friendly greeting. [Added on the front side of the postcard:] **We, certainly, do not pay attention to every lye [sic] we are obliged to read about our friends, fighting for (liberty) freedom at the other end of Europe, but it is difficult enough to judge what is occurring indeed, being limited only by newspapers.**

* German penal code paragraph banning abortion.
Flechine56 (24-25).jpg

19.07.1931

[Postcard in Russian with some German, English and Italian. Addressed to S. Flechine in

Berlin. Postmarked Samara. Translated by Szarapow.]

I just sent you, dear friends, a little postcard and a batch of requested newspapers, when I received from you a new parcel, with **“Die Neue Generation”** and **“B. T. H.”** [?] with two cutouts, on one of which is the art illustration from **“Ahora”**. Your mailing has just anticipated my wish and request expressed in the on-coming letter - namely, for you to pamper us with something from the art of Romanic countries, which are closer to us in temperament than the sober-minded and disciplined Anglo-Saxon spirit. Very interesting are the **“Sympathie-Erklärung”** [German: Declaration of sympathy] sketch, and the beautiful poem by Erich M., **“Spanien”** [German: Spain]. By God, if I had always learnt on such interesting material, I would have long known all the mysteries of the German language, including irregular verbs and their location within the sentence, and could sell off half of my vocabularies, thus easing my unemployment. However, it ends as from today anyway. Yesterday I signed a contract with a new newspaper, and tonight I am going to work after a month's break (in the last few months I work as a night-time technical editor - in the newspaper language that's called copy editor). I have started to send you the newspapers **“Izv[estia]”** and **“Zh. Zh.”** [?] plus some others almost regularly. I would be more than compensated, receiving from time to time cutouts and generally reading material, which you always select appropriately and which contribute to my successes in learning the language. A little paradox of life: the subject of **birth control** is very interesting and current, but personally I have lately encountered tragedies of the opposite kind. Several women amongst very close friends of mine are experiencing a heavy drama because they are deprived of the opportunity and joys **of motherhood**. Ultimately, something in common can be found between these two problems, at least both of them are rooted in the same cause, social exclusion in human life. In the eyes of a moralist, cheap is the civilisation in which there is huge shortage of real people, and human life becomes needless on the very moment of its coming into existence. Women must be satisfied - they get the right to kill which makes them equal to men who had this exclusive right from time immemorial in the history of humanity. Well, **finita** [Italian: finished]. I'm a bad moralist, and I may get something wrong in this delicate affair.

Hearty greeting. S.

[Note Erich M presumably Erich Muhsam]
Flechine56 (12-13).jpg

31.08.1931

[Postcard in English (start / end) and Russian (middle section), with some German and French. Addressed to S. Flechine in Berlin. Postmarked Samara. Translated by Szarapow.] Dear friends, with profound pleasure I confirm the receipt of your last letter and press matters, which I suppose attained me quite happily and in good state. Now we are reading all fragments and articles on separate leaves [i.e. pages] as good as “**Prolet. Freidenker**” [German: Proletarian Freethinkers], ... **pardon** [French: sorry], Atheist with great interest. Concerning food-package I think such matter is a little doubtful. Firstly - the package is not yet received and probably it is not only hasardous [sic]. Secondly such packages must be payed [sic] at the clearing-hous [sic] and the sum is big enough (7-20 roubles). Now, think of certain unopportunity, which causes this matter to the sender and sometimes to the receiver. Considering all this I ask you, do not send me in the future any food-pack. **And from another point of view, comparing positive and negative sides of such packages, I am inclined to consider this kind inefficient and economically unjustified. I would have read Mollie’s impressions from her holiday trip** [i.e. the 4th IWA Congress], **which she wrote about. I haven’t sent you magazines and newspapers for some time. I will probably post the accumulated newspapers tomorrow. We don’t yet have news neither from practical nor from legal side of things - we are still in the same strange condition of “persons awaiting documents” for over four months now. Any apparatus and mechanism only works well in one direction. Reverse motion is always slower.** That is also state-wisdom. You certainly are accustomed to see every day famous motto “Work, bread & freedom” of **KPD** [German Communist Party]. Now, we possess [sic] all this [sic] three parts of the sacred unity in very different degrees - plenty of the first, scanty of second and quite invisible quantity of the third. But all is distributed equally and with good sence [sic] of justice. Thanks for the magasins [sic] and newspapers. Greetings to Senya and friends. Fraternally yours, S. Flechine56 (6-7).jpg

28.09.1931

[Postcard in English with some Russian. Addressed to S. Flechine in Berlin. Postmarked Samara.]

Dear friends, Please excuse me my silence during last weeks. Man supposes and God disposes. Instead of the God, perhaps a little old-fashionable for our times there is here many other powers like him and very inclined to dispose of fates of their subjects. However I confirm thankfully the receipt of your package with butter etc. The method of sending is quite good (that is through R. co-operative & with pre-paid expenditures for clearinghouse). Also I confirm receipt of printed matters and resolutions in August number [i.e. issue] of S-St [?]. Thanks for all. Please note the address of my friend, which may serve you instead of myself for foodpack, also for spiritual food (newspapers and magasins [sic]) Kolpashevo, Tomsk okr. [district] Narym, N. J. Futerfas* (in Russian **to N. Ya. Futerfas**) You can write him in German, or English, or French – he is also very fond of languages & filology [sic] and every

printed matter (including in Spanish which he is studying now) will be welcomed [sic]. My social fate is yet uncertain. My friend of here received meantime continuation of his minus** for 3 years. I am awaiting the same. With friendly greetings, Ser...

* Natan Yakovlevich Futerfas (1896-1937). Born in the Polish city of Lodz to a merchant family. During the Civil War was a member of Moscow-based anarchist groups, chaired the organising committee of the All-Russian Esperanto Federation (OKTEF, 1918-1924), which united anarchist Esperantists. Co-publisher of *La Nova Epoko* magazine, member of the presidium of the 3rd All-Russian Esperanto Congress in 1921. Since 1924 arrested at least four times, and was nearly constantly in prison or exile since then, taking part in exiled anarchists activities. Arrested in Leningrad in June 1927 as one of the leaders of the Petrograd Group of Anarcho-Syndicalists, sentenced to three years' imprisonment. In 1929 exiled to Tomsk Region. In 1935 arrested in Tomsk, sentenced to exile in the Northern Territory. In 1937 arrested and executed in Arkhangelsk, with charges against him including communication with foreign anarchist centres. (Sources:

<http://slavik.babil.komputilo.org/bio/index.html> - biography in Russian, <http://www.makhno.ru/forum/calendar.php?do=getinfo&day=2014-8-9&c=1> biographical note by Anatoly Dubovik, <http://historio.ru/futerfas.php> - detailed biography in Esperanto, http://eo.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natano_Futerfas - Wikipedia article in Esperanto).

See also Natan Futerfas (photo and brief notes)

<http://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/1zcsk6>

** Banishment from major cities of the USSR.

[Note, Gaidovsky's "However I confirm thankfully the receipt of your package with butter etc." underlined after receipt.]

Flechine56 (16-17).jpg

28.11.1931

[Picture postcard, reproducing "Winter" by Julius von Klever, mostly in Russian, starts in English, with some German. The words "**Poŝta karto**" - Esperanto for "postcard" - added in ink. Addressed to S. Flechine in Berlin. Postmarked Samara. Translated by Szarapow] **Good dear friends, just received your last packages with various newspapers - am very thankful.** I am particularly glad for such pleasant variety in the selection of newspapers and magazines. I also received previous packages, and I am very glad that apparently everything arrived in its entirety and not ripped-up. Finally, I also received both letters from Mollie. Whilst I was preparing to answer the first one, the events have moved on, and such a question as the one about "**Berl[iner] Tag[eblatt]**" does not require a response, unless you will manage to obtain a visa and would return under the Parisian sky. I know from newspapers how hard it is now with entering France, and I wish you success in your efforts. Amongst other things, on Mollie's request I already posted "Izvestia" and other newspapers to Vsev[olod Voline?], and to you I am only writing. Thank you also for the Barcelona address. In the first letter there was again a mention of a **food-package**. If this is

about the first one, it was received back in September, and I have confirmed receipt right then, and asked not to repeat this favour at my address, providing the address of my friend, whose health concerns me much more than my own and who cannot buy the necessary food and medicine even if he had money, and he naturally hardly has any. If you are talking about a new one, then it did not arrive yet. I thank you in advance, and once again I ask to send it to where it is more needed. I only last week received documents which confirm the decision that I wrote to you about (about the end [of exile term]). Once again, I wish you success in you visa efforts and in settling in a new place. [I wish you] work and bread, as well as spiritual courage for idea-driven work!

Flechine56 (4-5).jpg

21.07.1932

[Letter in English. Addressed to S. Flechine in Berlin. Postmarked Samara. Pencil notes

on envelope: “photograph”, “answered on 29.07.[19]32”.]

Dear friends,

A long time passed after my last letter and you may think badly about my silence. But there were some “objective circumstances” as they use to say here often, which prevented me to maintain generally my correspondence.

First of all I was all the spring unemployed. Then during certain period (in May) I got and stayed in such a place, wherefrom the correspondence was impossible generally and especially with you. Now beginning from 1st July I am again out of work.

However, now my matters are relatively in order and I am in position to write you these some lines of greeting.

During last weeks I received from you several rolls with magazines [sic] and newspapers. Each time I was very glad to state, that you remember me. All material for reading that you sent was of certain interest to me. Simultaneously I am mailing to you some Russian newspapers and little foto [sic] of myself.

With best greetings, your Sergey.

Flechine56 (26-27).jpg