

Abram Monosson: Homicide Victim on Pokrovsky Street

Article (translated into English) from Moscow's "Newsletter" 15 April 1892

Donated by Carol Edan



On April 13th at 3:00 pm a middle class Jewess named Monozon originally from Mogilev and currently staying at Milovanov's residency on Gavrikov Street entered a special unit of Moscow's police department. She notified the police that her husband Abram Movshev Monosson (photo) left home on April 12th at 8 am and has not been back since that time. He had 4,000 rublesⁱ in his wallet and was supposed to have a business meeting. She assumed that something terrible happened to her husband because he was a very sick man. In addition she said that someone had seen Abram Movshev in the afternoon of the 12th of April on Pokrovsky Street near Gavrikov Street.

The chief of police sent two agents to Pokrovsky Street immediately to search for the missing Monozon. The agents found out that Monozon visited a leather shop owned by Guchin, and located in the basement of Pomelov's house. However, upon arriving at the leather shop the agents did not find Guchin. The agents searched the shop: the area had no windows and was situated three arshinsⁱⁱ under ground; they also discovered a little room that had no windows or doors. As the agents took a closer look at the little room, they noticed bloodstains on the floor. They followed the stains and discovered Monozon's body. Monozon was lying on his back with his head blooded; he was wearing his own clothes, a watch on a golden chain and a tie with a diamond pin. The agents closed the shop and went to Guchin's home looking for him.

At his home they only found Guchin's wife who told them that on April 12th Guchin gave her a wallet full of money and asked her to hide it, which she did by giving the wallet to her mother. Guchin's mother in law confirmed that she, in fact, got the wallet and in turn, gave it to her other daughter, Praskovya Shirokova. The house of Praskovya Shirokova's was searched and the agents found the wallet wrapped in a handkerchief, with bloodstains on it. The wallet contained valuable papers, coupons and 3,146 rubles worth of debt slips.

On April 14th in the morning the agents and coroner returned to Guchin's shop to examine the body. It appeared that Monozon was killed with a blunted object; his skull was crushed to the degree that pieces of Monozon's brain came out. Upon taking a closer look at the Pomelov's house, in which the homicide occurred, the police found freshly made ditch in the back yard. They assumed that Guchin was planning to hide Monozon's body there.



<http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Moskva/>

According to the neighbors Monozon was known under his nickname "Bulochkin."ⁱⁱⁱ Up to January 1st he owned an exchange shop on Gavrikov Street, but closed it because in accordance to government order he was supposed to leave Moscow. He had a stroke many years ago and could only use his left arm and leg, but that did not affect his business. He was 45 years old and is survived by his wife, two adult daughters and five minors.

The homicides suspect is Peter Guchin, a 23-year-old hot-tempered man. Guchin was selling leather; at the beginning the business was going well but lately it went down and he was looking for money. He had several business meetings with Monozon, whom he killed, trying to buy some valuable papers. When setting their last meeting Guchin asked Monozon to bring along no less than 4,000 rubles; the purpose of this request remains uncertain.

ⁱ What would be the worth of 4000 rubles today? Michael Jaffe sent me an e-mail with information he had found on JewishGen estimating it as equivalent to \$517,000. Now the bigger question: Why was A. Monosson ('Monozon') carrying so much money? I know he was a moneylender, but why would a leather shop owner need such a large amount of money at one time?

ⁱⁱ The 'arshin' is an Imperial Russian unit of measure equivalent to 28 inches.

ⁱⁱⁱ 'Bulochkin' literally means "Sweet Bread Man" – a nickname usually given to someone who likes to eat or is sort of chubby looking.