

LIVSHITZ FAMILY COLLECTION 2003.39

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Translations

1. Letter from N. Karpilov in Minsk to Yakov Livshits in Montreal, dated 2 February 1928. In it, Karpilov refers to an unspecified earlier request made to Livshits and in connection with this request (possibly for help in emigrating), he lists the names and ages of his family members.
2. Letter from Raya to a loved one dated 19 February 1928. Mentions that Karpilov wants to go to Canada.
3. Letter from Raya in Minsk to Livshitz but addressed to Katz in New York, Oct 28.
4. Letter from Raya, 17 September 1928 to Yasha. {evidently same recipient of above two letters} Raya laments their separation, discusses plans to join him, saying 280 ruble cost of passport would be a problem. Mentions other persons planning to emigrate.
5. Letter from Raya dated 12 October 1928 to same recipient. Laments separation. Talks about joy of future when they would be together.
6. Letter dated 11 September 1928. Raya continues to lament separation, looks forward to joining recipient in USA.
7. Portions of letter from Raya to Livshits, 1928
8. Letter from Raya to Yakov Livshits, dated 28 September 1928. More of the same.
9. Letter from Raya dated 19 March 1929. More of the same. Says separation has now lasted 2 ½ years. Encloses lock of hair.

4. Dear Brother Jack,

I got your letter. Sorry I didn't answer sooner, but I was waiting for more news to give you. My health is not great. My husband is not home yet. He will be coming very soon.

Now I will write you a bit about Chiana. Chiana was with me for three weeks. She had _____ (possibly an annulment). On the 25th, she left. She got a very nice kimono here. She also wrote to you that she will come with all of us and will get married. The young man was once _____ and now he has a job with them and earns a good living.

Something is very expensive. But I hope it will go well for him. And he seems to be a very fine young man. He is also from Solitsk. When I was at home in the winter [discusses the young man's family—no mother, or stepmother. His father has left Solitsk and lives in Crimea. Also discussion of where the newly married couple will live.]

5. To my dear aunt,

[the letter pleads to the aunt to deal with a loved one who is not communicating with them. She is asked to take the trouble to write about this person and to write also to her niece, Masha. They send hearty greetings to her from their father and all the rest.]

9. To my beloved daughter,

The person who will give you this letter is a neighbor who was not far from us and knows us. Now I will tell you what is happening with both of us. We hope your papers will be ready soon. Please don't forget to take the cards of each of your children and the wife and of the sister and her husband and her children. We will speak when we will happily be together and are close together. From me and your mother who impatiently waits to see you, a heartfelt greeting to my son-in-law who I have not yet met and the rest.

9. Letter to a friend (Yashke) says that he wants to get the address of his brother and sister so he can correspond with them.

10. To my dear and most beloved sister Dinah, First, I and my children, thank God, are in good health. Second, I thank you so much for the money which you sent. May God send you a cure for your health. I thank you for not forgetting your brother. From your brother, Israel.

We send greetings from Isaac and Moses. And now my children want to send you their heartfelt greetings and their wives. [at bottom of page 2, a new letter seems to begin as follows] First, I can write that I and the children, thank God, are in the best of health. A new year has started as we write these pages there has occurred an underground railroad catastrophe. Hundreds of people were killed and many more were wounded. Among them are some that we know.

Says that this past Sabbath someone's mother visited and complained that she had not received mail from her son (Layyer) for eight months, so please tell him to be in touch. She says the other son in America also doesn't write to her. She sent a letter and hasn't heard anything. She thinks he has died. Greetings from your father and to your children.

15. Speaks about a son who can't find work and thus can't make a living.

19. To my dear son Yankel, I received your letter with great pleasure because learned that you and the children are well. I received the money on Wednesday, February 1st, and I thank you very much for that. Tell me the truth—where did you get all the money to send me—since you make very little even when you work. [he then tells what he purchased with the money.] To my dear

sister, Dinah, Thank God my children and I are in the best of health. My dear sister, I thank you for the money. May God help you with your children that you should have “naches” (good things) from them. I wish you all the best. From your brother, Israel. My dear nephews, I thank you for the gift you sent me. May you all enjoy and have pleasure from one another. From your uncle Israel.

22. To my beloved and devoted son Yankel and also your beloved wife, I received your letter with pleasure. Thank God we are well. I'm sorry to hear you say that you are not making a decent living. I ask you my son to write and tell me how you are getting by since you have not worked for a long time. [the mother then proceeds to tell her son about her own problem, including selling off her belongings and moving in with Masha. But then they got a better, larger apartment and she was not permitted to stay with them and no longer had a home. She moves into a terrible little place with very little to eat. She then moves in with friends to improve her situation. And she has serious regrets about the whole situation.]
25. To my dear son Yankel, First we are all in good health, thank God. I got your last letter and was sorry to learn that you have to leave America. Don't think I'm foolish enough to believe that you intended to stay there for only a short time. But I can't do anything about the money. As I told you in my earlier letter, there is still no news about Esther Elkes' address. I got the address from Lipke, but she hasn't received any letters from her in a couple of years. I tried to get the address from someone else but couldn't. [She suggests that he look up someone else in New York who has a factory of some kind where he (her son) might find employment. Your father, Israel Lipshitz, sends you his best. Regards to the children, Chayene, Masha, and _____.
- To my dear son, Yankel, I received your letter on march 14 and we are all in good health. I am pleased to hear that you have _____ in 4 months. Best wishes from your father, Israel, there is no new news for now. Stay well, from your sister, Masha. A hearty greeing to you and the children. To my dear brother [his little brother, Itze Lipshitz, writes to him telling how he spends his day and wishing him good health.]
27. To my dear son, Yankel, We received your letter. We know you are unemployed and are upset that you sent us \$70—we don't want you to do such things. As for news locally, we've had heavy flooding here. The large synagogue was _____. Lots of drowning and many apartments were flooded. To my dear brother, Yankel, we're happy to hear that you are well. How did you spend Passover? How did you celebrate May 1st? Here we had a nice parade. Please write soon. Your sister, Masha.
31. To my dear son Yankel, We are well, thank God. Second, we got your letter. We understand you are moving. That might be a good thing if you are able to find work in Montreal. You ask whether I had any problems with the flood. My answer is that I did not. My apartment is a dry one and a good one. But we have no work to do. [something about university being set up]. I have no more news for you. From your father, Israel. Greetings to you and the children. Masha and Chayene send greetings. Itze also sends greetings. He has transitioned into second grade. To my dear brother Yankel, I thank you for greeting me and for the dollar. From your brother, Itze
43. To my dear son Yankel, We are all well, thank God. Secondly, please excuse me for not answering you about the money you sent me. I couldn't answer because I was away on vacation. When I cam home there were no letters from you for some weeks. Usually when you sent me money a letter comes very soon afterwards but not this last time. I am quite upset about this. [She

expresses concern that something bad has happened to him and pleads with him to write and tell him the truth.]

44. [postmark on envelope and date in letter appear to be April 1931] Dear brother Yankel, Thank God I am in good health and hope you are also. [He tells his brother that he is married and no longer lives at home but is with his father-in-law and mother-in-law, of whom he speaks well. He asks Yankel to send him a picture of himself and his wife.] There follows greetings from the sister to Yankel and a request that he also includes a self-addressed envelope.
45. [postmark on envelope dated 3 June 1929] Dear brother Yankel, [usual greetings tells about flood in their home and they moved in with neighbor for a while. Father is away working in other town for a couple of weeks working in an artel.] Asks for a prompt reply.
46. [postmark envelope, 5 May 1928] To my dear son Yankel, [very difficult to read, poor handwriting] Mother writes and then sister. Discusses price of a piece of matzoh.
47. To my dear son, Happy to read in your last letter that you are going to get married. My best wishes. I thank God that I have lived long enough to see 2 of my children get married, one is you and the other is Masha. Unfortunately, I can't be with you for your wedding. I will imagine that I am with you for your wedding.
48. Envelope postmark July 1928. Joyfully to my beloved son Yankel, we are all well. We got your picture and you look sunburned in it. Excuse me for not answering your last letter promptly, because I was waiting for the pictures of the children to be ready. [The father also writes some words and sends greetings from the other children.]
49. Envelope postmarked 18 August 1928, includes 2 letters
 1. To my most beloved son Yankel, we are well. Sorry I didn't answer your last letter, but a few days earlier I sent you a letter with the pictures of the kids. So now I am answering your last two letters. Thanks for the \$25 you sent. We really could use it because there is no employment or business to be done here. I had to go to an Artel to get some work to do. It's not a very good deal, but at least I'll earn 30 to 40 rubles a month. It bothers me that I have to work so hard in my old age. I didn't work so hard in my youth. Beyond that there isn't much news to tell you.
 2. Dear brother Yankel, I am well. I'm glad you got the pictures, even though they aren't that good. The next ones will be better. Now we are going to go to the collective. And we thank you for the money that you sent us, because we really needed it. Because there's not much work for our father. So he went away to an Artel. Sister Yankel, ask our aunt to send us a picture. No more news here. From your sister, Masha. Hearty greetings from Esther. I send regards to our Aunt. Be well and answer promptly.
50. [letter dated 1932?] Dear brother Yankel, She pleads with him to write to their father more frequently. She commiserates with him because she has learned that he is out of work. She tells him how happy she is to learn that he is getting married soon and wishes she could be at his wedding.
51. To my beloved children, I got your letter. I read with great pleasure about the wedding. May God give you a wonderful life. It pleases me that Dina led you to the Chupa. She has earned that night, my son. You wrote that good friends were at your wedding, but you felt an emptiness. I

shed many tears reading of your empty feeling in your letter. Maybe it just had to be that way. I know you expected a separate special letter from me but you'll have to excuse me because I was all mixed up. I have started working. I am staying with Masha and my health is ok, thank God. Have a long and happy life with your wife. From your father, Israel

[He then proceeds to write to his son's new wife saying he is aware that she doesn't know Yiddish, but since he knows no English, he'll write in Yiddish and her new husband will translate and her husband should write a letter to him from her. He wishes her all the best and sends best wishes to her parents.] [He then writes to his dear sister Dina. He thanks her for leading Yankele to the Chupa.] A letter to my dear brother and to your wife. She asks if he lives on the same street as their aunt. She sends pictures of herself and her husband to him and to their aunt. She says she didn't come out well in the pictures but he should recognize her. From sister and sister-in-law

52. To my dear son, we are all well, etc. I can give you happy news. In the month of Tamus, Chayene will get married to a boy from Slutzk. He is a fine boy. [proceeds to discuss wedding attendees, etc][talks about having to take Masha to the Chupa by himself at her wedding, how sad that was.] Stay well, from your father. [there follows a note to his sister] To my dear sister, Dina, best wishes, etc, from your brother Israel. To my dear brother Yankel, I'm getting married soon to a really nice guy. Please come to my wedding with your girlfriend.

53. [envelope postmark 16 October 1928, includes 2 separate letters]

1. To my beloved son Yankel, we are all well and we got your last letter on October. _____ and the money on the eleventh. [describes some problem getting the money from the bank and then thanks him for the money]. It pleases me that you are in good health but I'm sorry that you must soon go back to Montreal. I'm sending you some pictures. Your mother asks that you tell us all the truth about what is going on with you. Be well. From your father, Israel. The children send you hearty greetings and to my dearest sister Denah, your brother thanks you for your greetings and wishes you all the best. Your brother, Israel. A hearty greeting to Rachel and her husband [sends greetings from and to various others].
2. [letter dated 14 October 1928] To my beloved brother yankel, I read your letter and was happy to hear that you are well. I thank you for the money and for not forgetting about us. No special news from me. Be well and _____ from your sister. Regards from Esther.

54. To my devoted son Yankel, We are all well. I got your letter, but I'm puzzled that you write you have no letter from us. You say you sent out 3 letters and 2 calendars. I got one letter on Yom Kippur Eve and the calendar arrived on Yom Kippur. A second calendar and letter I have not seen. And I answered you promptly, my dear son. You sent me a package for which I thank you, but I haven't received it yet. It can take some weeks to reach us. You ask if you can send us things that we need. Please don't deprive yourself and I hesitate to ask, but it would be good if you could send some shirts. They're very expensive here. This October Masha visited us for some pleasure. She reminded us that it was just five years ago that that bloody day when human blood was shed. We all had a drink and we didn't work for 4 days. Workers arrived from Germany. It was cheerful. You can imagine how it was. Meanwhile, there's no news from Minsk. From your father, Israel

To my dear sister Denah, please write, how are your kids?

Dear brother Yankel, [she tells of visit in October. Surprised in reading his letter to read that he has not received mail from her. Happy to hear that he sent some towels in his package to their father.]

55. [dated 10 April 1928] [This is a very gloomy letter written to friend Yakov Livshitz—not very legible. Speaks of winter in poor health. He awaits Passover, having matzoh and shrouds (wrappings for a dead body) ie, meaning he is expecting to die soon. He refers to his son, daughter-in-law, and their lovely children. He thanks him for the letter which he wrote-speaking of a visit to the writer's son and family.] I can also send you greetings from your father and your older sister. I ran into her in the street.
56. To my dear son Yankel, I was happy to learn that you are in good health. We all thank you for the money. You asked how Passover was for us. We had only a 99% holiday. We had no chametz and no matzoh. May I was at Masha's and spent a week and I read your letter to her. They have moved out from her father-in-law and now have their own apartmet—as small one, but enough for them. The cost of living is lower in Slutz [she gives a series of price comparisons, e.g. a piece of meat costs us 50 rubles but only 15 rubles there, a liter of milk costs them 80 kopeks, costs us 250.] They asked me to stay with them and work there. You say you're getting married around Passover time. Tell us the day so we can celebrate some over here. We have no news here. From your father. Regards to your girlfriend.
To my dear sister Denah, We are all well. Why don't you write to me? I'd like to hear from you how you and your family are doing. May God help you to have good things (naches) from your children. From your brother, Israel. Greetings to and from all.
57. [dated 4 July 1926] This letter, addressed to dear aunt, is a long complaint. It gives a series of steps taken by him and his aunt, over a person starting 8/22/1922 running through February 1926. It involves the steps he and she take to help him come to America. His letter implies that she let him down by not doing enough. It is a bitter letter and signed your nephew, Yankel
59. [dated 12 January 1928] To my dear son, Yankel, I got your letter and was happy to hear that you arrived safely in New York. We are all in good health, but there is no employment (work) for us here. Please visit Esther Elkin, you have her address. In case she has died (gives the names of her children) [He says a letter is enclosed with an address of someone he should visit also a greenhorn, the sister of the person sending the enclosed letter]. From your devoted father, Israel
[He then writes to his sister asking her to answer soon, enclosing his address.]
An enclosed letter on a scrap of paper is addressed to Yacov Livshitz and provides the address of the writer's sister on the back.
61. Includes 2 letters
1. To my dear and devoted son Yankel, we're all well. We're worried because it's now over 2 months since we've heard from you. We know there are many unemployed over there and demonstrations going on so we're worried about you. Tell us the truth. Are you working or not? Greetings from all. From your father, Israel [followed by a brief letter to his sister, Denah]
 2. Dear brother Yankel, (letter dated April 1931) [She tells him she has been ill for a few days. She complains that he sent her a few dollars and she says they don't really need the money. Asks him to write soon.]
62. To my beloved son Yankel, First, I can tell you we're in good health and second, what has caused you to stop writing. It's already four months since I've heard from you. I answered your last letter and don't know what to think. You can imagine what we've been thinking. We finally got a letter from you after such a long wait. [He goes on and on complaining about his not writing.] I

received a letter from Masha [his sister] and she told me she had been in poor health. So I took off from work for a few days and went to see how she was doing. I wrote a letter to Mishke so that he could answer and tell me what was going on with you. I had Masha send you the letter and she asks that you write to her also. Two letters of mine got lost because the addresses were not good, so I ask that your addresses to me and Masha, my dear son. As soon as you get this letter, answer immediately. I'm excited that you are getting married soon. May you have good fortune. From your father, Israel. Give your fiancée hearty greetings from me. [He talks about not having enough work to do and things at the market being very expensive]. Send my heartfelt greetings to my dear sister Dena and Rachel and her husband and greet Isaac and his wife and child.

63. [Envelope addressed to Mas. D. Katz-NYC-USA]

1. To my dear brother Yankel, my health is ok. I am working and getting along. We received the package you sent us. And we have purchased a number of things. We were given _____. I thank you very much for the money. The coat I bought for myself cost _____.

So what can I tell you? I have no news for you at this time. Please stay healthy and fortunate. From your sister, Chayene. I send hearty greetings to your girlfriend, and greetings to our aunt and the children. Greetings from aunt Lipshitz and from everyone. Please answer quickly. Greetings from Itsy. He doesn't have the time to write a letter. Answer soon.

2. To my beloved son Yankel, Thank you for the letter and package. You wrote that you sent me three letters since the last package. I can assure you that I did not get one and I did send you two letters. I don't know if you received them you asked about Masha. She spent some time with me and then went off to Slutsk where she went to the [difficult to follow, since parts of the third and fourth pages were censored] She talks about Masha and her husband and their travels between different cities in his efforts to find work and about how difficult it has become to earn enough to get by.

64. To my son Yankel, The children and I are in good health. We received your letter and thank you for it. We got your letter after the wedding. We celebrated quite well. But it wasn't like the weddings of former times. To celebrate a wedding like it should be must cost at least 1000 rubles. My son, you asked about Raya. We saw her and Rebecca. She lives with her parents. She has a child. Chayene was here for 3 weeks from Slostsk. Now she is shopping for what she needs and also wants me to go off with her. It is difficult to make a living here. Life is a lot easier there. Be well. Your father, Israel

Good luck to you, my dear brother Yankel. I don't know what to write to you. You know I've gotten married. You ask if there was a wedding celebration. We had a small supper. You probably know I'll be going to Slostsk.

Your sister, Chayene

66. To my dear son Yankel, We are all in good health. Secondly, I received your letter. I am sorry that you didn't receive my letter. Don't worry my son, that you can't be here and that you stepped off with your left foot. Things didn't always go well for your father either. You are still young. Luck will still be with you. This too shall pass. Everything at home is still the same. We received everything you sent us. [Something about him not telling about a health problem he was having.] Please write and tell me everything. Your father wishes you good health. Also hearty greetings from the children and Rebecca. Give my best to my dear sister and her children.

67. Dear brother Yankel, First, I can tell you that I and my husband are in good health. I got your letter! How is your health? And are you working? How is life treating you? I can tell you that our father spent some time here with me. He came on May first and is going back today. Tomorrow I'm going to see the doctor. I want to thank you for the \$10 you sent me. I hope you didn't deprive yourself to send it to me. I don't know why Isaac hasn't sent you a letter. Isaac is going to spend the summer with me and he will be able to enjoy it here. As for Chayene, you know why she doesn't write. She works where they make _____. How is our aunt? No news to tell you from here. When I get the money and purchase what I need, then I'll write you another letter. Meanwhile be well and have good fortune. That is what your sister and brother-in-law wish for you. We send greetings to all and greetings from our father, even though he wanted to write some, he got all involved with his traveling. Greetings also to your girlfriend. Answer soon.
68. a. Four page letter in ink—handwriting illegible
b. May much joy and good fortune befall my dear brother and his wife. First, I can tell you that I am in good health. Yankel, you asked me how my husband is doing. I can tell you that previously he was a butcher and now he is an agent. He gets 150 a month for his work and we get by. We haven't written you a letter for a while because there is no paper here. I end this letter wishing you continued good health and good fortune. Regards from my husband. Answer soon. My address is _____.
69. To my dear brother, we're all okay. Things are not bad. How are things with you? How are you and your wife doing? How is our aunt and her kids? I'm sending you a _____ (photo?) which I had made a year ago—it didn't come out too well. I'll try to send you a better one. I end this letter wishing you continued good health and good fortune. Your sister and brother-in-law. Hearty greetings from my husband. Hearty greetings to your wife. Regards to our aunt and her kids. Answer soon.
70. [this is the beginning of another letter] To my dear children, I am well. I got your letter and was happy to hear you are both well. I worry about what you send me, my dear son. I thank you for the money. May God give you the health to enable you to earn. Isaac and I went to visit Masha—we stayed in another apartment. Can't follow the rest.
71. Letter folded and illegible.
72. To my devoted son, Yankel. The children and I are in good health. I received your letter and the pictures on the Sabbath the 13th. I thank you for the letter and the pictures. [The letter is hard to follow but makes it clear that they need help (money) to provide for the children, Masha and Chayene.]
73. Dear brother Yankel, I got your letter and am answering. How is your health? I have no news. My husband is working now in another shtetl. Itzi was staying with me. He is very _____ and is not afraid of anyone. And he started to get naughty with me. However, he is not healthier than I. You write that our father has very few pleasures. Well, I too have very few pleasures from him and God only know how he will turn out. Chayene will visit me in about 5 to 10 days. That is my news. I thank you for the money. I bought a lovely coat. When my husband returns we'll send you a picture. How is our aunt and the others? I hope for good news. I hope for good news about Chayene. Father wrote you that she is getting married. From Masha.

74. Letter from Father to Yankel. Usual family stuff.
75. [postmark 3 September 1930] Letter to my dear son, letter to my dear brother Yankel.
76. [postmark 19 September 1932] letter to my dear son (family stuff). Complains of life being very hard and not having any money to purchase necessities at the market. No sugar available at all, so can't drink even some tea. Can't get any meat. Please tell me the truth as to whether you are working on if you are going hungry. Expresses fear that they will never see their son again (we are forever to be separated). From your father, Israel
77. [postmark 20 March 1929]
78. 1. Mostly in Yiddish, dated 19 March 1929; Dear brother Yankel, from sister Masha. Usual family stuff
79. 2. letter to my dear son Yankel (no date), all the Jews were chased out of the synagogue while they were praying. Also describes beatings of the Jews and tearing up of the Torah scroll. And also a general demonstration of all the workers, both Jews and Russians. She seems proud that the Jewish workers did as well as the non-Jews in the demonstrations. From your father, Israel
80. 3. To my dearest sister Dena, usual family stuff
77. To my dear son Yankel, Thanks him for the money he sent. Then complaints of the difficulty of getting food—long waits for a bit of bread. They have shut down a certain bakery because they can't get any flour. You don't have to be afraid of going on the street in the middle of the night now. Lots of people sleeping in the streets, others on the streets teasing and others singing—so, do you think one has to be afraid to go on the street at night? Women and children roam the streets for days and the police don't even ask them where they are going. Be well. Your father wishes you the best and regards from Chayene, Masha, and Itzi. My best to Dina and the children and Rachel and her husband.
78. [dated Jan. 30, 1928] To my dear son Yankel, All is well with us. We received your letter and read it with pleasure. I am troubled by only one thing that Washington is taking so long with the visa. Sorry I didn't answer sooner, but I was waiting to get the cards you said Rachel had sent out. Meanwhile, your second letter arrived, but not, as yet, the cards. I guess I have to be patient to wait for the cards. These are critical times here at home. There is no work for us here. You asked how I knew that you were in America. [translator can't make sense of the rest of the letter.]
79. [dated Nov. 27, 1928] To my beloved son Yankel, The children and I are in the best of health. Also I received your letter with the money for which we thank you and may God help you. I'm only sorry that you departed from America, and that you have to be again in a foreign country. Well, it can't be helped. Don't worry, my son, God will help you in your health and to prosper. Please write and tell me if you are in the same circumstances as you have been in Montreal, that is, the first of the second one. Yes, I do. I don't have much choice. [rest of the letter is not clear, but it has to do with the difficulty of doing his work profitably because of leather shortage in making shoes.]

81. [envelope contains a four page letter and a separate sheet] 1. To my beloved brother Yankel [this letter is composed of one of the four pages plus the separate page] It complains about the difficult economic times they are suffering and sends Yankel her address for future mailings. From his sister, Chayene. 2. [this letter consists of 2 of the 4 page item]: To my dear brother Yankel, First, we are in good health. We got your letter and please forgive me for not promptly answering because I was waiting for father to come visit so I could write to you more news. Father came, but otherwise there is not any news. They are both with me. We got your letter in which you tell us of your coming marriage. We wish we could come to the wedding but that's not possible. But we hope you and your wife will have a happy life together. You remember dear brother, when you left us we were little girls. Well, now we are grown women. Time passes and the years fly by. Life is difficult here. Everything is very expensive and we can't get what we need. But we are not the only ones suffering. And we shouldn't complain. You ask about our father. He is like a big child. Runs around the streets and does whatever he wants to. Please be well and have a good life with your wife. Best regards to our Aunt. Answer soon.
82. [dated Sept. 15, 1928]To my dear son Yankel, we are all well, etc. Why didn't you write for such a long time? We wanted to send a telegram because we heard there was a great underground catastrophe in America in which thousands perished. You ask about my work in the Artel. I work there 8 hours [some confusion about working on Sabbath and Sundays—unclear]. Usual family stuff, greetings to all.
83. [dated April 17, 1928] To my much loved sister Dinah, we are all well. Thanks for your letter and for the money you sent. I was upset to hear about your health problem and that you are suffering so much. Forgive me for not answering sooner. First, we had the Passover preparations and second, there was a flood and our apartment was inundated. He says he and his kids are currently in good health and thanks for the money she sent him.
84. To my dear children, we were happy to get your to hear about your good health. Excuse me for taking so long to answer [excuse is apparently is that the sons letter said they had sent out a packet—and the answer was delayed until they received the packet]. Now let me thank you. He tells of the extreme difficulties that their sister Chayene is experiencing—she even lacks for clothing. But now she has purchased a home for 2000 rubles—and it will cost another 3000 rubles if not more! She hasn't moved in because it is still being renovated and won't be ready until sometime this summer. She has 2 costumes, one dark navy blue and the other a brown one. I have no special news. I feel well, Your father. [the second page of the letter:] To my dear sister Dinah, I hope you are well. They tell me you shared in sending us the packet—and so I thank you for that. I only regret that you are depriving yourselves by sending these packets to us. Usual greetings and regards.
85. To my dear children, usual proclamations, health, etc. Your last letter you requested a birth certificate and a _____. He thinks he can get the _____ when he will be in Minsk in a few weeks. You asked about how much Masha's home cost. So far, it's over 6000. Greetings to and from all.
86. [contains 2 letters, one barely legible, which is addressed:] To my dear children, It seems to complain about their not expressing any concern about not receiving letters from him for a long period. The second letter is longer and is addressed to my dear children. Letter starts with a bitter diatribe against his some for some assumed insult in a previous letter, and goes on

bitterly for almost 2 full pages accusing his son for laughing off his father and trying to get his father to be less devoted to him. Towards end of second page the father seems to get control of his anger and reverts to a more normal tone, asking what news he has and how he and Celia are doing, and signs off at bottom of second page and greetings to and from all. On third page, he addresses to his dear sister, Asks about her and her children and for what news she may have.

90. To my dear children, I got your letter and am pleased that Celia is getting close to the 9th month. May God make it sweet and easy for her. You wrote that she is in the 9th month and it has been 17 days since you sent your letter and 4 days since I sent my answer, so maybe by this time this letter gets there she will have produced a little boy or girl. Whatever it may be, it should be healthy and have a long life. How is your health and what other news do you have. I have no news to report. As for my health, I feel all right. They say that if Celia gives birth to a girl you will give her a name for the young aunt and that would be okay. For a boy also. Chayene gave a name to her son after the aunt. You can tell Celia that would be my wish. My son, it's already 13 years since you left me for that faraway land. Usual greetings to and from all family—from your father.
91. [postmarked May 18, 1936] To my dear children, Father writes he is pleased to get letter and to hear about the nice furniture his son has bought. Something serious and bad has happened to Chayene after Passover. Something with blood and was left barely keeping alive. It happened during the night before they could get help. It was in Slutsk. Now, thank God, she is in Falkash and finally back in good health. Please write and be well. Usual greetings. From your father. Answer soon.
92. To my dear children, I'm happy to hear that you purchased bedroom furniture you bought and what it cost. I am quite interested in knowing about these things. We had a mixed winter. For half the winter we had rain and very little snow but then there were severe cold in Shevat until just before Purim. There was no road through the snow for the whole winter. I don't have any other news. I am not working because I don't have a job. Usual greetings.
93. To my dear children, he expresses compassion for his son's suffering, but it's not clear what the son is suffering from. He says he is feeling okay for his health. He says Itzi has gone away to Koridy to learn a trade. He works during the days and earns 120 rubles a month. He pays 20 a month for a room, 3 rubles a day or more for eating. I send him small packets. I don't have any other news. My son, you asked about Rebecca. How do they live on 150 rubles a month? As for what she earns, I can tell you she does not work every day. Her work is occasional. As for us going to Minsk, that's very unlikely. They are probably gone from Minsk and are most likely in Smolensk for the years of their old age. I wrote also that I left them with a broken heart seeing how poor and lonesome they are. If Dena wants to send them a few dollars, it would be better if she sent a packet—not foodstuffs but of cheap merchandise which they can sell and get more out of it. I had a letter from him last week and she writes that her health is not good, and I can't be of any help to them. I'll end my writing here. Usual greetings, from your father Israel. Greetings from Masha—she is not in good health.
94. To my dear son Yankel, Glad to receive your last letter, etc. You say you are surprised at how expensive things are here. You ask how much he has to work to earn 400 rubles. He has to work more than 2 months. How is your health? And how is Celia? I'm not pleased to hear that you

have no news for me. My health is good. I too have no news. You ask about Dena. She was not well. Now she's so-so. In three weeks, I'm going to Smolensk to see Rebecca and to see how she is doing health-wise and how she is living. I would take a leave (vacation) for that but since they sent little Abraham away to camp for a month to Minsk and since we can't leave Chayene alone with 2 small children. I'll end here. Best wishes from your father Israel and hearty greetings to Celia.

To my dear brother and also to your wife. We are all well. No news to report. Mishka is working, but it's very hard to make a living. We hope there will be more work in the winter. How is your health and are you working? And how is life treating you? How is your wife doing? No other news. Be well. Your sister, Masha.

Hearty greetings from your husband and from my daughter Shashele and from my son. Answer soon.

Greetings to your wife and to our aunt. To my dear brother, we're all well. We got your letter a week ago and we thank you. We're living not too badly. I'm already a mother of 2 children. My son is not a bad kid and my daughter is the same. Little Abraham has gone to camp for a month in Minsk. Greetings, etc.

95. [dated August 11, 1936]: Letter from Israel to his son Yankel and daughter-in-law Celia, He addresses Celia separately at one point and describes the policy of the Soviet government paying subsidies to families for having more children.

96. To my dear children, usual greetings, etc. I'm still working but I can't work too fast. [He refers to the _____ workers—very productive workers under Soviet system where ever-higher output quotas are demanded. He says he can't produce at the required number of that system.] It's really for the younger workers—not me. My son, you asked about the renovation. It is quite fine. We now have electricity and radio. Little Abraham is working and makes a living. How are you and Celia doing? Any good news? Are you working and making a living easily or slaving away? Tell me everything. I'd like to know how my child in that wonderful land is living. The radio is on from 6 am to 12 at night. All day long we get the news of the whole world. Please write to me about everything. I'm worried that Dena hasn't any mail from Rebecca. He continues about some relatives they haven't heard from and then signs off from his son and addresses rest of the third page to his sister Dena.

97. To my dear sister, Dena, For Masha, I thank you very much for the money. Since there was no letter, I didn't know who to thank. Now I know from Yankel's letter that you sent the 50 dollars with Rachel. May God help you so that you may like to see your grandchildren married. Greetings to all.

98. [postmarked Oct. 12, 1927] To my dear son Yankel, first I can tell you that I and the children are in good health. Second, I was happy to hear from you and get your picture, but you look quite sad in it. Is it that you aren't working? A couple of weeks ago Raye visited me and told that she got a letter from you in which you told her that you are unemployed and you didn't mention it to me. I'm upset with you for not telling me. What are you living on? You asked about our apartment. I sent you the address in an earlier letter. I am unemployed and am struggling to get by. Last Thursday around 7-8 in the evening [can't figure this out]. It has been very cold here, but not quite as bad as just before Hanukkah. No more news to write. Be well. From your father. Greetings from various people. [on page 4, the father relates about not getting any mail from his sister. He asks Yankel to ask her why she hasn't written to him.]

99. My dear son, Yankel, We are all well and we received the money you sent a few days before the letter—on October 2nd. I'm answering you now for both and I thank you very much. May God help you with your health and your work my dear son. I'm afraid you have gotten quite lazy about writing to me and it's very upsetting to hear from you so rarely. Most of the letter is a plea that the son should write to him regularly.
100. To my dear children, we received your letter and package and we thank you for everything. I'm very happy with all that you sent, but I have just one question I'd like you to answer. Why is there nothing about Elke's wife with the younger child? Did something happen to them? I see in the picture Itzie with the older boy, but his wife isn't there. We are all concerned and don't know what to think. So please let us know. How is your health and what news do you have? I have no news and I am in good health. You were concerned about Itzie and about his going away to Baresov to study. You can stop worrying about him. He has been home for the last month after spending 2 months in Baresov, he couldn't stay there any longer. He ran up a debt for me of 200 rubles. He is working now, but I haven't seen any money from it, but I hope to have paid off the debt after the winter. I don't like to write about it. Your father, Israel. Hearty greetings to Celia. Greetings from Chayene and her husband and children. Mashe and Chayene would have written you a letter, but they have no news. Regards from Mashe and her husband. Regards from all. [On backside of page is a letter from Israel to his sister Dena. He thanks her for sending a letter with a picture, but swears that he did not recognize her. Usual stuff, greetings, etc]
101. To my dear children, I got your letter and am happy to learn you are both well. My son, you write that you don't know what to think about not hearing from me for a long time. [Lots of complaints about son night writing regularly.] Talks about Mashe's little son who yells a lot. He tells his son what sorts of things to send him in packages—no foodstuffs, etc.
102. To my dear children, Thanks for your short letter. I wonder why you haven't written to me for such a long time. [Constant complaints about son not writing enough.]
103. To my dear children, I got your letter—happy to hear you are both well. My health is okay. As for the news you wrote that Rachel bought a home. I hope she will enjoy it (some discussion of sending 800 rubles and discussion of exchange rate of 5 rubles to the dollar. Not clear as to who is sending the money and question of what exchange rate is in America.) What kind of news do you have? I hope we'll have some cheerful news very soon from Chayene, but I haven't heard any such news from you. Your younger sister Masha has 2—may they live long and be well, and Chayene will also soon have two, but you...(he speaks about a grandchild dancing in his hands and sends greetings to Celia and from Chayene and Masha and says he got a letter from Dina and Rebecca, then proceeds to write a letter to his sister Dena.) (from your father, Israel) To my beloved sister Dina, How is your health? The greeting that Yankel gave me from you did not please me. Why aren't you seeing your children? Are you not well enough to see them? It isn't right for your children? Are you not well enough to see them? It isn't right for your kids not to see you just because you are older and not well. (He laments not being able to see her and gives her some news about Malke the fat one who lived with a husband for 5 years in Slutsk and then divorced him and left for Minsk and took a second husband. They fought and she struck him in the head and killed him. What do you think of that? Please answer soon.
104. To my dear children, Usual greetings, how are you, etc? I have some very hard news. On August 2nd, they took away Masha's husband Abraham and sent him to the front. We have heard not a

single word from Masha. He is quite weak in health. Masha has become a wreck. She has no strength to go on. I visit her after work a bit to cheer her up. I sit and see her with a broken heart and her small children and they ask will my daddy come home tomorrow? I hardly have the strength to bear it. There have been again letters from Abraham. He is quite deep in Poland. He is having a hard time, with his poor health. He finds himself among those Polish murderers. On August 30, I got a letter from Itzie that I should not write to him anymore because they are sending him to the front. God only know what will be with him.

105. [Includes 2 letters, one in pencil, one in ink]. [pencil letter]: To my dear son: [difficult to make out. Discusses debt that concerning his relationship with his father-in-law and difficult in being unable to get an apartment. He asks his son to tell him what his line of work is.] To my dear brother (from his sister) she discusses the house she purchased which she says cost only 1800 rubles, or the equivalent of \$40. She says she has a good handle on the debt and is not asking him for any money. Ends with usual greetings and regards.

Ink letter: Much happiness to my dear brother and his wife (from sister Masha): Masha complains about her sister Chayene saying that she should not have borrowed so much money from strangers to purchase the house. Masha tells her brother not to feel heartbroken about their sister Chayene's situation, sends the usual greetings and asks him to send her a separate letter and provides her address for that purpose.

106. [dated March 1929] To my dear son, Usual stuff. Thanks him for money he sent. No special news. TO my dear sister, also usual stuff, thanks her for money sent.

108. [postmarked 17 April 1929] To my beloved son Yankel, usual greetings, etc. Talks about high cost of living in Minsk, says "Minsk has become impossible." Talks about several synagogues at various locations. He thanks Yankel for the money he sent. Talks about ruble-dollar exchange rate—not clear what it is—but some difficulties with exchanging apparently.

112. To my dear children, usual greetings. Thanks for the packet and for the two pieces of material you included. I sold them and got 300 rubles for them. And the brown cloth we used to make dresses and topcoats for Masha and Chayene. Please don't be angry with me, my son, for complaining about no clothing being in your last packet. As you see, it worked out well. He asks how he and his wife celebrated Passover. He asks about the new radio and about certain demonstrations reported in the news and whether his son took part in them. Concerning Rebecca, I have gotten two letters and she is well. Ends with usual regards and greetings.

113. To my dear children, usual greetings, etc. I got your letter and read it with great pleasure. Concerning your question about the birth certificate, I went to Minsk. I was told that you can demand a birth certificate through the consul. You wrote that I once got a birth certificate for Rachel—I don't remember that. I spent three weeks [not clear where] and gained eight pounds. You ask if that cost me any money. No. We Russian workers have this as a privilege. The government paid for my quarters 260 rubles and gave me vacation pay of 35 rubles. In no country in the world do the workers have such privileges as in the Soviet Union. When workers are sick here, they get paid. When a woman worker becomes pregnant, she gets 4 months vacation, 2 months before and 2 months after the birth. I can tell you that Masha is doing well. She has her own house and I'm so pleased that the daughter of Israel, the poor shoemaker, is doing so well. Who would have thought that my own children would ever own their own houses? I also want to write to you about Itzie. They have decided to train him as a soldier. They

sent him away to Gorky, that is Nizhmy Novgorod, about a month ago. He is going to school there and learning to be a commander. What do you say to that! You ask about your brothers-in-law. Although they're older, they're still doing the same work and haven't gone anywhere. It has been very hot here. You wrote that Rachel has had a son—may he be well. What's his name? Who does he look like? That's about all my news. Best regards to my sister. From, your father.

114. [dated 1934, two letters are included]

1. To my dear children, [can't make sense of this letter]
2. May joy and good luck come to my beloved brother and sister. First, I have no news for you. My husband is employed a little bit and we're barely eking out a living. [someone is reported as being very pale] and Abraham has been in the camp for a month.

That's about all I can write. From your sister, brother, and nephews. Greetings to all. Answer soon.

115. To my dear children, may you and your wife Celia be well. I have good news. Chayene now has a six-week old son. The bris was very nice. Masha and Mishka were the godparents. In the evening about thirty men and women got together and we celebrated until 2 am. Such a bris as Chayene made, may you be able to make someday.

117. [two separate letters]

1. To my dear children, I got your last letter and was glad to hear that you are well. You ask me to forgive you for not answering my letter promptly. We'll I've forgiven you more than once [he proceeds to detail his son's slow answers and berates him for his laxity.] [He speaks of Itzie needing very little money—very confusing. Speaks of Itzie's foolishness and his laziness and his late hours. He keeps complaining about Itzie.]

I may go to Minsk for 6 months. Chayene's husband was in Minsk for a month. I don't have more news. Be well and write soon. Greetings to your wife Celia. Also the kids send greetings—Masha, Chayene, and Itzie.

2. I forgot to mention that we celebrated your birthday a few days ago [letter is not clear].

118. Dear beloved children, I am well and I received your letter with the money. I thank you very much for the money. We are due congratulations. Chayene had a daughter. Her name is Chaba. My dear son, I am now the grandfather of two grandchildren and you are an uncle. [he goes on speaking well of his grandchild and expresses the hope that he will live to see such wonderful grandchildren from his son.] He complains about his more distant grandchildren and their not being interested in seeing him. He then proceeds to complain about his son, Itzie, saying he is not a good person and calling him an idiot who refuses to study and learn anything. He ends letter to his son, and on same page writes to his sister. To my dear sister Denah, thanks for the money. May God grant you good health. You have driven away my hunger. I don't have any news for you. Regards from, etc.

119. [dated 2 May 1934] To my dear son Yankel, I got your letter and wonder why it took you more than two months to answer my letter. You write that you are working just a little bit so it must be hard for you to make a living. I got the 30 dollars during the off-week of Passover and I thank you greatly for the money. May God grant you good health and good things for your children. Yankel, please tell me the truth. Did Auntie send me the last money by depriving herself? You ask about my health. I don't feel too badly. And about Itzie—the fact that he is a carpenter is his own fault. He doesn't want to learn. Maybe he will someday become a better person. Excuse the short letter, from your father, Israel. Hearty greetings to Celia and regards from Itzie.

To my dear sister Denah, Thank you so much for the money you sent. May God grant you good health and good things from your children and grandchildren. I had a letter from Rebecca a couple of weeks ago. Stay well, from your brother Israel. Greetings from all the kids.

Best to my dear brother and also to his wife. I can tell you that we are all right. Many thanks for your letter. How are you and what news do you have? My daughter was very sick but is better now. You ask about our father. He is staying with me. I end my letter wishing you good health, from me, Masha, and from my husband. My daughter sends you a kiss from afar. Best wishes to auntie and to your wife.

120. [dated January 1934 from Smolensk] Much joy and happiness to my dear sister Denah, please forgive me for not writing for a while. I am now in a strange city. Life is very hard here. Complains about difficulty of life in the new city and pleads that she send him money. Second page of letter is addressed to his nephew and niece. He complains about his suffering and asks for help. Says that he may starve to death if help is not sent.

129. To my dear children, I got your letter and thank you for it. How is your health and what news do you have? [he seems to ask for forgiveness for something he wrote in earlier letters—hard to figure out] My son, you say that life has not been very good for you. I understand that in America many people are unemployed. I wasn't asking you for help in my last letter. Thank God, I have enough to live on. As they say, my son, in youth one eats bones and in old age, one eats meat. Don't worry about my last letter. You write that Celia is still weak and that in a few weeks you will see a specialist to find out if she can still become pregnant. If she has pains, you have to see to it that she does not become pregnant. I had a letter from Itzie before Passover and I sent him 30 rubles. I'm sure I'll have to send him more. Meanwhile, I've had a letter from Rebecca in which she told me that Itzie is not unemployed. I've already sent him 30 rubles. It's such a pity. [something about Passover having cost him another 75 rubles, so I could not send him any more] My health is all right. Be well. Greetings to Celia—tell her to be well and cheerful. Greetings from all, from Chayene and her husband and kids and from Masha and her husband and kids. And greetings to my dear sister Denah and all her kids. From your father.

130. May my dear brother have much joy and also your wife. First off, I can tell you that my husband and I and all our kids are well. I don't know what to say to you because your letter gave me a lot of heartache. My first concern is what is the meaning of your not sending a greeting from Celia. Has anything happened? You must tell me the whole truth. [She proceeds to tell him not to concern himself about their father being able to support himself. She assures him that all is well with their father and asks that he write soon.] From your sister, Masha.

131. [dated 26 January ?] To my dear children, I got your last letter on Jan. 23. I'm sorry to have caused you such pain. He expresses concern about Itzie, saying that he (Itzie) had been in Estonia and Latvia and is now in Finland. He received a letter from Itzie saying he is on the front line. Expresses much concern about Itzie and hopes that he will come home safely. Usual chit-chat and greetings to and from. From your father. He then follows with a brief note to his sister—greetings, etc.

132. Letter from Israel to Yankel, lots of sarcasm apparently in use of Russian title preceding surname "Guspodin" with their last name, "Livshitz." Usual chit-chat and greetings to and from. Also, at the end of the letter the question is asked is it time true that a five-year-old girl in American gave birth to a child?

133. [two letters]

1. To my dear children, I got the sense from your last letter that are very angry with me, but I really don't know why? You say I wrote very cruel words, but I don't understand that. Also, we, the children and I, all are in need of nothing. We have plenty to live on. So, it's stilly for you to feel a grudge against me. I didn't ask you to send me a packet before, and I'm not making such a request now either. In your whole letter, you never wrote the word "father." I don't know how to call my son. [something about a card] Greetings to and from all. Answer soon.
2. Heartfelt greetings to my dear brother and also to your wife. I read your letter with great joy hearing that you are all well. We are all in good health. How is Celia? You can see in a picture your father our father with his grandchildren. May both of you stay well and healthy. From sister Masha. Greetings from my husband and children. Also greetings from Chayene and her children. Greetings to our aunt and Rachel and her family from Isaak and all the others. She is happy with [unclear]

134. To my beloved children, In our last letter we wrote of our concerns about Masha's husband. We have heard from a friend of his as well as from him and he is in good health. He says where he is located, 6-700 meters from Estonia, but can't provide an address. Some discussion of possible war with Poland and USSR. Talks about various places in Poland, Brest-Litovsk, Bialystok, and the Bolsheviks don't expect what they encountered there, near Estonia. Mentions also made of Hitler on last line of first page of this letter. Talks about Hitler and the Fascists beating against the Jews and women and children cutting up their bellies and hung them up, and buried Jews—men and women alive. All mention of war, Hitler, Fascists is as reported in letter he received from Masha's husband. His own letter then reverts to usual stuff about health and greetings to all and from all.

135. [postmarked 12 June 1941] Contains 2 separate pages, a long and short one, comprising a single letter:

1. To my dear children, I got your letter of March 25th on May 7th and noted with great joy the arrival of my grandchild. Excuse me for not answering sooner—but we've had a terrible tragedy here in our household. Chayene's little boy Laybalch was extremely ill. Chayene stayed with him in _____ for nine days and he died. He died on Friday when we blessed the new month Sivan. We buried him on Sunday a week before _____. What can I tell you. I think constantly of that child. If you only could have seen what a child he was. I can't even begin to describe his good looks. He was exceptional. He used to come to me as soon as I came home from work or when I woke up and get into my arms and not want to go to anyone else. When I left for work he would cry. [This continues.] Now, concerning Abram there are also serious problems. The letter continues to describe a problem of Abram being in custody and then having to make payments of thousands of rubles to possibly be able to purchase his freedom. He then describes the difficult working conditions and that despite his desire to stop working he is being forced to continue work and is held to a rigid time schedule. He once left a half hour early and his pay was cut 25% for several months. He closes with greetings from the family members and good wishes to his son and daughter-in-law and new grandchild.

136. [dated 10 November 1935] Letters from Chayene and Masha, complaining of hard times. Their husbands have no work and conditions are not good. Family health seems to be okay.

- 138 [dated 8 May 1935] Seems to be a very sarcastic letter from Israel to his son, complaining that he has not written for some time and has not sent the money he said he would send.
139. [dated 11 December 1934, two letters]
1. Much joy to my brother and his wife. First, I can tell you we are all well. We got your letter and thank you for greeting us. It's quite cold here, but no snow. [She complains about difficult times and hard work and sends greetings to all and from all. She hopes for better times.] Starts with a letter to his daughter from Israel in which he complains that her last letter was too short and he wishes she would write him a letter "more than four words long." Next part of page is addressed to his dear and beloved sister Denah. He complains that she hasn't said anything about her and her family's health and wants her to write to him about that.
 2. To my dear children, I got your letter and thank you for it and for the money. I didn't write sooner because the money arrived long after the letter and I didn't have an address. Thank God my health is okay. But I have no work. [He talks about what he gets for the American dollar his son sends him and also that his daughter-in-law translate her English message to him into Yiddish. He also complains about not understanding his son's handwriting.
141. [dated 30 May 1939] To my dear children, My son, your last letter advises me to move to Minsk, but it's very hard to get an apartment there. He tells of other people who tried to move out of Slutsk and had difficulties, and so no move to Minsk is determined.
143. [two letters included]
- To my dear children, I was happy to receive your letter and to learn of your good health. A day later I received the money order. I thank you a lot for the money. May God bless you for not forgetting about me, my son. You ask if I am working. I am not. And you know I'm not lazy if I have work to do. As for going to Minsk, I really don't know about that. I figure that things might be better for me and Itzie in Minsk. I think that I may have a chance to get an apartment in Minsk and in Slutsk I can no longer stay with my children. As you know, Itzie and I are now staying with Masha. _____ (Masha's husband) has said that he wants them to move into a room in his father's house, so there won't be any room for me there, so I have to leave them. He then goes into a long allegorical story about how God created a horse, a cow, and a dog, and then a human and winds it up saying he has lived many years of his life like a horse or a dog but can't realize what, if anything, he has accomplished in his life. He then addresses a letter to his sister and commiserates with her about her husband having left her. Finally, last half of 4th page is not in Yiddish.
2. One from sister (doesn't say which one) to her brother Yankel. She thanks him for his letter and for the money he sent, saying that the money really saved them. She explains that her husband is a decent guy but earns very little money and can't manage to make a living. Another included letter is to my dear brother. She also thanks him for the money he sent and indicates that they are struggling and not making a good living. She complains that their father, after having lived with her for a long time now must live with her sister, Chayene. She complains that she has suffered a great deal and asks him not to write in his next letter about their father since she doesn't want their father to know what she has written about him.
144. [dated 20 August 1935] Letter is addressed to dear sister and son and his dear wife. First, we are all in good health. Further, we were sure, from the letter you wrote to your aunt Lifseh, Dena, that you were asking about the well-being of all of us. Further, you asked how Masha and Chayene _____. They have very honest husbands. The letter goes on at length giving the statuses of

various family members and asking for monetary help and for the address of a brother who did not return and reply to their letters. Signed by your sister's child, Rachel.

147. Addressed to my dear children, I enjoyed your letter, but I'm wondering why you didn't write in such a long time. It has been over 2 months in which I received no letter from you. In the meantime, I have become a grandfather and you an uncle. Masha had a daughter. [the letter is barely legible. It appears that the father tells the son that he has remarried in his old age, but doesn't say much about his new wife.]
148. May much joy reach my beloved brother and the same to his wife. First, I want to thank you for your letter and second, we're not in bad health. So, after all, Yankel, you have finally reached the stage of becoming an uncle. I had her (the child). I wanted to write to you but we were waiting for a letter from you. If you could only see this little girl. She is very beautiful. Things have gotten very bad here. Things are extremely expensive, but so far my husband is still working. I gather that things are also not good with you. Greetings from my husband and from our father. From your sister, Masha. Answer soon.
150. [dated 1934?] I wish much joy and happiness to my beloved sister and your children. We received the \$30 you sent and I promptly wrote and thanked you and we then received another letter from you and again promptly answered and then wrote you several letters without any answer. So I ask you, dear sister, if you have received my letter please answer promptly and let me know how you and your children are. We got the \$30 you sent and wanted to purchase a house and harness but by the time we got around to it, there was no money left. But Itzie finally got a job and he makes 100 rubles a month, that is in your money \$2.50, so you can imagine how one can live on that money, with an apartment and other expenses. So we took your money and lived on it for a while. There is no other news, dear sister. Excuse the long wait between letters from me because there are few Jews in Smolensk, so I have no one to write for me. But now I am in Minsk, so I am writing you a letter.
152. Much joy to my beloved brother and also to your wife. To start, I can report that I, my husband, and child are in the best of health. I read your letter happily to learn of your good health. She says something about her husband and times are not very good here. She says that her daughter is beautiful and bright. She writes that about Rivka (Rebecca), who her brother had inquired about, is still alive, but not doing as well as earlier and that she (Rebecca) didn't want to take an interest in them. And how are things with you, Mr. Yankel? Did you attend the wedding of Moshe's daughter or not? She ends with greetings to your wife and our aunt, and answer soon. [2nd side of the page starts a new letter from a different person] My beloved brother, First of all, we are in good health. Second, our daughter had become a good girl. She was very small at first, because things were very bad with us. Usual greetings and request for a speedy reply. From your sister, Chayene Mechanik
153. Letter addressed to my dear children. The letter mostly discusses his efforts to find out why Rebecca has not answered the aunt's letters and hasn't acknowledged receipt of money that was sent to her. He goes to Minsk to find out what the situation is and discovers that a letter was sent about a month ago, but it must have been lost—but is not certain. He says he is currently unemployed. Talks about the lack of snow and about Itzie, who has gone off to work with a carpenter, earning 15 rubles a month. He writes that he is pleased to have Itzie working and not running around aimlessly. Signs with usual greetings—from your father, Israel. He asks

what business his son's father-in-law is in and mentions that Moshe's daughter got married. Then addresses a brief letter to his sister Denah, asks after her health and that of her children.

155. [dated 1934?] Letter addressed to my beloved sister Denah and her children. Says he received the \$10 she sent and has already promptly answered and thanked her and sent a number of letters and has not heard back from her. He pleads with her to write so he can learn how she and her kids are. He tells her he earns no money and is suffering from hunger. Repeated pleas for mercy and for money to help them survive.

19 February 1928

Letter from N. Karpilov in Minsk to Yakov Livshits in Montreal

Dear friend Yakov,

I am the one about whom Raya wrote you. Although we haven't received an answer from you about whether you agree, I decided to write you about whom you should go about getting visa sponsorship. I am doing this so as not to waste any time in correspondence and it's desirable to move as fast as possible. Concerning the circumstances, Raya has probably written you what I have agreed to.

Concerning the sponsorships, I would like to have them apply to the entire family, which is composed of four persons, whom I will list in detail. But if this is not possible, then at least I would like sponsorship for myself. Here is a list of my family members, including myself:

Nevukh Efroimovich Karpilov, 43
Tauba Moyseyevna Karpilova, wife, 38
Tauba Nevukhov Karpilov, son, 4
Efroim Nevukhov Karpilov, son, 3

My profession is leatherworking—the making of handbags, wallets, etc.

My friend, I ask you to begin quickly the process of getting visa sponsorship. There is a saying: time is money. Don't waste time. Keep us informed. Also write to me about Moysey Dvorkin and what he thinks in regard to his wife Fanya.

11 September 1928

Letter from Raya to Yakov

Says there has been no letter from him for 12 days. Says his sister has not heard from him for 3 weeks.

Today they have been apart 2 years—a time of tears, unhappiness, and suffering. Recalls when she first met Yakov. Now lives on hope for the future.

Says that the daughter of Burkovskiy “has already arrived” but she hasn't talk to her yet. Asks about the weather in New York. Asks Yakov what he thinks about work in Canada. Has he been able to get much work? Asks about news from Moysey. Says Fanya received a letter from Moysey recently,

but there was nothing in it about her trip. But Moysey sent her money; he often sends Fanya money, even though he doesn't write to her much.

Raya says she's going to the theater in the evening to see a Yiddish play staged by the Adler troupe; he's an American.

Raya begs Yakov not to travel back [note: not clear whether from Canada to the US or from the US to the USSR]. Says she doesn't want any further misery. Sends request from Berta and Lev, also from Risa, who will soon be a mother.

17 September 1928

Letter from Raya to Yakov in New York

Raya mentions plans to have Yakov invite her to the US [as a sponsor for visa purposes?] Raya also talks about possibility of her taking a course in bookkeeping. Again on the subject of going to the US, says she could be invited as someone's sister using another name. She would need a passport, which, she writes, would cost 250 rubles.

She writes Moysey has already begun the paperwork for Fanya, whom he is inviting to the US as his fiancée. Fanya would be leaving in December. Raya would very much like to have company on her trip to the US. But, she writes, the important thing is that her trip materializes.

Asks whether Yakov's sister-in-law can speak Russian. Asks what language is most popular there. Do they speak Russian anywhere—at the theater? At dances? "Yaska, [Yakov] I'm beginning to think I will never be happy." Says today is already the second day after Rosh Hashanah. Winter is coming.

28 September 1928

Letter from Raya to Yakov,

It will soon be two weeks without a letter from you. Why are you silent? Are you that busy? I worry about your welfare. Recently there was a report in the newspaper that there was a terrible hurricane in New York and there was much damage and a lot of injuries. Write often.

I would have written earlier, but I was waiting for advice from you as to where and to what address I should write. But apparently you are silent.

I received the money yesterday—thanks. The bookkeeping courses are all filled, but there are teachers who are forming groups on the side. I will begin studying with a teacher today or tomorrow. Maybe I should study English, but you recommend bookkeeping and I'll stick with that.

Happy Holiday. Today is Succoth. This is the third one without you. Will it be the last? Answer!

Yesterday I saw a silly comedy film. Now I have to pay a lot of visits to the city. I promised to see your father. I haven't been to Smilevich in 4 months. I also must visit Fanya.

I spoke with Berta about the visa sponsorship and said that maybe I'll have to change my last name. She promised to give me a statement that I was her employee and not her dependent. With this statement, I'll get a passport for 50 rubles.

Are you working? If you're already in Montreal, how do you feel about the change in circumstances? You always feel at home.

I won't keep asking questions since I want to know everything, to see everything, to feel everything, to write everything in great detail.

Have you had a suit made? I haven't had anything new made. But I need a lot—a hat, shoes, gloves, a warm dress. If I knew how it will work out with the trip, I would know what to do. We'll wait and see.

For now, I kiss you. Regards from all,
Yours forever.

12 October 1928

Raya says that after a 28 day gap, she received two letters from Yakov. She says she and Yakov are used to suffering and that their happiness will be in the future when they are together.

Raya says she does not know where Yakov is. Says she would like to have a photograph of Yakov. Asks what color is the suit that Yakov bought. Thanks Yakov for visiting her uncle.

Raya discusses the issue of being sponsored [for a visa] by Yakov or someone else. Says Yakov would know best how to devise a plan of action. Asks Yakov to imagine how poetic it will be when they are together, the two of them, and no one else, surrounded by only happiness.

She asks what kind of man is the husband of her uncle's daughter—an ordinary person or a member of the intelligentsia? Nothing that Yakov had asked her to keep the fast, Raya writes that she is not religious. She writes that if Yakov begins the paperwork, she would be able to travel no earlier than January or February. She asks whether it isn't dangerous to travel in the winter.

19 October 1928

Raya writes that she received Yakov's letter of September 20. Says that they must hope that the current separation will soon be a memory and reality in the future will be beautiful and happy.

Raya says that one of Yakov's letters can take 14 days to reach her, and another 24 days.

She asks who is the fellow that is supposed to sponsor Zhenya. And why is he doing this for you? Asks about sponsorship of herself. Asks Yakov to write about all the details so there will not be any mix-up. Asks why Yakov doesn't correspond with Moysey. Says Fanya hopes to leave in January.

Raya says the course she wanted to take was full and she was turned down. Raya scolds Yakov for writing so little. Asks what he does in the evening. Says she is home most of the time.

19 March 1929

My heart is full. I must say, at the present time I do not know and understand you. Says Berta asked "What does Yakov want?" and I broke out in tears. I could not answer.

In one day could do all. Could _____ via Canada for US. You could write me as a servant. In a word, if you wanted, you could think of something. Everything is possible and nothing is impossible if you only want and make the effort.

2 ½ years apart. Be a man, not weak.