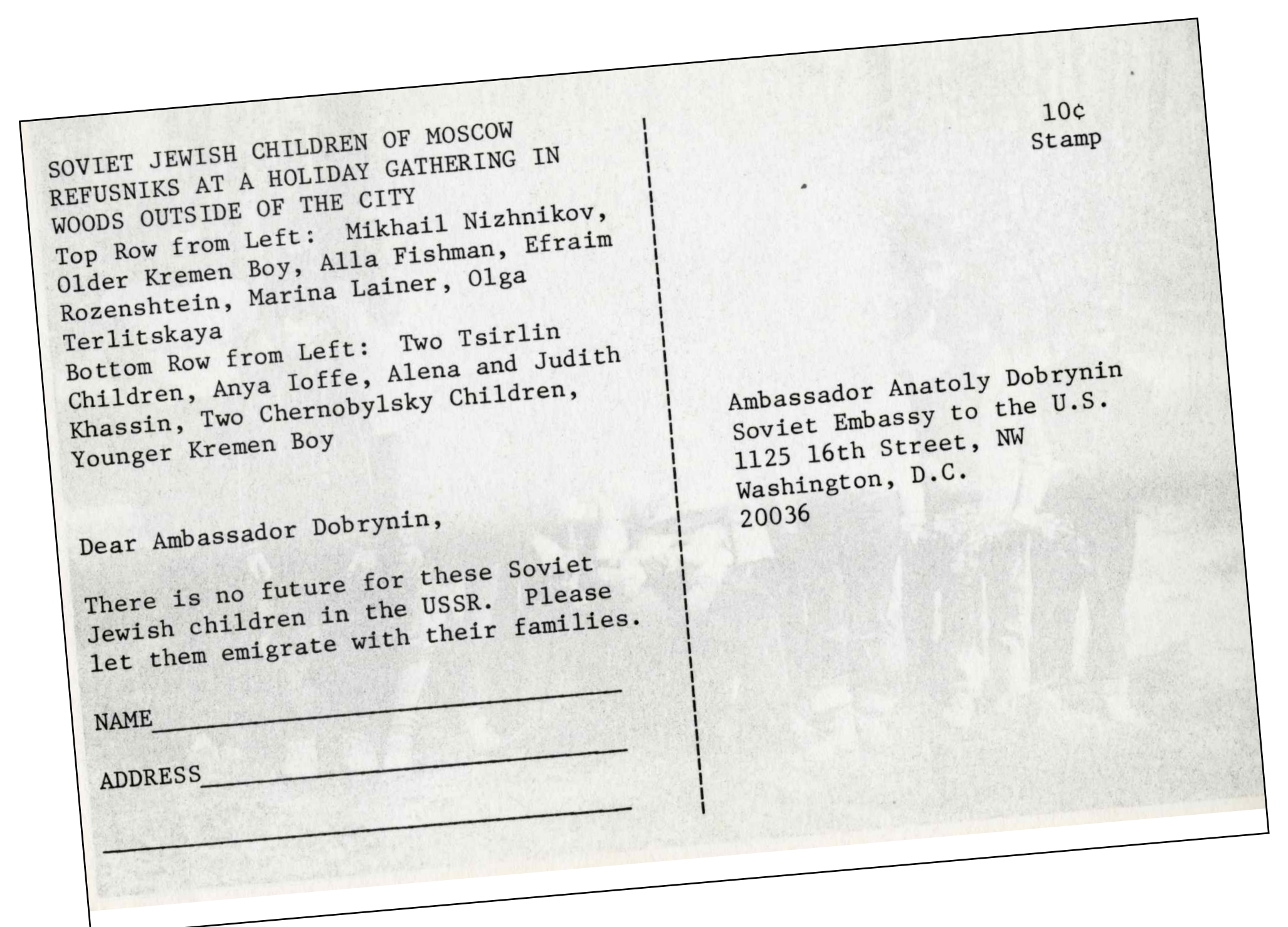


# Everyday Antisemitism and the “Fifth Paragraph” in the Soviet Passport

In the Soviet Union, Jews were considered members of a separate national or ethnic group. Regardless of religious belief, level of acculturation, or place of birth, individuals of Jewish descent were recorded as Jewish in their passports, the main form of identification in the Soviet Union. During periods of greater antisemitism, the “fifth paragraph” — or the nationality line — became a source of everyday discrimination. Colleges and universities strictly enforced admission quotas for Jewish students and barred them from certain majors. Workplaces rejected prospective candidates of Jewish descent and denied promotions to existing Jewish workers. Levels of antisemitism varied across the Soviet Union, and many Jews were able to succeed despite it. For others, antisemitism, together with other factors, encouraged a desire to emigrate.



Postcard used to pressure Soviet government officials, featuring the children of refuseniks.

Courtesy of the Nizhnikov family.



In addition to passports, military identity cards also listed one’s nationality. This identity card belonged to a Jewish student. Her nationality is listed on line 2.

Courtesy of the Gribnikov family.



Anatoly Sharansky with other refuseniks at an underground meeting.

Courtesy of the Nizhnikov family.



Ida Nudel, the “Guardian Angel” of refuseniks, in exile in Siberia.

Courtesy of the Nizhnikov family.

