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*The first version of this text was published on the Internet three years ago: in 2018. In subsequent years, I received letters from other descendants of G.M. Bystrov, who, as it turned out, now live all over the world: in Ukraine, Latvia, USA, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Israel. Some of these distant relatives have shared with me information that has been preserved in their families. In the present version of the text, I have tried to make the appropriate additions. I am especially grateful to Toms Bisenieks from Latvia (e-mail: [toms.bisenieks@inbox.lv](mailto:toms.bisenieks@inbox.lv)). I also used information from the memoir "Ludmila" by Baiba Edgoups from the USA.*



*This is the English version of the text, obtained mainly by machine translation. The original Russian text is located at the [LINK](#).*



## Great-grandfather Archpriest

### Georgy Mikhailovich Bystrov

(1864 — 1931)

*I shall die for some day we all reach our last destination.  
And I'd rather be stabbed, than decease just like that in my bed.  
People pity the killed, pay them tribute and promise salvation...  
I'm not sure of the living, however, we cherish the dead.*

*Vladimir Vysotsky*

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## Reference books of the Tomsk diocese

Starting this work, I had only the following information:

- the maiden name of my grandmother *Lydia* (from the mother's side) — *Bystrov*;
- patronymic of grandmother — *Georgievna*;
- grandmother's father was an *Orthodox priest* in the position of *dean*;
- grandmother studied at the *Tomsk diocesan school*.

So, grandmother *Lydia* studied at the *Tomsk Diocesan Women's School for girls of clerical rank* – so you need to look in the documents of the *Tomsk Diocese*.

### 1910 year

The source: «*Справочная книга по Томской епархии за 1909/10 год : с дополнениями и изменениями в личном составе священно- церковно-служителей : по 1 - е марта 1911 г.*» *Томск, 1911* ("Reference book on the Tomsk diocese for 1909/10: with additions and changes in the personnel of the clergymen: until March 1, 1911" Tomsk, 1911) — <http://elib.tomsk.ru/purl/1-1152/>

According to the list of names mentioned in the book, there was then only one priest *Bystrov* with a name starting with the letter «Г» (lower in a red frame) in the lists of the Tomsk diocese:

Быстрицкий П. А., псал.	471
Быстровъ А. М., свящ.	230
Быстровъ Г. М., свящ.	13, 588
Быстровъ Е. П., псал.	353
Быстровъ I. С., свящ.	700
Быстровъ М. И., свящ.	699, 750
Быстровъ П. П., псал.	459, 755, 770
Бычковъ П. Г., свящ	756

We have for G.M. Bystrov links to pages 13 and 588.

On page 13 we see (in translation):

Diocesan administration				
Name of institutions, position, rank or dignity, name, patronymic and surname, insignia and content employees.	In the service and in the department	In real dignity or rank	In this position	The last award
34th district. — Priest Grigory Mikhailovich Bystrov: mailing address: village Kyshtovskaya, Kainsky district.	since 1888	since 1890	since 1897	1907

Here the names *Grigory* and *Georgy* could have been confused, especially since in a similar book for 1914 (see below) *Georgy* appears in the same position. My grandmother (his daughter) was called *Lydia Georgievna*. As it became known now, our great-grandfather *Georgy* (diminutive - *Yegor*) had a brother *Grigory* (diminutive - *Grisha*). This brother was also a priest, but he served in the *Tobolsk diocese*, which means that he could not be on the lists of priests of the *Tomsk diocese*.

I have heard the toponym *Kyshtovka* more than once from my grandmother. She was probably born there. Later this assumption was confirmed, and at the end of the text we will see a copy of her *Birth Certificate*. Today the village of [Kyshtovka](#) is located in the *Novosibirsk region*, Russia. Coordinates of [Kyshtovka](#): 56.562356, 76.622754.

Further, on page 588 of the *Reference Book on the Tomsk Diocese*, we see (in translation):

### Deanery of the 34th district

504. **1. Kyshtovska:** a wooden church - one-altar, in the name of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, built in 1895; there is no land with her; distance from Tomsk is 750 versts. (*Russian verst is approximately 1 km*).

**Postal address:** *Kyshtovka's post office, Kainsk district.*

**Parish composition:** the village of Kyshtovskoe, Kainsky district, village: Vyatskaya, 5 versts, Novo-Lozhnikova — 16 v., Novo-Chekinskaya - 15 v., Eremina - 17 v., Novo-Karbalykskaya - 12 v., Verkhne-Chekinskaya — 20 v., Lyubimova — 25 v., Voroninka - 30 v., Pakhomova - 18 v., Agacheulak - 2 v., Korovina - 7 v., Gavrilovka — 15 v.

**Parishioners** — 4143 souls, including 145 schismatics.

**A state clerk:** one priest, a deacon, and one psalmist.

**Maintenance of the clergy** (housing is provided by the parish):

salary from the state 212 rubles, *ruga* (grain) from parishioners 600 poods and income from the Church services.

**Attached church,** in the name of the Intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos in the village of Pakhomova, built in 1908.

**Dean, priest** Georgy Mikhailovich **Bystrov**, 45 years old, graduated in the Samara Theological Seminary, 2 grade; ordained deacon on Oct. 1. 1888 and a priest on April 29. 1890, appointed dean of churches 34 okr. in 1897; has awards: a legguard, a skufia and a kamilavka, the last one he received in 1907; in its present place since 1907.

**Staff deacon** Konstantin Petrovich **Smirnov**, 54 years old, studied at a rural school; identified by the psalmist on December 21, 1885, ordained deacon to this church on May 14, 1906.

**Psalmist** Andrei Gavrilovich **Zaborsky**, 24 y., Finished. in a 2-grade (4-year) elementary school; in this position and with this church since 1905.

In the index of names, the priest from Kyshtovka was named *Grigory*, and in the text – *Georgy*. In the list of graduates of the *Samara Theological Seminary* in 1888, who graduated from the 2nd grade, it is written: *Bystrov Yegor*.

**Yegor Bystrov also had a brother named Grigory (Grisha), also a priest, but in the Tobolsk diocese. That is why during the years of study of both brothers in the seminary, their great-grandfather was even referred to in documents as Yegor Mikhailovich Bystrov: so as not to be confused with Grigory Mikhailovich Bystrov.**

And here is the new one. In the previous version of this text from 2018, we did not pay attention to the name *Bystrov A.M.*, preceding the name of *Bystrov G.M.* on the list of priests. Now from a relative from Latvia it became known that one of the 7 Bystrov brothers (they all became priests), *Arseny*, was a priest in the village of *Poperechnoye*, Tomsk region.

We look at page 230 of the *Reference Book on the Tomsk Diocese* (in translation):

101. **3. Poperechno-Iskitimsky:** a wooden one-altar church, in the name of the Holy Apostles Pyotr and Paul, built in 1861; the land with her arable and hay-making 99 tithes; distance from Tomsk 114 versts. (1 tithe = 1.09 hectare, 1 verst = 1.07 kilometer).

**Postal address:** *through the Bolotinskoe post office.*

**Parish composition:** the village of Poperechno-Iskitimskoe, Tomsk district, village: Taimenka 25 versts, Popova — 25 versts, Ust-Iskitim — 25 versts, Kulakovskaya — 20 versts of Kornilov — 25 versts, Arlyukova — 10 versts, Oparina — 20 versts, Belyanina — 15 versts, Novo-Gutov — 12 versts, Bolshoi ulus — 10 versts, Shalaev — 14 versts. Parishioners 3790 souls, including 77 schismatics.

**Parishioners** — 4143 souls, including 145 schismatics.

**A state clerk:** one priest, a deacon, and one psalmist.

**Maintenance of the clergy** (housing is provided by the parish):

salary from the state 212 rubles and income from the Church services.

**Attached church.** In the village Taimenka is a wooden chapel.

**Church Schools of Literacy:**

1) in the village Poperechno-Iskitimsky, opened in 1885,

2) in the village Shalaeva, opened in 1907;

Students in both schools 41 people.

**Priest** Arseny Mikhailovich **Bystrov**, 42 years old. From the 2nd class of the Samara Theological Seminary, he was appointed psalmist on March 20, 1890, ordained deacon on August 2, 1898, and as priest on May 6, 1899, awarded a legguard in 1905; in the present place since 1907.

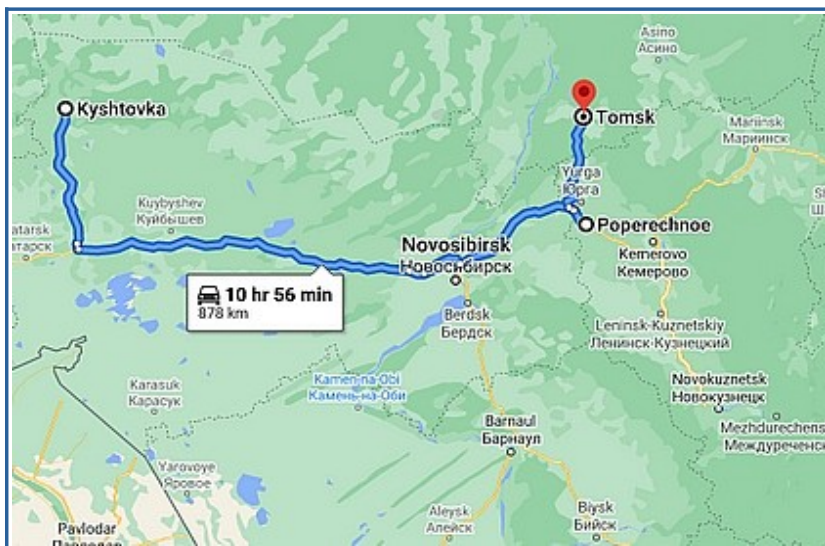
**Psalmist, in the regular position of deacon,** Grigory Feodorovich **Fedorov**, 28 years old., He graduated from the course in a two-class (4-year) civil school. departments; was a teacher in a church school from 1901 to 1904, in this position from January 9. 1904. In the present place since 1909.

**Psalmist** Vasily Danilovich **Nikiforovsky**, 44 years old, graduated from a theological school. He served for the State service for the postal and telegraph department for 10 years and retired with the rank of *provincial secretary*, has been in this position since December 9. 1905 and in the present place since 1908

Now the village of *Poperechnoye* and other toponyms mentioned in the parish of *Arseny* are located in the *Yurginsky municipal district* of the *Kemerovo region (Kuzbass)* of Russia. The city of



*Yurga* appeared here already in the second half of the 20th century. There are several villages with the name *Poperechnoe* in *Western Siberia*, but the coordinates of the village we are interested in are 55.506751, 84.977199. It is not so far from *Tomsk*, but it is very far from *Kyshtovka*, where *Georgy Bystrov* lived, even now (more than 800 km).



It is known that *Arseny* died shortly after the 1917 revolution. It is also known that he had three daughters, one of them became a dentist.

*So, in 1910, we learned the following to our great-grandfather*

- *Georgy Mikhailovich Bystrov, born in 1864, priest.*
- *Education: Samara Theological Seminary, graduation year: 1888.*
- *In 1910 — Dean of the 34th district in the village of Kyshtovka, Kainsky district, Tomsk region.*
- *In Kyshtovka — since 1897.*

Nowadays *Kyshtovka* (coordinates: 56.562356, 76.622754) is the administrative center of the *Kyshtovsky district* of the *Novosibirsk region*.

The city of *Kainsk* is now called *Kuibyshev* (coordinates: 55.445972, 78.311111) and is the administrative center of the *Kuibyshevsky district* of the *Novosibirsk region*.

### 1914 year

Source: Reference book on the Tomsk diocese / comp. employees of the consistory at hand. V.A.Kartashev in Jan. - March month. 1914 - Tomsk: Partnership "Printing S. P. Yakovlev", 1914. - VIII, 594, 25, XXI, [18] p. (<http://elib.tomsk.ru/purl/1-1110/>)

In the list of names of *The reference book of the Tomsk diocese* in 1914, we see:

Быстрицкий П. А., псал.	342
Быстровъ А. М., свящ.	25, 534
Быстровъ Г. М., свящ.	17, 413
Быстровъ Е. П., псал.	564
Быстровъ П. П., діак.	104
Бычковъ П. Г., свящ.	219

Here are links to pages 17 and 413.

On page 17 we see (in translation):

**34th district**, - priest Grigory Mikhailovich **Bystrov**; mail. adr .: village Kyshtova, Kainsk district, at service and department since 1888, in present dignity since 1890, in current position since 1897, last award in 1910.

And yet, in another place in the same book we see (in translation):




Dean Priest Georgy Mikhailovich Bystrov, 48 years old, graduated from the Samara Theological Seminary with the 2nd grade, has been serving in the diocesan department since October 1. 1888 ordained priest on April 29. 1890, appointed dean of churches of the 34th arrondissement in 1897, in the present place since 1898, the last award was received by the Order of St. Anna, 3rd class, in 1910.

Only the award was added in 1910. Officials and priests then received *awards on a regular basis*, «for length of service», if they did not have any violations. From what follows, it follows that in 1910 the *Order of St. Anne of the 3rd degree* was added.

According to the decree of 1847, it was decided to award officials with the Order of St. Anne of the 3rd degree who had served at least 12 years in one position of at least 13th grade. From that time on, the order actually began to be relied on as a reward for length of service.



Other awards were specific to the church and were elements of priestly vestments, the right to wear of which was received by the recipient.

<p><b>Nabédrennik</b> (Church Slavonic: <i>набедренникъ</i>, "on the thigh") — belonging to the liturgical vestments of an Orthodox priest of the Russian tradition. It is worn on a long ribbon at the hip. Symbolizes "the sword of the spiritual, which is the Word of God"</p>	
<p><b>Skufiá</b>, — the daily headdress of the Orthodox clergy and monks. The purple velvet skufia is given to representatives of the white (non-monastic) clergy as a reward — the second after the legguard. The monks have black skufia.</p>	
<p><b>Kamilávka</b> - a headdress in the Orthodox Church of dark blue, purple or black (for monks) colors in the form of a cylinder expanding upward, is a reward for priests.</p>	

Further in the book follow 10 pages with a list of churches and employees of the 34th ecclesiastical district of the Tomsk diocese, which were under the direction of the dean of G.M. Bystrov. These are places on the southern border of the Vasyugan swamps. In small settlements located tens of kilometers from each other, there were often no representatives of the state, except for parish priests, at that time.

The wooden church of the *Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker* in *Kyshtovka*, the rector of which was his great-grandfather, has not survived. It was probably demolished in 1926-1927.

Among the photographs of the expositions of the *Kyshtovka Museum*, presented in social networks, there is a model of the old wooden church. Great-grandfather G.M. Bystrov was the first and only rector of this wooden church in *Kyshtovka*.

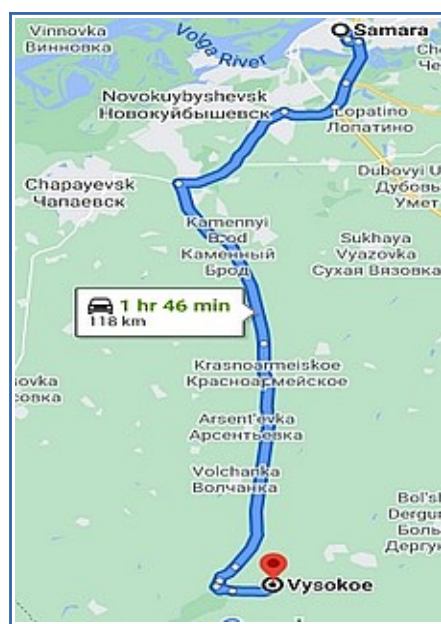


In 1997 a new stone church was opened in Kyshtovka. It is shown in the photo below.



### Place of Birth

From the archival information about the arrest and death of great-grandfather in the prison hospital of *Biysk, Altai Territory* in 1931 (see below), we learned that the great-grandfather of G.M. Bystrov — a native of the village of *Vysokoe* of the *Pestrvskaya volost* of the *Nikolaev district* of the *Samara province*. Now the city of *Nikolaev* is called *Pugachev* and belongs to the *Saratov region*. The village of *Pestrvka* is now the center of one of the districts of the *Samara region*, which also includes the preserved village of *Vysokoe* (coordinates: N 52 ° 23 '46.5324 "E 50 ° 2' 16.4328"). The distance from *Vysokoe* to the city of *Samara* is 118 km.



The village arose when, after liberation from serfdom, the poor of the *Voronezh province* began to organize in groups for free settlement on undeveloped lands.

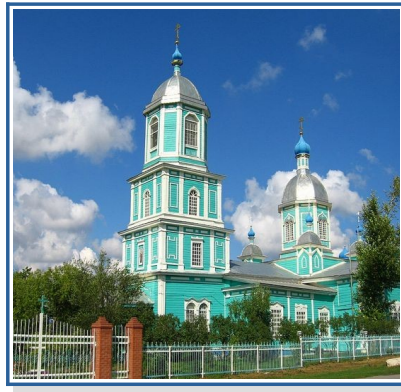
### Great-great-grandfather and great-great-grandmother

From my grandmother *Lydia*, daughter of G.M. Bystrov, I heard that my great-grandfather was



the son of a *psalmist* at the local church, which allowed him to study at the *Samara Theological Seminary*.

Below is a modern view of the *Church of Michael the Archangel* in the village of *Vysokoe*.



*The title of psalmist was approved on February 16, 1885 by the decision of the Holy Synod to all clergymen in churches – clergymen whose duties include reading from service books, singing in the kliros and generally participating in all church services. The duty of the psalmist, under the supervision of the priest and by his order, was entrusted with the performance of kliros reading and singing, accompanying the priest when visiting parishioners for the performance of spiritual requirements, and all writing in the church and parish. He kept registers of births, books for recording married marriages, confessions, clerical records with detailed designation of all data regarding the temple, the means of maintaining the clergy, the amount of land, the library, as well as the families of all members of the clergy. At the present time (the beginning of the 21st century), the choir directors of small parish choirs are most often called psalmists. Unlike priests and clergymen, women can also be psalmists.*

*Toms Bisenieks from Riga read the memoirs of his great-grandmother Ludmila, daughter of G.M. Bystrov (and my grandmother's Lydia sister), written by her at the age of 70, in part even already in Latvian. From Toms' letters I learned the following.*

Georgy's father was called *Mikhail*, mother – *Fedosya*. In the service of the church community, Mikhail used a small house. The house had a garden and a livestock barn. The villagers paid for the ritual services mainly with their products: eggs, meat, grain, wool, etc. From all this, the priest received 2/3, and the psalmist - 1/3. In addition, since the church had a land allotment, Mikhail was engaged in peasant work, like the rest of his fellow villagers.

Mikhail died early. After the death of her husband *Fedosya* was left a widow with small children. To earn a living, she began to bake special liturgical cookies – *prosporphos*.

*Prosphora* (ancient Greek προσφορά - “offering”; plural: *pro'sphoros*) – liturgical bread used in Orthodoxy to commemorate the living and the dead.



### **Great-grandfather's brothers**

*Mikhail* and *Fedosya* had 7 sons: great-grandfather *Georgy* had three younger brothers and three older ones. All brothers studied at the *Samara Theological Seminary*, where the sons of *priests*, *deacons* and *psalmists* could study for free at full board (housing, food, clothing). All brothers became priests.

*The full course of study at the seminary was to consist of seven classes: six general education classes for one year and the seventh – theological – for two years, that is, a total of eight years. Not all seminaries had a theological class. Probably, the graduates of the 6th grade were called “graduates of the 2nd grade”.*

*Young people of the Orthodox confession from all classes were admitted to the seminary, both those who had already*



studied in other educational institutions and who had received home education. For admission to the 1st grade, the age was set from 14 to 18 years. The best pupils continued their studies at the theological academies; most of the pupils were appointed by the diocesan authorities to the positions of clergy and clergymen, or to the positions of teachers and overseers in theological educational institutions. At the end of the 19th century, the best graduates of seminaries were given the opportunity to enter only two secular universities: Tomsk and Yuryevsky (aka Derpt, and now – the University of Tartu). Only shortly before the 1917 revolution did seminary graduates receive the right to enroll in other universities.

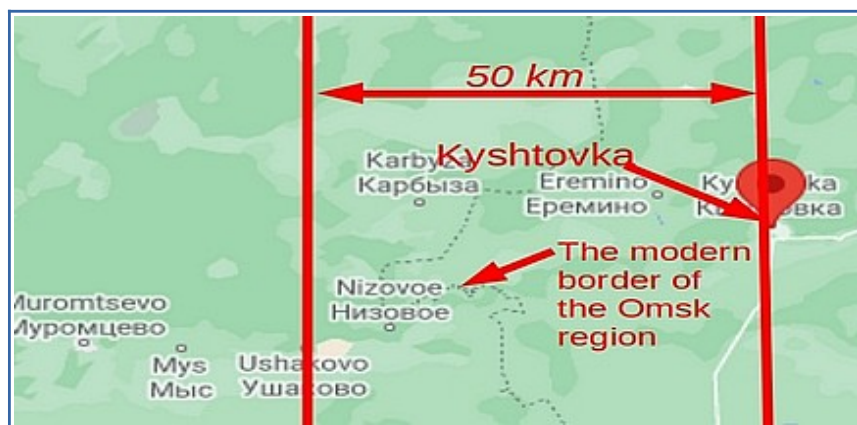
While studying at the seminary, Fedosya continued to help her sons, and they always stayed together. The older brothers, when they became independent, helped the younger ones.

It is known that in 1902, Georgy's brother Alexei was a priest in the same church in the village of Vysokoe, where his father once served as a psalmist. The brothers Dimitri and Yakov served as priests in the Samara province. It is known that Yakov's wife died of anthrax, after which he began to abuse alcohol and froze during a blizzard.

The above-mentioned brother Arseny, in the book of the Tomsk diocese of 1914, is already mentioned as a dean, heading the church district around one of the railway stations.

Brother Gregory, after graduating from the theological seminary, served with the archbishop (metropolitan): he helped him around the house and on trips. Conducted the Metropolitan Choir. After his marriage, Gregory was ordained a priest and a parish in the Tobolsk diocese, 40-50 km from Kyshtovka.

Geographically, this is understandable. Kyshtovka is located in the northeast of the modern Novosibirsk region, at the very border with the Omsk region. At that time, the Novosibirsk region was part of the Tomsk province, and the Omsk region was part of the Tobolsk province. To the east of Kyshtovka there are villages of the Omsk region, located just at the specified distance. It is impossible to find out more precisely where Gregory served, since I could not find a list of priests of the Tobolsk diocese of those times on the Internet.



Gregory was the only one of Georgy's six brothers who lived relatively close to him and communicated with him regularly. Grigory's wife was much younger than him, and according to the memoirs of Ludmila, she stayed with her with one of her daughters in 1919 in the village of Chany, where Ludmila then lived. During the Civil War, Gregory and his wife already worked as teachers. Ludmila recalled that her sister Lydia (my grandmother) wrote to her in the USA in the 1950s that Gregory was still alive and was over 80 years old.

I doubt very much that my grandmother Lydia in the 1950s could have so easily corresponded directly with her sister from the United States. Perhaps only through the sons of Ludmila who remained in Latvia. She was very careful in this sense. Then, when applying for any job, it was necessary to fill out a questionnaire, which included the question "Do you have relatives abroad?" The correct answer was "No." "Yes" did not mean that they would have been refused employment, but who needed extra questions ?!

The youngest of the Bystrov brothers, Vasily, was a priest in the south of the Samara province in the city of Novouzensk. He combined service in the church with work as a teacher in a secondary school.

We have already mentioned about brother Arseny. From the above documents of the Tomsk diocese, it follows that Arseny did not graduate from the seminary, and from the 2nd grade in 1890 he

was assigned to the *psalmist*. In 1898 he was promoted to *deacon*, and a year later – to *priest*.

## Georgy (Egor) Bystrov. Marriage to Maria Protasova

Below is a photo of Georgy Bystrov, taken in *Samara*, next to it is the reverse side of this photo.



Here's what we managed to make out on the reverse side.

*1888 Apr 27. As a keepsake from a 6th grade pupil.*

*Samara Theological Seminary. Egor M. Bystrov – Maria P. Protasova.*

*Remember and not forget.*

And here is a joint photo of Georgy and Maria in the same year.



We learned above that *Georgy* was “*ordain deacon*” on October 1, 1888. In the *Orthodox Church*, the ordination of a *deacon* or *priest* is possible only after marriage (or the adoption of monasticism, but this is clearly not the case here). It follows that they got married immediately after *Georgy's* graduation from the seminary between April 27 and October 1, 1888 in the old style.

### ***About the family of Maria Protasova***

Maria's grandfather *Mikhail Protasov* (1800 -1888) was a priest in the village of [\*Dyakovka\*](#), Saratov province. He lived there all his life.

His wife *Elena* (1806-1905) was the daughter of a captain of the Russian army. It is known that the wife of this captain was from the merchant class, not from the nobility, which is why the wives of the officer's colleagues did not accept her into their circle. *Maria* kept a gold pocket watch, which her great-grandfather received for his valor in the war with Turkey. This watch was taken away from her by bandits who imagined themselves to be revolutionaries in July 1919. The next day they shot *Maria* as well. But this is still to come.

Mikhail Protasov had only one son, *Pyotr* (1842-1916). He was expelled from the theological seminary for a relatively innocent prank (in the modern view): he buried the dog of the rector of the seminary according to the Orthodox rite. Therefore, *Pyotr* did not have to become a priest, and he was a peasant in the same village where his father was a priest. In addition, since he was literate, he helped fellow villagers with the preparation of various business papers. *Pyotr* and his wife *Matryona* (1852-1908) had seven sons and daughters. *Maria* was the eldest daughter.

*I also heard the story of the funeral of a dog from my grandmother Lydia. However, in those days it was a very common plot: this was how they talked about the reasons for their expulsion from the seminary and those expelled for academic failure or for other reasons. However, in the biographies of I.V. Stalin, if you know, they always wrote that the reason for expulsion was reading revolutionary literature. But that was a completely different era.*

## Service in the Samara diocese

*Information about this period is taken from the work of Baiba Edgoups «Ludmila».*

For the first two years after graduating from seminary, getting married and being promoted to the clergy of deacon, *Georgy* served in his native *Samara province*, perhaps even in the city of *Samara* itself. This is a big old city. At this time, *Maria* managed to give birth to two children: a girl, *Antonina*, and a boy, *Vyacheslav*. These children died almost immediately from measles.

*Probably the next female child born by Maria was also named Antonina. The descendants of this second Antonina now live in Kiev, but more on that later, in their own place.*

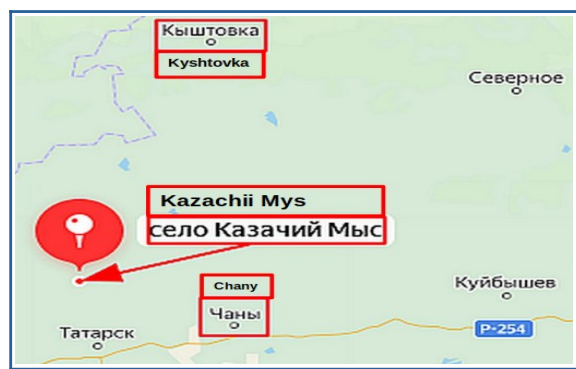
## Service in the Tomsk diocese

### *Kazachiy Mys (Cossack Cape)*

*Maria* was very worried about the death of her children, and *Georgy* asked his leadership to be transferred to another parish, hoping that the change in the environment would ease the suffering of *Mary*.

To the church leadership, such a request from an employee who had just started serving seemed impudent, since a high infant mortality rate was still a common occurrence at that time. However, his request was satisfied, and very radically. There was a shortage of priests in Siberia. There were very few priests who graduated from seminary. Therefore, the *deacon* was promoted to the *priesthood* and gave him the command of a parish in the Siberian wilderness.

The first place of service in Siberia was the village of *Kazachiy Mys*. Now this village belongs to the *Tatarsk district* of the *Novosibirsk region*. Coordinates: 55.507917, 75.875293.



The family of *Georgy Bystrov* lived in the *Kazachiy Mys* for about 7 years.

### *Kyshtovka*

In 1897 G.M. Bystrov was appointed *blagochinniy* (dean) of churches of the 34th district of the Tomsk diocese, rector of the *Church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker* in the village of *Kyshtovka* (coordinates: 56.562356, 76.622754). It is about 120 km north of the *Kazachiy Mys*.

*Blagochinniy* – in the Orthodox Church, the administrative position of a priest, upon appointment to which he becomes one of the bishop's assistants in terms of overseeing order in a certain ecclesiastical district within the diocese, called *blagochinie* (deanary). The *Blagochinniy* is a kind of mediator between the parish and the diocesan administration on a number of issues. The *blagochinniy* is appointed by the ruling bishop of the diocese from among its



clergy (as a rule, living in this territory).

In the Catholic Church, the analogue of the *blagochinniy* is the *dean* (archpresbyter), in the Lutheran churches – the *probst*.

There G.M. Bystrov subsequently received the rank of *protoierey* (*archpriest*). This is the largest rite that Orthodox priests who have not taken a monastic vow can receive.

In the family of *Maria* and *Georgy Bystrov*, children were born 14 times. Then it was the norm. Only six survived to adulthood. Natural selection was then at work instead of medicine. All surviving children were female.

For the training of the sons of the ministers of the church there were *Theological seminaries*, for the daughters there were *Diocesan schools for girls of clerical rank*. As in the seminaries, there was a 6-year course of study. For large families – free and full board. It was assumed (and usually was) that the graduates of the school would become the wives of priests. Such education was then considered *secondary*.

Дочери Быстровых учились в Томском епархиальном женском училище для девиц духовного звания. В училище был еще дополнительный педагогический класс. При окончании этого дополнительного 7-го класса девушки получали звание домашних учительниц.

The Bystrovs' daughters studied at the *Tomsk Diocesan Women's School for girls of clerical rank*. The school also had an additional *pedagogical class*. At the end of this additional 7th grade, the girls received the title of *home teachers*.



In the spring of 1918 the school was closed. My grandmother did not have time to finish it and continued her education in a regular secondary school.

And this is how the building of the main building of the *Tomsk Theological Seminary* looked like in those days.



The complex of the seminary included, in addition to the main building, the building of an *exemplary school*, where students of the seminary received *pedagogical skills*.

About the education system in those days, I prepared a review «[Public education in the Russian Empire and the early Soviet Russia](#)».





*Maria Bystrova (left) and one of her daughters. Tomsk, 1915*

## 1919 year

### **Each village had its own Robespierre ...**

*The words in the title are from the fundamental work of Prince P.A. Kropotkin's «The Great French Revolution of 1789-1793». P.A. Kropotkin believed that in all revolutions there are common features, common laws. The events of the early 20th century in Russia have largely confirmed this.*

There have never been landowners in Siberia. The peasant had as much land as he could cultivate. The Siberian peasants could not have had serious reasons for taking part in the revolution.

At the same time, a significant stratum of the population in the villages consisted of criminals who had served their time in *hard labor* and "reformed" criminals. In addition, back in March 1917, the *Provisional Government* pardoned political and criminal prisoners held in *hard labor*, as a result of which the latter ceased to exist. Many of the former criminal prisoners remained in Siberia and returned to the only robber or thief lifestyle they knew. Orthodox priests in the Empire were *civil servants*. Siberian peasants considered priests to be representatives of the administration. The «revolutionary» moods of the peasants provoked by various agitators in many parts of Siberia turned just against the priests.

Siberia has never been distinguished by the particular religious fanaticism of the village. «Red partisans» often practiced exterminatory terror against the church in general – with the universal murder of not only priests, but also clerks, sextons, monks and nuns, burning of temples and houses of worship. The extermination of the ministers of the Orthodox Church often proceeded with sadistic cruelty. It was especially «fashionable» to drown in water: «You baptized us – now we are you ...». They were the priests who in 1919-1920 in Siberia were called the word *diver*.

Многие представители духовного сословия оборонялись в те годы *не только крестом и молитвой*. Сибирское духовенство вступало в *иисусовы полки, дружины святого креста, дружины зеленого знамени*. Эти части формировались из добровольцев духовного сословия и действовали часто с не меньшей жестокостью, чем *красные, зеленые* и прочие сибирские партизаны.

Many representatives of the clergy defended themselves in those years *not only with the cross and prayer*. The Siberian clergy joined the *Jesus regiments, the squads of the holy cross, the squads of the green banner*. These units were formed from volunteers of the clergy and often acted with no less brutality than the *red, green* and other Siberian partisans.

During the reign of Admiral [A.V. Kolchak](#), many representatives of the clergy were on his side. In September 1919, the positions of *bishops of the armies*, *chief priests of the fronts* were introduced, and the *religious-front-line association of Alexander Nevsky* was created. Admiral Kolchak was proclaimed the *Head of the Russian Church outside the Bolshevik borders*.

The anti-church terror in Siberia physically destroyed a significant part of the clergy and contributed to the renunciation of the dignity of many clergy.

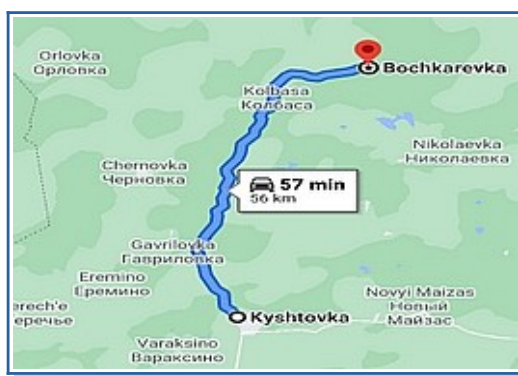
### ***The murder of Maria Bystrova***

***«In June 1919, partisans of the Kainsky district of the Tomsk province ... in the village of Bochkarevka killed the wife of Archpriest G. Bystrov ...»*** (V.S. *The brutality of the red gangs // newspaper «Сибирская жизнь», 1919, October 5*).

Another newspaper of that time («Русская речь», Novonikolaevsk, 1919, No. 221) published a *List of clergy and clergymen who were tortured and killed within the Tomsk-Altai diocese before September 1, 1919 (according to information, admitted to the Tomsk Diocese)*. This list is very long. In addition to many other names, we see *Maria Bystrova* in this list:

***«... killed: the wife of the archpriest of the village of Kyshtovka, Kainsk district, Maria Bystrova, ...»***

The village of *Bochkarevka* mentioned in the first newspaper report is located in the same place, on the edge of the [Vasyugan swamps](#) and, probably, within the boundaries of the former 34th church district, which was ruled by the great-grandfather. As the map shows, there is now an asphalt road between *Kyshtovka* and *Bochkarevka*.



The great-grandfather G.M. Bystrov himself survived in 1919. As we will see later, he lived until 1931. We assumed that this was due to the fact that the murder of *Maria* did not actually take place in *Kyshtovka*, but in *Bochkarevka*, but the materials that have now become available to us do not confirm this.

***Note also that in newspaper publications in 1919, my great-grandfather was twice named an archpriest. This means that he received this ordination between 1914 and 1919.***

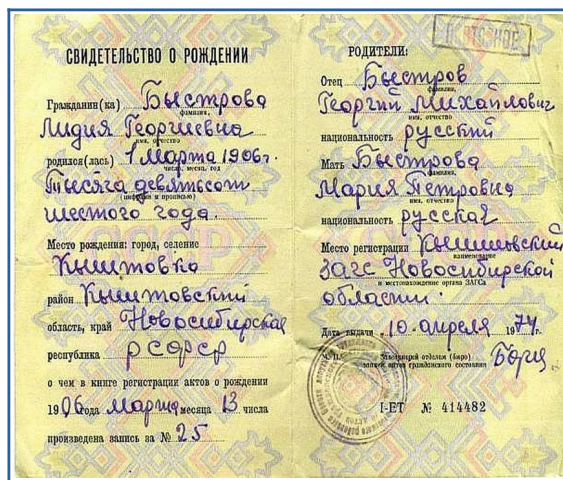
The daughter of the Bystrovs, Ludmila, who then, being a very young widow with two small children, lived with her parents, recalled the murder of *Maria* as follows.

***«... On July 17, 1919, the bandits came to the Bystrovs' house, searched and robbed them. In the morning they came again. Some of these men were local and Ludmila knew them personally. They broke into the house and demanded breakfast. Ludmila's mother, Maria, did not respond quickly to their request. She said that she would have to wait for the dough to rise and then they would bake the bread. She was ordered to go out into the street, into the courtyard. There, they immediately shot her in front of the family. Then the killers returned to the house and sat down at the table waiting for breakfast. Someone ran to the neighbors for bread so that they would not kill again.***

***In the following days, the bandits forbade the burial of Mary in the cemetery near the church next to the graves of her dead children, which was the usual resting place for priests and***

*their families. They were allowed to bury her only in the common village cemetery. Many fellow villagers came to the funeral service in the church. They loved Maria in Kyshtovka ...»*

Did George perform the funeral service himself, or was there another priest in Kyshtovka then? We do not know this.



After the section about *Kyshtovka* was written, I found an electronic copy of the *Birth certificate* of my grandmother *Lydia* in the family archive. It confirms her birth in *Kyshtovka*, as well as the names of her father and mother.

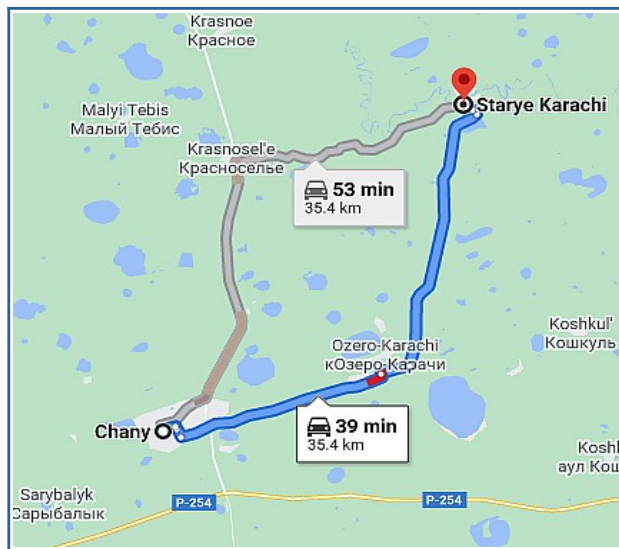
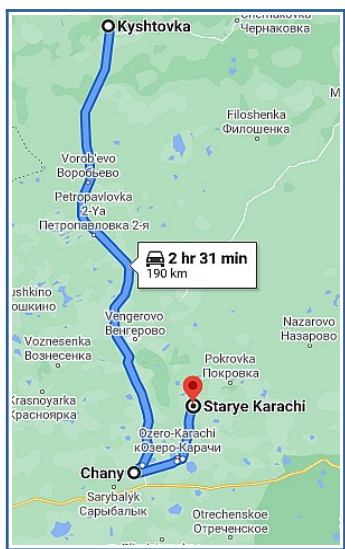
*Date of issue of the Birth certificate – 10.04.1974. Grandmother Lydia specially went to Kyshtovka to fetch him, as she was going to draw up an inheritance after her sister Nina, who died in Semipalatinsk at that time. It was as if Nina had her own home. Then, most likely, she fell ill herself, and the matter did not come to formalizing the inheritance.*

### ***Moving to Chany — Karachi***

In 1919, immediately after the murder of his wife, G.M. Bystrov and the daughters who still lived with him left for the village of *Karachi* (now – *Starye Karachi* (Old Karachi) of the *Chanovsky district* of the *Novosibirsk region*, coordinates: 55.49486, 77.04859). *Georgy* received the post of a parish priest there. His daughter *Ludmila* with her children settled in the neighboring village of *Chany* (coordinates: 55.309171, 76.761382). There she worked as a school teacher.

In those places there are many salty lakes with medicinal properties, and now there is a federal resort «Lake Karachi».

*Chany* is the nearest station of the Trans-Siberian Railway to *Kyshtovka*. They hoped that at least some kind of *power* remained along the railway, and that it would be safer for them there. Power in Siberia was really established soon, the bandits were gone, but this was already another, *Soviet power*. The new government was extremely hostile to the ministers of the church. In subsequent years, G.M. Bystrov was arrested several times.





## Soviet power and the Orthodox Church in the 1920s

On June 13, 1921, on the territory separated from the *Tomsk* and *Altai provinces*, the *Novonikolaevsk province* was formed as part of five districts: *Kainsky*, *Kargatsky*, *Kamensky*, *Novonikolaevsky* and *Cherepanovsky*. *Kyshtovka*, located in the *Kainsky district*, thus ended up in the new province. *Novonikolaevsk* was renamed *Novosibirsk* in 1925. *Kainsk* later became known as *Kuibyshev*.

At this time, it is believed, on the unspoken initiative of the Bolsheviks in Siberia, structures of [\*church renovationists\*](#) began to emerge.

In *Tomsk*, in the summer of 1922, the «*Living church*» renovation group under the leadership of 25-year-old «*archpriest*» *Pyotr Blinov* announced the creation of the *Tomsk higher church administration*, which was soon transformed into the *Siberian Church Administration (SibChA)*. It claimed the leadership of all church parishes in Siberia.

Since the beginning of 1922, the *bishop of Yakutsk and Vilyui, Sofroniy (Arefiev)*, was in *Novonikolaevsk*, who in the fall of 1922 also joined the *church renovationism*. He announced the *non-recognition of the Moscow Patriarch Tikhon*, who was under house arrest at the time. *Sophrony* organized the *Siberian Higher Church Administration (SibHiChA)*. He did not recognize either the renovationist *Moscow HiChA*, or the *Tomsk SibChA*, and offered the heads of the other Siberian dioceses to unite under his authority — the *Provisional Administration of the Siberian Metropolitanate*.

A notification was sent from the *SibHiChA* in *Novonikolaevsk* to all diocesan councils in Siberia that the *Tomsk SibChA* had no powers, *there were no married bishops*, and a spiritual investigation was appointed over *P. Blinov* for the usurpation of power.

Probably, my grandmother *Lydia* mentioned that at the *congress of priests* her father was offered *an election to the bishop*, including because he was already a *widower*, which would be a compromise between a *married* and *monastic bishop*. The *congress of priests* in *Novonikolaevsk* did indeed take place at that time.

From June to October 1922, the authorities did not intervene in the conflict between the two church groups, but at the end of 1922 they arrested the leadership of the *SibHiChA of the Sib-Metropolitanate* and urgently transferred *P. Blinov's SibChA* from *Tomsk* to *Novonikolaevsk*. However, this did not prevent them from shooting the same *Pyotr Blinov* in 1937, but that was already in *Murmansk*.

[\*V.V. Kuibyshev\*](#) explained: «The party firmly adheres to its principled position, hostile to any religion ... But for the party it is far from indifferent whether the church organization, embracing tens of millions of believers, is headed by counterrevolutionary conspirators or elements loyal to Soviet power. ***It is recommended to provide all possible, but unofficial support for the renovation movement ...***»

In the 1920s, the authorities' support for the *renovationist split* became one of the main means of the anti-religious struggle in the country. The clergy who resisted *Renovationism* were repressed. In Siberia, the actions of the renovationists were directed by party organs and special services.

Nevertheless, one should not assume that the movement for the *Renovationism* of the Orthodox Church was wholly inspired by the Bolsheviks. By the beginning of the revolutionary upheavals of 1917, the Russian Orthodox Church was in a state of deep internal crisis. The need for internal reforming of the church was then recognized by many.

Since the mid-1920s, a process of widespread closure of churches with the aim of demolishing or re-equipping them for various economic and other needs has been outlined in Siberia. Some churches were closed under the pretext of dilapidated buildings. On December 15, 1926, the *Siberian Regional Administrative Department* issued a circular for all district departments, accord-



ing to which: «... if a religious building has fallen into disrepair and threatens to endanger its users, then it must be demolished ... etc., it is quite advisable to sell for the needs of theaters, clubs and other cultural and educational organizations ... It is quite acceptable to sell such things in open form for various kinds of products, for example, for hats, shoes, etc. Such objects of worship, as icons, iconostases, not accepted by believers, if it is impossible to sell (due to low cost), are subject to destruction ...»

Probably after 1926 the wooden church in Kyshtovka was also demolished.

Only old men remained priests in Siberia, and even those ahead were waiting for prisons, exile, concentration camps and executions.

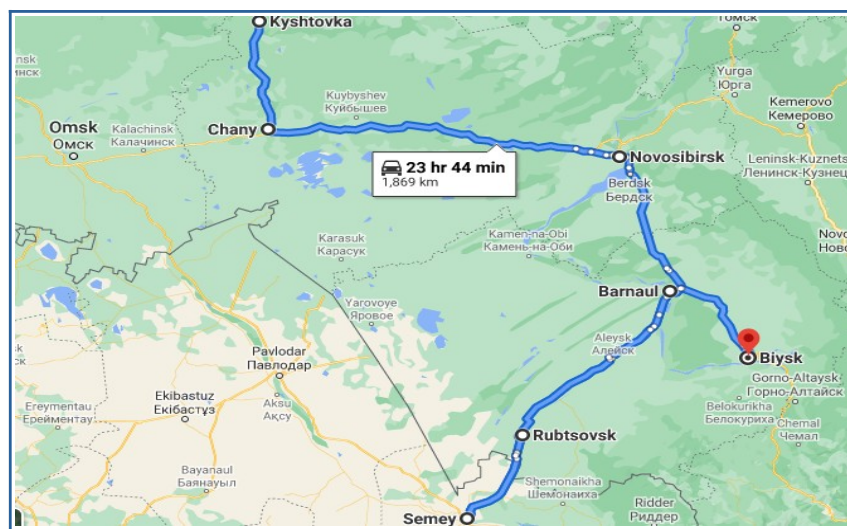
In 1927, a priest was allowed to perform his duties only after *registering with the local department of internal affairs*. He was given a *Certificate for the right to worship*. Both the registration and the issuance of the *Certificate* took place only after a thorough check of the candidate, his past, his reliability. Most often, the *parish community* turned to the appropriate *diocesan administration* to obtain a *priest*. The latter sent its candidates for approval to the *internal affairs bodies*. Failure to issue the *Certificate* was interpreted as a *prohibition of worship* for the applicant, and in this case he passed into the category of so-called *secret priests*, that is, to an illegal position. There were *itinerant priests* who traveled through the villages and cities, sent out treasures and helped the people who had sheltered them with the household chores. They carried all the necessary accessories for the performance of the rituals with them.

### The last trace of great-grandfather

Did Bystrov's great-grandfather have a *Certificate*? Obviously not. The *Certificate*, after all, allowed worship only in a *certain place* in it. It was issued by the *local internal affairs bodies*. **Probably, in the last period of his life, great-grandfather was just a *wandering priest*.**

The last of the daughters who saw him was *Nina*. *Nina Georgievna Bystrova* lived in [Semipalatinsk](#) (now the city of *Semey* in *Kazakhstan*, coordinates: 50.404964, 80.249190). She lived there until 1972 and died under the name of *Bystrov*. Her *Death certificate* is in the family archive. Saying goodbye to *Nina* in *Semipalatinsk*, the great-grandfather asked *not to look for him*.

I think that after *Semipalatinsk*, great-grandfather *Georgy Mikhailovich* headed north by rail to [Barnaul](#), and then to [Biysk](#).



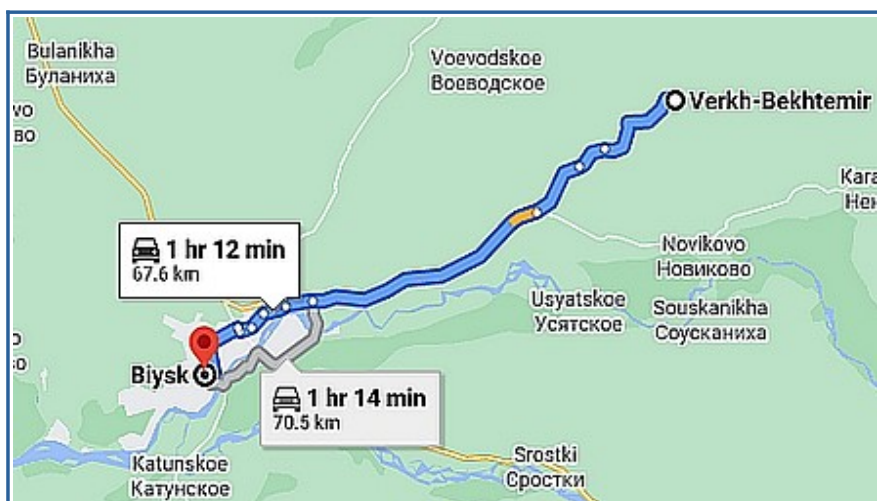
In both of these cities there were then several *Renovationist Orthodox dioceses* competing with each other. Perhaps he was trying to find a job there.

*The author of these lines is now about the same age as he was then. I have a pension, housing and everything I need at the minimum of modern standards. He only had a bag over his shoulders. At the end of his life, he turned out to be an «enemy of the people» persecuted by the au-*

*thorities.*

In my family, about the future fate of G.M. Bystrov knew nothing. The last trace of Bystrov's great-grandfather I discovered only in the process of working on the first version of this text in 2018.

This trace was found in Altai, near the city of *Biysk*, in the village of [\*Verkh-Bekhtemir\*](#), which is located approximately 70 km north-east of Biysk.



### ***Book of memory of the Altai Territory***

Below is a copy of the original version of the website page, to which the highlighted title leads. Subsequently, this page was significantly changed and supplemented by me. I will change it again after finishing work on this edition of the text.

#### **From the book of memory of the Altai Territory:**

#### **New Martyrs and Confessors of the Russian Orthodox Church of the XX century (Database)**

#### **Victims of Political Terror in the USSR (Database)**

#### **Lists of repressed clergy and laity**

#### **for the Barnaul diocese**

Presented in translation:

### **Bystrov Georgy Mikhailovich (1864)**

**Date of birth:** 1864

**Gender:** male

**Nationality:** Russian

**Profession / place of work:** priest

**Place of residence:** Biysk district, village Verkh-Bekhtemir

**Where and by whom he was arrested:** Altai Territory, Biysk district

**Date of arrest:** April 19, 1931

**Conviction:** June 13, 1931

**Condemning body:** The [special troika](#) at the PP of the [OGPU](#) in [Zapsibkrai](#)  
(*Transcript: Special Tribunal of the Plenipotentiary Representation of the [Unified State Political Department](#) in the [West Siberian Territory](#)*)

**Article:** 58, paragraph 11

**Sentence:** to 5 years of expulsion

**Date of rehabilitation:** October 19, 1989

**Rehabilitation body:** Rehabilitated by the AK prosecutor's office

### **Service**

**Altai Territory, Biysk district**

priest

End date: 1931

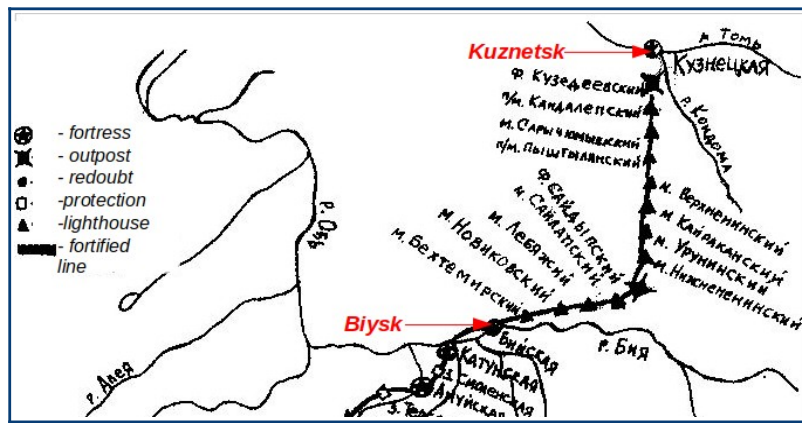
The coincidence of the *name, patronymic, surname, year of birth* and *profession* allows us to unambiguously conclude that the person arrested in *Verkh-Bekhtemir* is my great-grandfather. At the same time, *it does not follow* from this fact that he really lived there and was a priest in the local church.

«*New Martyrs and Confessors of the Russian Orthodox Church of the 20th Century (Database)*» is a modern document. It is based not on church archives, but on the archives of the *secret services*. There are no church archives of that time (and earlier) in the *modern Russian Orthodox Church*: I inquired about this in the *modern Tomsk diocese*.

The document «*Representatives of Altai clergy, shot in the Biysk prison of the NKVD*» states that in 1937 another priest of the Verkh-Bekhtemir church, *Nosov Pyotr Ivanovich*, was shot. Most likely, *P.I. Nosov* was also a priest in Verkh-Bekhtemir in 1931.

### **The village of Verkh-Bekhtemir**

The village of *Verkh-Bekhtemir* (coordinates: 52.766114, 85.905945) is located 70 kilometers north-east of the city of *Biysk*. This settlement already existed in the 18th century, but the *Mayak Bekhtemir (Bekhtemir Lighthouse)* on the diagram below of the *Kolyvano-Kuznetsk Cossack fortified line*, indicated northeast of the *Biysk fortress*, is another settlement, on modern maps called *Stan-Bekhtemir*.

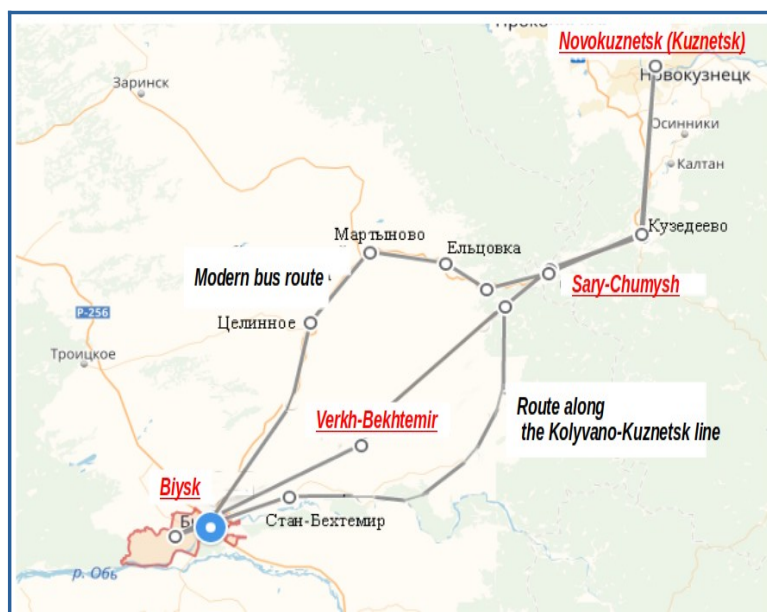


The *Cossack fortified line* was created in the 17th century on the border with the *Dzungar Khanate*. In the first half of the 18th century, the *Dzungar Khanate* was defeated by *China*, and for some time the border with *China* began to pass here. Later, as a result of the conclusion of agreements between *Russia* and *China*, the border began to run hundreds of kilometers to the south.

It is logical to assume that the *old road* between *Biysk* and *Kuznetsk fortresses* ran along the former fortified line.

The modern bus route between *Biysk* and *Novokuznetsk* goes much further north, through *Tselinnoye*, *Martynovo*, *Yeltsovka*, but also not along the shortest route.

In the picture below, we see three routes from *Biysk* to *Sary-Chumysh* (then they coincide).



We obtained the bottom line by connecting on the modern map the points of the same name with the points of the *old fortified line*. The upper one is a modern bus route. The *shortest* (middle)

route just passes through *Verkh-Bekhtemir*.

It is logical to assume that it was the shortest route through *Verkh-Bekhtemir* that was used after the loss of the value of the fortified line, but before the emergence of the modern bus service.

I believe that the great-grandfather of G.M. Bystrov in April 1931 *simply passed through Verkh-Bekhtemir on the way from Biysk to Kuznetsk*. Indeed, one of his daughters lived in *Kuznetsk* (not far from the gates of the *Kuznetsk Fortress*). Perhaps he stayed in *Verkh-Bekhtemir*, and, most likely, he just fell ill on the way and took to bed. Maybe some of the local residents sheltered him for a while.

*Verkh-Bekhtemir* at that time was a large prosperous village. In 1929-1931 there was a period of [\*collectivization\*](#), when peasants were forced to unite their farms into *kolkhozes* (collective farms). Three *kolkhozes* were created there at once: «*Winner*», «*Red Banner*», «*1st May*». The peasants were reluctant to use them. Back in 1933, there were 478 *middle peasant* farms and even 49 [\*kulak\*](#) farms in the village! Rural party functionaries had to prove their diligence and vigilance to the higher authorities. To avoid getting into a concentration camp or being shot, the easiest way was to catch and surrender some «enemy of the people». So they turned in an old man, a *wandering priest*, who was not even a resident of the village, *but simply passed by*. It was better for them than giving up one of their fellow villagers!

Under *article 58-11 of the Criminal Code* of those years, only those who could *potentially* carry out anti-government activities, *but did not really do it*, were condemned *only to deportation*. At that time it was so easy to «prove» even the *anti-Soviet agitation*, which was then supposed *to be shot*, that they would not have done it only if there was a complete lack of credibility. At the time of G.M. Bystrov was already 67 years old. Perhaps his state of health was already such that there could be no doubt about his «harmlessness».

### ***Reference from the archives of the Altai Territory***

These *assumptions* about the circumstances of the arrest of G.M. Bystrov in *Verkh-Bekhtemir*, I then presented on the above-mentioned page of the site «*The Book of Memory of the Altai Territory*». After some time, I received *the e-mail* from the editor of this site, in which I was told how and where I can turn to get information about the circumstances of my great-grandfather's arrest. It turned out that this can be done *completely free of charge*, which was essential for me.

The fact is that a few months before that, one woman wrote to me. She introduced herself as a journalist from Barnaul. She offered to get information from the archive, but *for money*. I then refused, suggesting that this is just a fraud, and the information received from her may be inaccurate.

As a result of the subsequent correspondence from the *State Archives of the Altai Territory*, I received the *Reference* presented below.

The *Reference* states that the great-grandfather *still lived* in *Verkh-Bekhtemir* and allegedly was engaged in *anti-Soviet agitation*. Sentenced by a [\*special troika\*](#) of the [\*OGPU\*](#) to 5 years of deportation to the East Siberian Territory on 06.13.1931.

It may be fortunate that the matter did not come to *expulsion*:

**«... the arrested Bystrov Georgy Mikhailovich died in the hospital of the Biysk house on 08/02/1931».**

Here the abbreviation *domzak* means «house of confinement» – that is how the prison was called in those years.

Recently, from the memoir «[\*Ludmila\*](#)» by *Baiba Edjups*, I learned that at that time living in *Latvia* daughter of G.M. Bystrov at about that time received a letter from Russia, over which she cried for a long time. Whether this was an official message from prison about the death of her father or it was his farewell letter is unknown.



My grandmother *Lydia* never even heard of *Verkh-Bekhtemir*.

Scan of *Reference* from the *State Archives of the Altai Territory*.

<p>УПРАВЛЕНИЕ АЛТАЙСКОГО КРАЯ ПО КУЛЬТУРЕ И АРХИВНОМУ ДЕЛУ</p> <p><b>КРАЕВОЕ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЕ КАЗЕННОЕ УЧРЕЖДЕНИЕ «ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ АРХИВ АЛТАЙСКОГО КРАЯ» (КГКУ ГААК)</b></p> <p>ул. Анатолия, д. 72, г. Барнаул, 656049, тел./факс: (3852) 63-15-45, e-mail: gaak@itb.ru</p> <p><b>08 МАИ 2018</b> № Б-743</p> <p>На № <u>заявление от 14.04.2018</u></p> <p><b>АРХИВНАЯ СПРАВКА</b></p> <p>По документам архивного фонда Управления ФСБ РФ по Алтайскому краю «Архивно-следственное дело по обвинению Быстрова Г.М.» за 1931-1989 гг. установлено, что Быстров Георгий Михайлович, 1865 (1964) (так в документе) г.р., уроженец «с. Высокое Пестровской вол. Николаевского уезда Самарской губ.» (так в документе), проживал в «с. Верх-Бехтемир (В-Бехтемир, В-Бехтимир, В-Бихтимир) Бийского р-на» (так в документе).</p> <p>Быстров Г.М. был арестован «ОГПУ» (так в документе) 19.04.1931 по обвинению в том, что он «... занимался антисоветской агитацией направленной к срыву коллективизации ...» (так в документе).</p> <p>Быстров Г.М. был осужден Особой тройкой при ПП ОГПУ по Западно-Сибирскому краю 13.06.1931 по ст. 58-11 УК РСФСР и приговорен к высылке в Восточно-Сибирский край сроком на 5 лет.</p> <p>Согласно сообщению Барнаульского оперативного сектора ПП ОГПУ по ЗСК от 09.01.1932 «... арестованный Быстров Георгий Михайлович умер в больнице Бийского домзака 02.08.1931» (так в документе).</p> <p>По данному делу Быстров Г.М. реабилитирован по заключению прокуратуры Алтайского края от 19.10.1989.</p> <p>Основание: КГКУ ГААК ОСД Ф.Р.2. Оп.7. Д. 18339. Лл. 52, 72, 96, 101, 106, 109, 125, 148, 154.</p> <p>Заместитель директора</p> <p>Начальник отдела спецдокументации</p> <p>Сергеев Антон Владимирович (3852) 33-36-41</p>	<p>Петрову В.Б.</p> <p>ул. _____ д. _____, кв. _____, г. Новокузнецк, Кемеровская область, 654041</p> <p>Л.Н. Богомолова</p> <p>Т.Ю. Месенцова</p>
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Translation of *Reference* from the *State Archives of the Altai Territory*:

ARCHIVE REFERENCE

According to the documents of the archival fund of the Directorate of the FSB of the Russian Federation in the Altai Territory "Archive investigation case on the charge of G.M. Bystrov" for 1931-1989 it was established that Bystrov Georgy Mikhailovich, 1865 (1964) (as in the document), born in "v. Vysokoie of Pestrovskoy parish. Nikolaev district of Samara province" (as in the document), lived in "s. Verkh-Bekhtemir (V-Bekhtemir, V-Bekhtimir, V-Bikhtimir) Biysk district "(as in the document).

Bystrov G.M. was arrested by the "OGPU" (as in the document) on 04/19/1931 on charges that he "... was engaged in anti-Soviet agitation aimed at disrupting collectivization ..." (as in the docu-

ment).

Bystrov G.M. was convicted by the Special Troika at the PP of the OGPU in the West Siberian Territory on 06/13/1931 under Art. 58-11 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR and sentenced to deportation to the East Siberian Territory for a period of 5 years.

According to the report of the Barnaul operational sector of the OGPU PP on the ZSK from 01/09/1932 "... the arrested Bystrov Georgy Mikhailovich died in the hospital of the Biysk domzak on 08/02/1931" (as in the document).

In this case, Bystrov G.M. rehabilitated by the conclusion of the prosecutor's office of the Altai Territory from 10/19/1989.

**After 58 years, Bystrov G.M. was rehabilitated by the conclusion of the prosecutor's office of the Altai Territory on 10/19/1989.**

Since the beginning of 1930, by order of the OGPU plenipotentiary representative for the Siberian region, Latvian L. M. Zakovsky (real name – Henrikh Ernestovich Shtubis, Latvian Henriks Štubis), 10% of all priests in the region were shot. As usual in those years, this executioner himself, in turn, was shot in 1937. By the way, L.M. Zakovsky (Henriks Štubis) was a supporter of the use of torture in the interrogation process. He was condemned not so much for the use of torture as for their excessiveness! Torture «within reasonable limits» was then considered even a useful tool!

In fairness, it should be noted that Zakovsky was a consistent internationalist: he destroyed his Latvian compatriots as diligently as he did Russians.

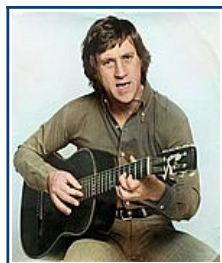
The Motherland must remember its heroes. The Motherland also remembers its martyrs. But the people often remember their executioners and traitors, although it would be better to erase the latter from the people's memory.

### Instead of prayer

*Vladimir Vysotsky*

*APPLES FROM THE GARDEN OF EDEN*

[Listen to sound recording in mp3](#)



*Владимир Высоцкий*

*РАЙСКИЕ ЯБЛОКИ*

[Слушать звукозапись в mp3](#)

*As they say, I will die - people tend to die sooner or later,  
But I'd rather be killed - hate to die on my own, paralyzed.  
Not to those alive - to the dead do we really cater,  
Taking care of them, chanting, promising them Paradise.*

*Stabbed, I'll fall in the mud, fall apart, so handsome and hapless,  
And my soul will rush on a stolen mare towards the sky;  
In the Paradise gardens I'll pick several pink seedless apples,  
But the gardens are watched, and the guards zap you right in the eye.*

*Eden was the last name for the place where I came with my mare -  
Barren grayness around, it's a kingdom of "Nothing & Nix",  
And in front of the gate in the center of that nowhere  
Several thousand inmates would silently stand on their knees.*

*Then my mare would neigh - so I calmed her with handfuls of oats,  
And I pulled out the burs from her pasterns and plaited her mane...  
A gray-haired old man tried to open the gate, swearing oaths,  
But he failed to unlock it and quit, swearing dirty again.*

*Those folks at the gate neither groaned nor uttered a sound,  
They just squatted, because knees went numb due to long kneeling there;  
Dogs left prints on the sand - oh, my God, it's a prison compound!  
It is not Paradise, though the Crucified soared in the air.*

*Я когда-то умру — мы когда-то всегда умираем.  
Как бы так угадать, чтоб не сам — чтобы в спину ножом:  
Убиенных щадят, отпевают и балуют раем...  
Не скажу про живых, а покойников мы бережём.*

*В грязь ударю лицом, завалюсь покрасивее набок —  
И ударит душа на ворованных клячах в галоп!  
В дивных райских садах наберу бледно-розовых яблок...  
Жаль, сады сторожат и стреляют без промаха в лоб.*

*Прискакали. Гляжу — пред очами не райское что-то:  
Неродящий пустырь и сплошное ничто — беспредел.  
И среди ничего возвышались литые ворота,  
И огромный этап у ворот на ворота глядел.*

*Как ржанёт коренной! Я смирил его ласковым словом,  
Да репы из мочал еле выдрал, и гриву заплёл.  
Седовласый старик что-то долго возился с засовом —  
И кряхтел и ворчал, и не смог отворить — и ушёл.*

*И огромный этап не издал ни единого стопа,  
Лишь на корточки вдруг с онемевших колен пересел.  
Здесь малина, братва, — оглушило малиновым звоном!  
Всё вернулось на круг, и распятый над кругом висел.*

*I am looking around - other prisons must envy this prison!  
Smell of bread from the gate - it holds better than shackles and chains.  
I am safe so far, but too much of the ozone has risen,  
I am nearly choked, I can't curse as it gives me great pains.*

*I at once understood - it is Peter, the doorman of Eden,  
And he is the apostle, and I am an ass, passing by;  
In the Paradise gardens picking apples is strictly forbidden,  
And the gardens are watched, and the guards zap you right in the eye.*

*I do not ask for much - though others adore goods and chattels,  
All I need is my friends and a wife who will wail when I die,  
And for them I will steal in the Paradise gardens some apples,  
But the gardens are watched, and the guards zap you right in the eye.*

*Saints in khaki are clad, from the doghouse cherubim swear;  
Ice-cold apples I pick, into my shirt those apples I slip,  
And then - bang! - here's the shot, I am killed in the eye, and my mare  
Takes me down to the Earth, madly galloping back on this trip.*

*We may die once again - only this time in Eden it happens,  
Then the soul will trot down the old familiar track.  
Out of Eden I carry a shirtful of pink seedless apples,  
I will bring them to you, 'cause you waited for me to come back.*

© George Tokarev. Translation, 1998; Edited by Robert Titterton

*И апостол-старик — он над стражей кричал-комиссарил —  
Он позвал кой-кого, и затеяли вновь отворять...  
Кто-то палкой с винтом, поднатужась, об рельсу ударил —  
И как ринулись все в распрекрасную ту благодать!*

*Я узнал старика по слезам на щеках его дряблых:  
Это Пётр-старик — он апостол, а я остолоп.  
Вот и кущи-сады, в коих прорва мороженных яблок...  
Но сады сторожат и стреляют без промаха в лоб.*

*Всем нам блага подай, да и много ли требовал я благ?!  
Мне — чтоб были друзья, да жена — чтобы пала на гроб,  
Ну а я уж для них наворую бессемечных яблок...  
Жаль, сады сторожат и стреляют без промаха в лоб.*

*В немевших руках свечи плавилась, как в канделябрах,  
А тем временем я снова поднял лошадок в галоп.  
Я набрал, я натряс этих самых бессемечных яблок —  
И за это меня застрелили без промаха в лоб.*

*И погнал я коней прочь от мест этих гиблых и зяблых,  
Кони — головы вверх, но и я закусил удила.  
Вдоль обрыва с кнутом по-над пропастью пазуху яблок  
Я тебе привезу — ты меня и из рая ждала!*

*Tony Fata sings in English*

[Listen to sound recording in mp3](#)



*На английском поёт Тони Фата*

[Слушать звукозапись в mp3](#)

### About a family legend that the great-grandfather was allegedly a bishop

Above, in the «*Book of Memory...*» the *Barnaul diocese* is mentioned. This is now the only diocese in Altai, belonging to the modern *Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate*, and there are only two bishops there: in *Barnaul* and *Biysk* (there is no talk of [Old Believers](#) here). At the end of the 1920s, as many as five Orthodox dioceses existed on the territory of Altai.

— [Renovation](#) Orthodox: *Barnaul, Biysk, Kamensk*.

— Traditional Orthodox: *Barnaul* and *Biysk*.

There is information that there were also “autocephalous” parishes that adhered to orthodox dogmas, but were in no way connected with *Moscow Patriarch Tikhon*, who was under house arrest, and *Sergius, the locum tenens* in Moscow.

There were also parishes of an undefined orientation: the subtleties of the liturgical rites of the parishioners were of little interest there.

Could the great-grandfather have been one of the many bishops, as family tradition suggests? In the 1920s, with his ecclesiastical and administrative experience and the status of a *widower*, this was easily possible, but he is not on the lists of numerous Renovationist and Orthodox bishops of Siberia. I am even glad of this after I got acquainted with the circumstances of that time.

By no means all of those bishops were people of high morality, and not at all because the renovation bishops were allowed to marry, as their rivals, the "orthodox," asserted. Both those and others were *necessarily secret agents* of the *GPU-NKVD* (so incomprehensibly to heighten intimidation was called at that time the service to fight the *internal enemy*). Otherwise it was impossible by definition. Many became agents not at all out of compulsion, but for the sake of a career. These «bishops» fully deserved the concentration camps and executions that soon fell to their lot. There were also ideological, highly moral people among the clergy of that time, but the path to leading positions was closed to them: this was impossible without the approval of the *special services*.

### About the descendants of Georgy and Maria Bystrov

It is known that *Maria Bystrova* gave birth to 14 children. All the sons born to her died as chil-



dren. Only daughters survived to adulthood, but their number is now unknown for sure. According to a Latvian relative, *Toms Bisenieks*, in the memoirs of his great-great-grandmother, *Ludmila Bystrova*, who died in the United States in 1980, six daughters are mentioned: Ludmila herself (*Luda*), Klavdia (*Klava*), Nina (*Nina is*), Valentina (*Valya*), Lydia (*Lida*), Elena (*Lena*). However, I do not have full confidence that there are no more of them. I do not currently have information about all the Bystrovs' daughters. Below is what is known today (October 26, 2021).

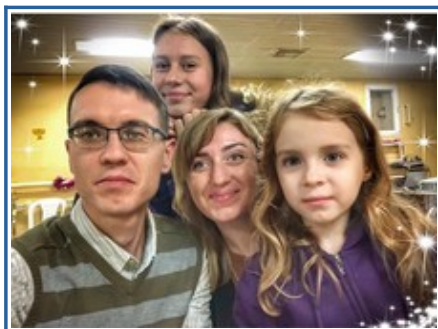
### 1. Antonina

Antonina (Tonya), in the memoirs of *Ludmila* is indicated only as having died in infancy in *Samara*. Probably, the next girl born by *Maria* was also named by this name.

About a year after I published the first version of the text about *Georgy Bystrov* on the Internet, in 2020, I received an email from *Natalia Ilik* (e-mail: [ilick.natasha81@gmail.com](mailto:ilick.natasha81@gmail.com)) from *Kiev*. *Natalia* wrote that her great-grandmother *Sinyavskaya Antonina Georgievna* has the maiden name of *Bystrov*. At the same time, she mentioned the descendants of another daughter of the Bystrovs, *Elena*, who lived in *Chernigov*, with whom her family keeps in touch. I have heard more than once from my grandmother *Lydia* and from my mother (Lydia's daughter – *Nina*) about relatives in *Chernigov*. I remembered that I had heard about relatives in *Kiev*.

Here is what *Natalia Ilyk* said about the Kiev branch of the Bystrovs' descendants.

*Antonina Bystrova* married marry a priest, *Alexander Nikolaevich Sinyavsky*. In 1920, her daughter *Tatyana* was born. Judging by the available photo of her *Birth certificate*, they lived in *Kazakhstan*, near the city of *Alma-Ata*. There *A.N. Sinyavsky* was killed in 1929. *Antonina* and her daughter moved to *Kiev*, where she lived until 1968. She was buried in Kiev at the *Berkovetsky cemetery*. *Tatyana*, her daughter, had two sons: *Boris* and *Alexander*. *Alexander* is already retired, *Boris* died of a heart attack this year (2021). *Natalia*, who wrote to me, is *Alexander's* daughter. She herself already has two daughters. Currently, *Natalia* and her family moved from *Kiev* to *Israel*, since her husband has Jewish roots. Below are the photos that I received from *Natalia Ilyk*.



### 2. Ludmila

About *Ludmila Bystrova* is known thanks to the memoir «[Ludmila](#)», written by her granddaugh-



ter *Baiba Edgoups* from the USA. The years of life of *Ludmila Bystrova*: 1895-1980.

Ludmila graduated from the *Diocesan School* in *Tomsk*, including an additional (7th) *pedagogical* class. As a result, she qualified as a *home teacher*. Lyudmila's first husband was *Alexei Konstantinov* – also a teacher. They lived with Alexei in Tomsk. They had two children: *Yuri* and *Konstantin*. Lyudmila's first husband died after 4 years of their marriage.

Lyudmila's second husband was *Jekabs Duks* – a Latvian with whom *Lyudmila* moved first to *Latvia*, then to the *USA*. With *Jekabs*, they had five children: *Viesturs*, *Mirdza*, *Maya*, *Aija* and *Luda*. The descendants of *Ludmila Bystrova* now live in the *USA*, *Australia*, *New Zealand*, *Ireland*.

Here are some photographs from *Baiba Edgoups'* memoir, «*Ludmila*»:



Below is a photo from my family archive (however, this photo is also in the work of *Baiba Edgoups*). On the back of the photo there is an inscription (in Russian, of course): «*In memory of dear sister Lida and niece Ninochka from the family of Latvians Duka*». Here *sister Lida* is my grandmother, niece *Ninochka* (diminutive of *Nina*) is my mother. The photo definitely dates back to the second half of the 1930s. One of the sons (*Konstantin Konstantinov*) - in the Latvian national military uniform. This means that the photo was taken even before the accession of Latvia to the Soviet Union.



### 3. *Claudia* (or *Valentina*?)

To date, I do not know anything about this sister and her descendants. If this text is read by any of them – write me at [vbp1953@mail.ru](mailto:vbp1953@mail.ru)

### 4. *Valentine* (or *Claudia*?)

She lived in the city of *Kuznetsk*. Now it is part of the city of *Novokuznetsk*. She lived near the gates of the *Kuznetsk Fortress* (coordinates: 53.774637, 87.184098). She died around 1956 when I was 3 years old. I remember going to her funeral.

I remember well her son, *Nikolai Nikitich Bezborodov*. He died when I was already an adult. After him, his son *Anton* remained, who still lives in *Novokuznetsk*.

My great uncle *Nikolai Bezborodov* had a sister who married a Greek. That Greek was in our area the *chief engineer* of the construction of a coal-fired power plant in the city of [Kaltan](#) (refers to the *Novokuznetsk agglomeration*).



His surname was *Khristokin*. Then he was transferred to *Kharkov*. My brother *Konstantin* remembers that in the 1980s two women came to *Novokuznetsk*: a mother and a daughter from *Kharkov*. They were, respectively, the daughter and granddaughter of that grandmother's sister who lived in *Kuznetsk*. Then *N.N. Bezborodov* was still alive.



*Nikolay Nikitich Bezborodov*



*Caption on the photo: Aunt Lida and Nina from their niece and sister Lyuba. Stalinsk, 2.05.1951*

*Novokuznetsk* in 1951 was called *Stalinsk*.



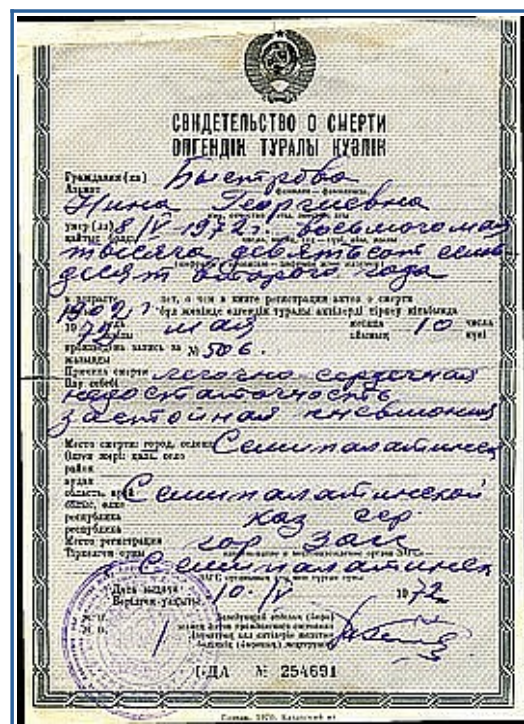
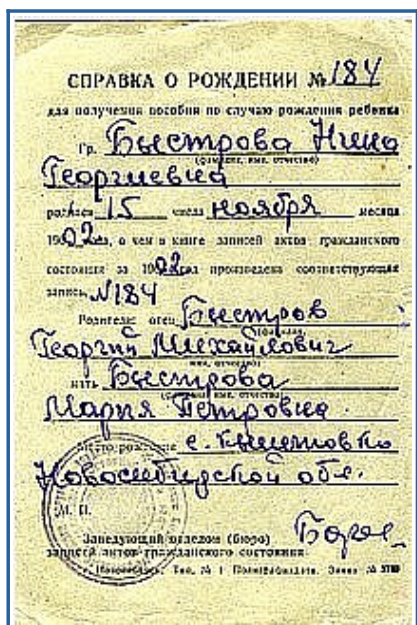
The photo shows the gates of the *Kuznetsk Fortress* and the adjacent *semi-bastion*. This is how they looked as we drove past them to the funeral of my grandmother's sister. In the 1990s, the fortress was restored. Now there is a museum. The photo below shows the modern look of the *semi-bastion*. The houses of local residents are visible on the right above the fortress wall. It was in this area of the city, as I remember, that my grandmother's sister died. She probably lived there.





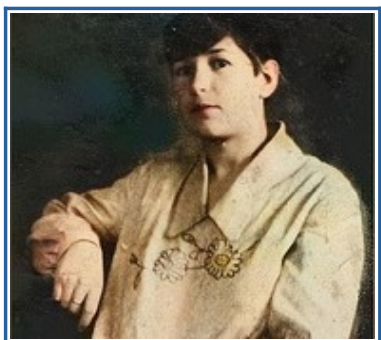
## 5. Nina

It is only known that she lived in the city of Semipalatinsk, which is now in Kazakhstan and is re-named Semey. Below is her *Birth certificate* and her *Death certificate*. Lived: 1902-1972. As far as I know, *Nina* did not have children.



## 6. Lydia

My grandmother Lydia was the penultimate of the daughters of Archpriest Bystrov. She was born in 1906 in *Kyshtovka* and died around 1980 in *Novokuznetsk*.



*Lydia Georgievna Bystrova (Deryagina) in different years of her life*



*Lydia*, like her other sisters, studied at the *Tomsk Diocesan School for girls of clergy*. She did not manage to finish it, since in 1919 this educational institution was closed. She continued her education in a regular school. I also heard the toponyms *Kyshtovka*, *Chany* and *Karachi* from her more than once.

Around 1928, *Lydia* married *Alexander Deryagin*, who worked as an accountant in the village of [\*Kolyvan\*](#), *Zmeinogorsk District, Altai Territory* (coordinates: 51.313, 82.569).

By the time of the arrest and subsequent execution of *Alexander Deryagin* in 1933 (during one of the [\*Stalinist terror\*](#) campaigns, all under the same *Article 58 of the Criminal Code*), *Lydia* already had four children, and she was pregnant with my mother.

According to the recollections of my brother *Konstantin*, the grandmother told him that soon after her husband's arrest, she let a woman with her children spend the night with her. After that, her own children fell ill with *diphtheria* and died in two weeks. For some time, *Lydia* found shelter with friends or relatives of her husband, probably already [\*Rubtsovsk\*](#) (coordinates: 51.527, 81.217). There she worked in a canteen at the station.

However, the host *was strictly warned* that he had sheltered the family of *an enemy of the people*. *Lydia* could only run as far as possible. On the train to [\*Tashkent\*](#), she was advised to go even further, to *Khodjent* (now – [\*Khujand\*](#), coordinates: 40.285201, 69.618994). Then this city was called *Leninabad*. In *Leninabad*, she got a job as a cleaner in a hotel. Soon, *Lydia* received the position of an accountant in the same hotel where she worked until the start of *the war with Nazi Germany* in 1941.

In the first year of the war, famine began in *Leninabad*. Grandma's younger sister *Elena* lived in the village of [\*Tsvetopol\*](#) in the *Altai Territory* (coordinates: [53.196935](#), [78.238159](#)). *Elena's* husband, *Aleksey Erastovich*, was in charge of the *MTS*, a *machine tractor station*. He helped arrange documents for moving to them.

*In those years, collective agricultural enterprises (kolkhozes) did not yet have the opportunity to maintain equipment. The equipment (along with the necessary personnel) was provided to them for the period of work by state MTS. Subsequently, small collective farms were merged into larger farms with their own equipment, and the MTS disappeared.*

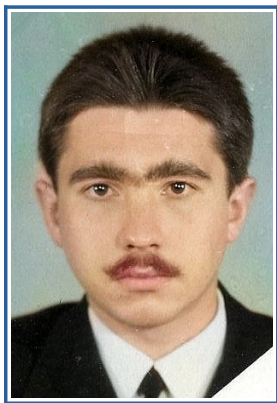
*Lydia* worked at *MTS*, first as an accountant, then as the head of a refueling base. There my mother *Nina Aleksandrovna* finished school, and then studied in [\*Omsk\*](#) as a dental technician. After graduation, she was sent to work in the city of [\*Prokopyevsk\*](#) in [\*Kuzbass\*](#). After my birth in 1953, my grandmother *Lydia* also moved to *Prokopyevsk*. Subsequently, our family lived in the city of [\*Novokuznetsk\*](#), 30 km south of *Prokopyevsk*.



*Daughter of Lydia, Nina Alexandrovna Deryagina (Petrova) in different years*



*Nina Alexandrovna and Boris Georgievich Petrov are our mother and father. 1973 photo*



*Lydia's grandson, Vladislav Borisovich Petrov*



*Lydia's grandson, Konstantin Borisovich Petrov*

Lydia's great-grandchildren:

*Ekaterina Konstantinovna Shvets (Petrova) – daughter of Konstantin,*

*Vsevolod Vladislavovich Petrov – son of Vladislav.*

Great-great-grandchildren of Lydia:

*Maria Mikhailovna Shvets, Daria Mikhailovna Shvets – daughters of Ekaterina Shvets (Petrova),*

*Varvara Vsevolodovna Petrova – daughter of Vsevolod Petrov.*

## 6. Elena

*Elena Georgievna* is the youngest daughter of the *Bystrovs*.



*Elena Georgievna Bystrova*. 1960 photo

*Elena's* son, *Eduard Ivanovich Bystrov*, was the same age as my mother, *Nina Alexandrovna Deryagina (Petrova)*, and they grew up together.



*Eduard* received a *law degree*, worked in *Omsk* in the *special services*, and then in the *party and state bodies*.

In the photo below, *Eduard Bystrov* with his mother *Elena* and son *Konstantin*. It seems there was also a daughter, *Olga*.





In Omsk, *Eduard* rose to the rank of *mayor of the city*. My grandmother *Lydia* recalled that when he was driving her from the station in his official car, the policeman *saluted*.

*But everything passes, does not last forever,  
And the stars in the sky go out without a trace ...*

The Omsk period of *Eduard's* life ended due to a divorce from his first wife, who, they say, wrote denunciations against him. As a result, *Eduard* lost his high position.

At the advanced training courses for party workers, *Eduard* met *Maria Yakovlevna* from the city of [Chernigov](#) in Ukraine (coordinates: 51.491007, 31.298652). She became his new wife. They lived in *Chernigov*. Their son's name is *Victor*. It is known that *Eduard* died in 2020, having lived to almost 90 years.

### Other online family history publications

*The files, links to which you will see in the table below, are located on my Google drive. The latter is configured so that it will continue to exist for another 18 months after the termination of using my Google account. At the beginning of 2022 I will be 69 years old. None of us are eternal. Therefore, if you are interested in any materials, the links to which are posted below - DOWNLOAD them. At the same time, I must note that I change and supplement all the materials listed below from time to time, they are under constant revision. If you have information that, in your opinion, should be added here – write to me.*

*Sincerely,*

*Vladislav Borisovich Petrov, [vbp1953@mail.ru](mailto:vbp1953@mail.ru)*

Name	Language
<a href="#">Book of memory of the Altai Territory. Bystrov Georgy Mikhailovich (1864)</a>	Russian
<a href="#">V.B. Petrov. Great-grandfather Archpriest Georgy Mikhailovich Bystrov</a>	Russian
<a href="#">V.B. Petrov. Great-grandfather Archpriest Georgy Mikhailovich Bystrov</a>	English
<a href="#">V.B. Petrov. Grandfather Alexander Dmitrievich Deryagin.pdf</a>	Russian
<a href="#">K.B. Petrov. Father Boris Georgievich Petrov.pdf</a>	Russian
<a href="#">Baiba Edgoups. Ludmila Bystrova.pdf. Translation and notes by V.B. Petrov</a>	English + Russian
<a href="#">K.B. Petrov. About Tomsk.pdf</a>	Russian + English
<a href="#">V.B. Petrov. About Latvia and Latvians</a>	Russian + English
<a href="#">V.B. Petrov. Public education in Latvia 1920-1930s</a>	Russian + English
<a href="#">V.B. Petrov. Public education in the Russian Empire and the early RSFSR</a>	Russian + English
<a href="#">V.B. Petrov. About Latvia and Latvians. World War I and Civil War</a>	Russian + English