

Monument On The Grave Of Boruch-Afroim Rivkin



This photograph was taken in 2003 at the Gomel Jewish cemetery. It was taken by the son of my late brother Semen Rivkin. The photo shows the monument on the grave of my father, who was buried at the Gomel Jewish cemetery. The Russian text contains a mistake: my father's family name is Rivkin. The Doctors' Plot occurred when I was in Gomel. It was terrifying to see these sinister articles in the newspapers, feuillets with anti-Semitic cartoons. But in Gomel there were no pogroms. Soon after Stalin's death, I was permitted to see my husband in the camp. I will never forget the day of Stalin's death: 5th March 1953. At that time I lived in Gomel, I understood nothing

and took his death as a terrible misfortune for the whole country, and for me personally. Gomel was full of black flags. I also cut my black skirt to make a flag. I wrote to my husband, who was in his camp, describing the country in sorrow. After his return he said, 'I was ashamed to read your letter.' In contrast to me, my father seemed to understand a lot more. I remember an episode which took place during the Doctors' Plot. My father usually prayed in his bedroom, but that day he went out to the dining-room in his tallit and said in Yiddish, 'They attacked Jews, but they won't get away with it.' In Yiddish, country means 'melukhe.' And my father repeated with bitterness again and again, 'Such a melukhe!' Mark was a little boy and he asked me, 'Mum, what is grandfather talking about? Who is 'melukhe'?' And I answered, 'She's a bad woman.'