

## *The Editor's Column*

The generally accepted popular term for genealogical study is searching for ones roots. And so it is, 'search' forms the indispensable part of the word research. The fundamental goal in genealogical investigation is to discover family ancestors and to construct a family tree, as thorough and as broad as possible. But the only way to achieve this goal is through searching: searching through old papers forgotten in some corner of the house whose value has suddenly increased; burrowing through archives and examining documents and perusing books, both old and new. It is also checking cemeteries – and unfortunately for us today, probing those places that were destroyed and trying to reconstruct the memories and preserve them by erecting markers or memorials and by writing books.

Not infrequently, the search begins with some small item: a letter from years ago, a chance meeting, a notice in the newspaper or some dim childhood memory. Two articles in this issue describe searches that began in such a way: the starting point for the expansive study by Emily Rose were two oil portrait paintings hanging in her grandparents' house in New York. Yitzhak Tadmor began his investigation with a dim childhood memory of two picture books, one covered in red and the other in blue, that his father would peruse while holding him on his lap.

Even the writing of history is to a certain extent a reconstruction. Leon Trahtenberg provides us with a summary of the history of the Jews of Peru, describing the advances and retreats in its development and the problems that concern this community. Daniel Wagner relates the Jewish history of his ancestral town, Zdunska Wola in Poland and the efforts underway to preserve what has survived. Misha Melamed shares with us a short and dark chapter in the history of the town of Iyve during World War II and the Holocaust. Yehuda Klausner provides us with the second part of his review of the history of Hasidism, its rabbis and its dynastic courts. The article by Shmuel Shamir is unique. He combines history, family, Zionism, the love of Eretz Yisrael and even the belief in the coming of the Messiah.

Jean-Pierre Stroweis summarizes an interesting visit to the Institute for Hebrew Microfilmed Manuscripts at the Jewish National and University Library and in another section he reviews the book by Benjamin Meirtchak. A review of foreign language journals appears as usual, with Harold Lewin presenting the English section while Esther Ramon and Mathilde Tagger provide the Hebrew section.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform our readers of a change in the numbering of the issues of *Sharsheret Hadorot*. For administrative purposes, the editorial board decided to number the issues according to the secular calendar instead of according to the Hebrew calendar. Therefore, issue one of Volume 17 will appear in February 2003. The issue of November 2002 will have the number 16-4. We apologize to the Hebrew calendar for this change and we trust that we have not diminished our esteem for it by this action.

*Yocheved Klausner*

**From the Desk of Chana Furman**  
*President of the Israel Genealogical Society*

The 16-3 issue of *Sharsheret Hadorot* appears after completing the lion's share of our activities of the year 5762. In light of the changes and developments over the past year, I am confident that this year will be thought of as one of significance by both our membership and our society.

**Beit Shemesh Branch:** Greetings and welcome to the new branch, which in January 2002 joined the cycle of monthly meetings. Their lectures are given in English and so far, there have been four meetings. Some of its members have been working on genealogy for a number of years, while others are just taking their first steps. For a list of contacts and the E-mail address that you can be in touch with, see the inside cover of the publication.

**A New Home for the Jerusalem Branch:** On May 1, 2002, the new meeting site for the Jerusalem meetings, Beit Frankfurter, was dedicated. The move has made it possible for us to resume the activities of Jerusalem's English speaking group, which had been suspended since the beginning of the year because of space limitations at our previous location. The library was reorganized and is now housed in attractive and closed bookshelves. We are currently computerizing the library holdings, which will be able to be seen on our web page. A printed list will be available at each branch.

At the festive yet modest dedication, we were honored by the presence of the Fifth President of the State of Israel, Mr. Yitzhak Navon, we toasted a l'hayim and heard an absorbing lecture delivered by Professor Yisrael Bartel. I wish to thank all who pounded the pavement, gave of their time, and diligently searched for a new location for we can all take pleasure in our new home. Activities in our other branches are continuing as usual. This year new members have joined while former members resumed their membership after a lapse of time.

The bequest of Dr. Paul Jacoby has found an appropriate place in the Judaica reading room of the Jewish National and University Library on the Givat Ram campus of the Hebrew University. The accessibility of this collection is an absolute thrill for all who are involved in genealogy. This collection is for the most part the fruit of the hard work of the late Dr. Jacoby, who was a key member in the development of the Israel Genealogical Society and was always willing to help whenever called upon. We want to mention the important role of our member, Dr. Hanan Rappaport, who was concerned that this collection be transferred to the National Library.



## The Jews of Peru at the Crossroads \*

Leon Trahtemberg

Translated from the Hebrew

The small group of destitute Jews that immigrated to Peru in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century developed into a flourishing prosperous community by the 50s and 60s of the century. However, since reaching that pinnacle, there has been a steady decline and it now stands at a crossroads. One path calls on the Jews to fundamentally reorganize their community as quickly as possible in order to adapt its institutions and resources to the contemporary economic and demographic reality. The other path hopes to retain the community's institutions and activities as they were, with the danger that within a few years the community will no longer be able to guarantee that it can maintain its organizations along with their activities as before. The danger is that in only a few more years the Jewish community will lose its strength and will no longer be able to assure that its Jews will remain in the community framework, especially with regards to their synagogues and the prestigious León Pinelo School.

How did this situation come about? We will examine it decade by decade through the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### The 1910s

The first Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews arrived in Peru in this decade. They joined the few German Jews who were members of community institutions dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and also utilized their cemetery. This was a difficult period of exploring the possibilities and some of the immigrants tried their luck in Lima. By the decade's end the city had 400 Jews.

### The 1920s

This decade saw the continued immigration of young people, especially Ashkenazim who sought their fortunes. Many of them went to outlying cities and developed businesses operating on credit. When the number of Sephardi Jews increased, they separated from the Ashkenazim and founded the *Sociedad de*

*Beneficiencia Israelita Sefardita* in 1920. The Ashkenazim founded the *Unión Israelita del Peru* in 1923. Peru's Zionist organization *Organización Sionista del Perú* was established in 1925. In the end, the German Jews assimilated and by the end of the decade, the Jewish population reached 1,000.

### The 1930s

This was the period when the original Jewish families attained financial security. There was plenty of work and the immigrants had many opportunities to become wealthy. A new wave of immigration from Germany and Austria began in 1933 and the *Sociedad de Beneficiencia Israelita de 1870* (The Jewish Beneficial Society of 1870) was re-established. During this time, the first families whose children were born in Peru strengthened. The Maccabi, Hashahar, Hashomer and Betar youth movements were created. The Sephardi synagogue consecrated in 1933 and the Ashkenazi synagogue consecrated in 1934 were housed in buildings owned by the community.

In 1938, the Peruvian government completely banned Jewish immigration. By the end of this decade, Peru had some 2,500 Jewish residents.

### The 1940s

This was the decade of stabilization and consolidation of the Jewish community enabling it to both fight the outside enemy and to provide for local needs. The *Directorio de la Colectividad Israelita del Perú* (The Directorate of the Jewish Community of Peru) established in 1942, was the representative body of all of Peru's Jews. Communal services were created and consolidated: the cemetery was enlarged; a home for the elderly was established and in 1946, the León Pinelo Jewish School was founded. At the same time, two Zionist youth movements, Hanoar Hatzioni (Zionist Youth) and Betar, supplanted the earlier Zionist youth groups and three women's Zionist organizations Wizo, OSE and

Pioneer Women were organized. Groups formed at this time were the *Comité Peruano Pro Palestina Hebraica* (The Peruvian Committee for Jewish Palestine) through whose efforts the Peruvian government voted in favor of Partition of the Palestine Mandate in 1947, the *Asociación de Crédito Israelita del Perú* (The Jewish Credit Union of Peru) and the *Asociación Médica Israelita del Perú* (The Jewish Medical Association of Peru). The daily news bulletins of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency were published and measures were taken to aid the victims of the War. During this decade, the relationship between Jewish education and Zionism significantly intensified. By the end of this decade, despite the restrictions on immigration, the number of Jews reached about 4,000 people.

### **The 1950s**

This was the decade of achievement for the community. The Jewish families were financially well off and the Jews in the outlying areas moved back to Lima in search of a Jewish social and educational framework for their children. Many tracts of land were purchased for the construction of Jewish institutions: a building was acquired for the Jewish Beneficial Society of 1870, the Leon Pinelo school and the Unión Israelita Synagogue; buildings were purchased for the Israeli embassy. Additional buildings were purchased for the cultural center, for the sports club Hebraica and for the Bikur Holim and Hevre Kadisha (visiting the sick and burial society). The Zionist Youth Movement was relocated to the old school building, an old age home Afilantis was established and the Adath Israel Synagogue was built. The Jewish population exceeded 5,000.

### **The 1960s**

This was a period of general change. The second generation of Jews, most of whom were born and educated in Peru assumed the roles of leadership. The community continued to prosper, ties with Israel intensified, the activities of Keren Hayesod were augmented and Aliya increased. More than 80% of Lima's Jews were connected with the Jewish school

that had attracted emissaries (*shlihim*) who served as teachers and as well as the principal. The Hebraica Organization hired a foreign co-ordinator for its activities and three new rabbis were engaged by synagogues. While the outlying communities declined in numbers, Lima's increased and reached 5,500 people.

### **The 1970s**

This decade was a turning point in the life of the Jewish community. It marked the decline in the community from both a demographic and an economic standpoint. The military coup of General Velasco (1968-1980) affected landowners because of agrarian reform, industrialists in the wake of setting up workers' organizations and real estate investors because of a leasing law. The national economic crisis, the politicization of the universities, the students' strikes and the decline of the standard of living, all alienated Jewish youth who began to go abroad especially to Israel and the United States to study. The increase in intermarriage, the beginning signs of open anti-Semitism that manifested itself in an anti-Zionist slant with support for a Palestinian state, the increase in crime and the lack of urban security all stimulated the emigration of Jewish families who either came on Aliya or sought other destinations on the continent. By the end of the decade, the Jewish population had declined to some 4,500 people.

### **The 1980s**

This period saw the weakening of the community. The emigration rate increased spurred on by the economic crisis caused by foreign debt, crime, kidnappings and terror perpetrated by various groups (MRTA and The Shining Light) all of which created a pessimistic view of the future. The Jewish birthrate decreased which along with the other factors saw a decline in the number of school pupils from a peak of 1,014 in 1976 to 540 students in 1990. The Jewish institutions were also in difficult economic circumstances. The "Who is a Jew" question was raised because of the increasing number of children of intermarriages. At the end of

the decade, the Jewish population of Peru had fallen to 3,200 people.

### **The 1990s**

The community's deterioration was clearly felt in this decade. The economic situation in the country and in the Jewish community continually worsened and unemployment and poverty among Jews increased. The dictatorial regime caused tension, fear and great uncertainty. Aliya also decreased because of internal problems in Israel and the feeling that those who came from South America were pushed aside in favor of those arriving from Russia. Inter-marriage increased further, emigration to the United States intensified while the number of pupils in the school steadily declined to only 430. After continuing for 18 years, the annual trip of high school graduates to Israel ended until the end of the decade because of local economic difficulties and internal problems in Israel. The number of financial contributors to the Jewish community also dwindled. In some sectors of the community, notably among the elderly, a religious revival began to manifest itself, which resulted in a Habad rabbi locating in the community. He was supported partially through contributions especially from those affiliated with the Union Israelita Synagogue. The Jewish population dropped to 2,700 people.

It should be pointed out that the religious revival that also appeared in many other places around the world is understandable in the case of Peru. It is a historic given: whenever the Jews began to feel insecure about their future, experience economic pressures and other problems, they draw closer to religion and seek in it refuge and answers.

### **The Decade of 2000**

This period urgently requires the reorganization of the community that will enable it to transmit its legacy and to continue its services, as its future depends on them - this be done in the framework of national optimism with the restoration of democracy in the country following the

election of Alejandro Toledo. However, we do not have much time. We will have to put aside unnecessary internal disagreements and friction utilizing professional criteria. In addition, answers will have to be found for three types of conflict that threaten the community's existence. One is the disparity between the cost of maintaining the community and the benefits and the services that its members expect. The second is how much weight will be given to English studies in contrast to Jewish culture in the education provided to the children. Thirdly, is the organization of the community as a single, united body rather than the current four separate communities each with its own rabbi - the Ashkenazi Orthodox, the Sephardi Orthodox, the Conservative and the Habad.

### **Conclusion**

The Peruvian Jewish community faces a great danger. Elitism splits its members, with regards to what their expectations are concerning services, education and group interests. If the Jews split up into rival groups as in Argentina, the wealthy will solve their own problems and leave all of the others in the fringes. These people in turn, without any protection and being poor, will not find the energy and initiative to maintain their affiliation with the community that does not include them in its self-vision and does not accord them equality. Thus, Peru's Jewish community may lose the historic values that united it and for many it will lose any relevance to their lives. Let us hope that God provides its leaders with vision.

\* This article is a summary of a lecture delivered by Professor Tratemberg at the 14 January 2002 meeting of the Tel Aviv Branch of the Israel Genealogical Society.


**Note:** The Internet site [www.salamon.net/surnamelist.htm](http://www.salamon.net/surnamelist.htm) includes a list of all of the Jewish families of Peru including the names of locations connected to them.

*Professor Leon Trahtemberg was born in Lima. He is a graduate of the Leon Pinelo School in Lima, serving as a teacher for 27*

years and as its principal for 15 years. He is a mechanical engineer with a master's degree in business administration from Peru. He holds a master's degree in education from the Hebrew University *summa cum laude*. He currently is an educational consultant and lectures internationally in education and administration. He has authored a number of

books dealing with education and three books dealing with Jewish immigration to Peru in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He writes a weekly newspaper column as well as a weekly television and radio program in Peru. He has also received a number of prizes for his endeavors in Jewish and general education.

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## The Teschnauer Family

### *Yitzhak Tadmor-Teschnauer*

Translated from the Hebrew

This past summer, my brother and I traveled to Hungary in an attempt to trace the footsteps of our father, Laszlo Teschnauer, who disappeared in Auschwitz in the summer of 1944 along with most of Hungary's Jews. The quest began with a dim childhood memory tucked away in the deepest recesses of my mind: the recollection of a house with a red-tiled roof, a fireplace filled with burning coals, a chest-of-drawers with an oval mirror in which there were two large books, one blue and the other red. I am sitting on my father's lap and together we are turning the pages and looking at the pictures in the book.

In the beginning of the 1980s, after the long delay that most of us experience, I realized that I knew nothing of my father and there was no longer anyone to ask. Only then did I embark on the search for him and his family. The solitary thing I knew at the time was that my father's name was Laszlo Teschnauer and that during World War I he served in the Austro-Hungarian army. In recognition of his service, he received decorations of distinction, which enabled us to escape the deportations from Kosice and later from Budapest in 1944.

The name Teschnauer is very rare in Slovakia and, so it seems, in the entire world. In addition, I have been unable to find a connection between the few Teschnauers that I have discovered. I consulted with several

genealogists and they are of the opinion that the name's origin can be traced to the town of Teschen in The Czech Republic.

The starting point of my search was my memory of the books. I asked my brother, who is a few years older than I am, if there really were books like these or perhaps they were figments of my imagination. He verified that the books existed and the two of us understood that the two books were somehow connected to our father's history. I asked Hungarian émigrés about the red and blue books. Our investigation led us to Yad Vashem where we also asked the same strange question. One of their researchers from the Hungarian department told us that he thought the two books were the ones issued by Hungary's Jews in 1942 in which the Jewish participation in World War I was discussed. It was published by Hegedus Marton and its title is *A Magyar Hadviselt Zsidok Aranyalbuma az 1914-1918 Vilaghaboru Emlékére* – The Golden Book of the Hungarian Jewish Soldiers in Memory of the World War 1914-1918. It was produced in order to find favor in the sight of the Hungarians and Germans and to gain recognition for the patriotism of the Jews. We found a copy at Yad Vashem and it included hundreds of pictures of Jewish soldiers and groups of soldiers from all of the towns and cities of Greater Hungary. We speculated that our father's picture was also

included in the books. We carefully perused the books but did not find him and we assume that he appears in one of the group photographs.

Our mother, Yolanda Brand, married our father in the early 1930s in the city of Kosice. They had three children, my sister Judith, born in 1933, my brother Peter-Jacob, born in 1935 and me, Jan-Yitzhak born in 1939. In March 1944 at the beginning of the German occupation, my mother fled with the three of us while my father was captured during one of the *Aktzias* (roundups) that took place in Kosice between May and June of 1944. My brother remembers a postcard arriving from him from Auschwitz in which he wrote that he was fine. All of this was a closed topic and we rarely ever spoke of it. In the few conversations that I had with my mother about my father, she related to me something vague; that my father had been previously married and that he had a daughter; something mentioned as a matter of fact with no explanation. Beyond this, I knew nothing, especially since we did not have any documents or photographs. In a conversation I had with an uncle from my mother's side of the family, he told me that my father came from the city of Presov in Slovakia.

In 1985, I contacted the Czechoslovakian embassy in Ottawa, Canada, by way of a Canadian Jewish friend, as at that time there were no diplomatic relations with Israel. I was interested in receiving information from the Kosice archives about people living there bearing the family name of Teschnauer. After some time, through my Canadian friend I received the embassy's response that surprised me to a certain extent: nothing was reported about our family, however they reported on another Teschnauer family – Francesca Teschnauer and her husband Elias Blau; they had two children, Dezider and Andrej who were born in 1924 and 1926. The second family was that of Alfred Teschnauer, his wife Regina Friedman and their daughters Edita and Livia born in 1937 and 1939. I attempted to locate them but upon reaching a dead end, I gave up hope and assumed that these families perished in the Holocaust. In that same year, I requested that the Kosice

archives forward me the birth certificates of my brother, my sister and myself, as well as my parent's marriage license. I received the requested documents and from my parent's marriage license I learned two new facts. My father was born on 15 November 1895 and his parents' names were Ignac Teschnauer and Johana Yulesova. Their place of residence was listed as 'unknown.'

In 1986, I placed a notice with the few known details I knew of my father at that time in a newspaper published by Czechoslovakian émigrés that appears in the UK. Two weeks later, I received a letter from Tibor Rosenwasser of Kiryat Yam informing me that he indeed knew my father in Presov. He was married to Rozette Futersack and together they ran the grocery store that she received from her parents on the main street, Masaryk Street.

A short time later Rozette Futersack became pregnant, however, most unfortunately, she and her baby boy died in childbirth. She is buried in the Jewish cemetery of Presov. A few years later, my father married Helena Rosenberg, one of the four daughters of the butcher Rosenberg. The couple had a daughter whose name was Martha in 1924. The marriage ended in divorce and about 1930 my father moved to Kosice, 30 kilometers south of Presov.

I wrote to the Presov archive and they informed me that in their possession there was only one document in which my father's name appeared – the birth certificate of Martha. From that information, it became clear that my father came from a village called Polanka, situated near Kosice. I checked a map and found that there were eight different locations with the name of Polanka in the vicinity of Kosice. I wrote to each of them and never received a reply from any of them. Concerning Martha, I assumed that she perished in the Holocaust. To confirm this I contacted the offices of the Red Cross in Arolsen, Germany and they confirmed that she was taken on a transport that left Presov on 29 March 1942 and she died in Auschwitz in August of that year. Some years later, I read an article by Joshua Bichler, a researcher on the Holocaust in

Slovakia that appeared in *Yalkut Moreshet*, concerning the first transports of women from Presov to Auschwitz. Through the facts collected, it became clear that she was on the second transport that arrived at Auschwitz. Testimony confirming this was found at Yad Vashem where there is a list of the women who were on the transport.

In the same year, 1986, my brother Jacob was in Vienna. At the Austrian War Archives, he submitted a questionnaire concerning our father Laszlo Teschnauer. A month later, we received a reply confirming that the above was a private in the Austro-Hungarian army in the 66<sup>th</sup> infantry unit and was wounded in battle. They even mentioned in which hospital he recuperated. It was at Garamszecs in the District of Gomor Kis-Hont. We have been unsuccessful in finding its location.

Regarding Francesca Teschnauer-Blau who is mentioned in the letter from Kosice that we received through the Czechoslovakian embassy in Canada, I tried using phone books. I sent dozens of letters to Blau families in Israel. I only received one answer, a letter from David Ofek of Jerusalem who wrote that he had a relative by that name and he knew that her parents were Adolf Teschnauer and Etele Atlas. Unfortunately, my contact with him was cut off and I have been unable to locate him since.

In 1989, I received a letter from the Search Bureau for Missing Relatives of the Jewish Agency. They stated that in 1940 a man came on aliya from Czechoslovakia by the name of David the son of Yitzhak Teschnauer. With this information, I contacted the Ministry of the Interior and they told me that he had died in May 1959 and that he had no descendants. They sent me a copy of his death certificate in which his last address was recorded, 8 Allenby Street, Tel Aviv. I went there and found an office building. Someone was able to tell me that previously there was a hotel at that location. I utilized the Tel Aviv City Archives and they located the names of two very elderly people who were connected with the hotel. However, through a telephone conversation with them it became clear that they did not remember anything. I attempted to retrieve his file from the Israel National

Social Insurance, with the claim that he may have been my uncle, but all of my requests were rejected. I contacted the Hevra Kadisha of the Dan Region and of Jerusalem to find out where he was buried but this attempt also ended in failure.

At Yad Vashem, I found evidence on an additional David Teschnauer who lived in the city of Piestany in central Slovakia and was married to Ms. Grossman. All attempts to find him failed and I assumed that he, too, perished in the Holocaust.

In the summer of 1989, I arrived in Czechoslovakia as part of a group tour. It was still under communist rule and there were restrictions regarding travel to places one wished to visit. In spite of this, we were given three days to travel freely. Naturally, we had to report where we were headed and in which hotel we would be staying. In this limited framework, I managed to reach Kosice, to our house. It was occupied by strangers and there was no one I could ask, but I was a bit more successful with the Jewish Community Council. In the cemetery list, I found the name of my grandmother Johana (Yulesova) Teschnauer and in the cemetery itself, I located her grave and remnants of her tombstone. I also discovered the graves of Moses Zvi Teschnauer and his son Solomon Abraham, but I have been unable to find a family connection with them. At the Kosice Archive, I met the director Pavol Salomon who is Jewish. He offered a suggestion concerning the birthplace of my father. He was of the opinion that the actual place was Polomka, a large village in Central Slovakia near the District City of Brezno. In the course of our tour, we passed through Polomka and there we were told that the Jewish cemetery had been wiped out of existence. With regards to the inscriptions, we were told that all those records were either in Brezno or Banska Bistrica but we were unable to travel there because of the restrictions placed on the organized tour.

A gathering of Jews of Czechoslovakia took place at the Diaspora Museum in June 1993. I decided to take advantage of the opportunity and I circulated the known information about our family among all those



attending the conference. That evening I received an excited phone call from Aviva Lichtenstern of Haifa who identified herself as Katrina-Ethel the daughter of Francesca Teschnauer and Elias Blau and the sister of Dezider and Andrej. The children who were at the time of the war 18-20 survived and Aviva and Dezider came on aliya to Eretz Yisrael. I met with them and to our mutual disappointment, we did not find a familial connection. What they did remember were their visits to their grandparents in the village of Matayovce northwest of Kosice.

I wrote to the archive in Banska Bistrica in 1995 and asked them if they had any records in their possession in which the name Teschnauer from the Brezno or Polomka areas appears. Two months later, I received a negative reply. They listed all the files they searched but they did not find the name in any of them. Through the Internet in 1998, I located some people in the United States whose name is Teschner who originated in Povska Bistrica. I contacted them and they sent me an extensive family tree going back to 1780, but unfortunately, I could not find any connection to them.

After becoming discouraged by our searches in books and on the Internet, my brother and I decided to return to Slovakia in the fall of 2001 and try our luck again. We first visited the archives in Kosice and Presov but we did not find anything new. We again tried the local Jewish communities but with the same results. We decided to dedicate our last day to Polomka. We arrived before noon and to our good fortune, we met Diana, the only young woman in the town who spoke Hungarian. She took us to the head of the local council; he reviewed our documents and said that the birth registry records were in a different office. We went there only to find it closed for the lunch break. Diana decided to utilize this time and took us to the church and the local priest. We asked about the Jews of the town and the Jewish cemetery. He replied that he did not know anything about the Jews and with regard to the cemetery he said that he did not know what existed in the past but that he is certain that at present, there is no Jewish cemetery.

We returned to the registry office and met Ludmilla Cernakova who was in charge of the population records. We then repeated to her the whole story and showed her the documentation from the Archives of the Austrian Department of War. She went to the bookshelf and removed a huge volume containing all the births that took place in Polomka. She started checking the list we gave her according to the date we gave her – 15 November 1895 – and she suddenly stopped, and declared, “I found it!” We tensed up and the emotions of all were overpowering. From this outsized book, she went to another large volume and in it found the recording of the birth certificate for Laszlo Teschnauer that took up an entire page that included his parent’s names as well as their ages and their address. We asked Ludmilla to check the books to see if there were other Teschnauer listings. She went back to the books and to our great surprise, she found another four siblings: Zelma, born 1898; Dezider, born 1901; Alfred, born 1904 and Aladar, born 1907. We asked if it would be possible to photocopy the documents and she called Banska Bistrica to make sure. She was told that it was not permitted to photocopy them but that they could be photographed or copied on a video, which we did. They provided us with five official birth certificates along with the required stamps and seals. We checked the earlier lists that we had and two fit in with the new information. Alfred, about whom we knew from the letter from Canada in 1985, and David-Dezider Teschnauer who died in Israel in 1959 were now discovered to be our uncles. Ignac and Johana Teschnauer’s house was located in the northern part of the village, near the river. In a letter recently sent by Ludmilla, she wrote that she found out Ignac’s Teschnauer’s occupation – he had a shop where he sold cement. She also sent us a photocopy from the registry of deaths of the village that included an additional Teschnauer – Moritz Teschnauer, the father of Ignac. He was married to Lotti Kornreich and was a *shohet* and a *mohel*. He died in 1909 at the age of 63, thus the year of his birth was 1846. We traveled to the district

city of Brezno, some fifteen kilometers from Polomka to see if he was buried there. On the list of tombstones that were identified, the Teschnauer name did not appear. The enigma remains. Where are Ignac Teschnauer and his parents buried? It stands to reason that they are buried in a Jewish cemetery some place. There is the possibility that they are in a different village, or in spite of the priest's testimony, perhaps there was a Jewish section on the edge of Polomka's Christian cemetery, a situation that existed in not a few villages in Slovakia and Hungary.

Finally, we felt like we broke through the wall of ignorance that was ours all these years. Now we have a task no less

challenging before us: to reveal the fate of each of the siblings, our aunts and uncles whose documents we have discovered.

*Yitzhak Tadmor-Teschnauer is a native of Kosice, Slovakia (1939). During the Holocaust, he was in the Ghetto of Budapest along with his mother, brother and sister. Before his aliya he was in a children's home in Blankenese near Hamburg. He arrived in Eretz Yisrael in 1947, and has made his home since then at Kibbutz Givat Brenner. He studied general history at Bar-Ilan University and library science at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He is currently the librarian at the Efal Seminar.*



## Portraits of Our Past: Discovering Moises Kaz in the German Archives \*

*Emily Rose*

I grew up looking at two oil paintings hanging above the mantel in my grandfather's New York City apartment (see illustration 1). Somehow I had never inquired about the portraits, and no one in the family had ever told me anything about them. I had no inkling of how meaningful they would become to me.

The story began in 1992 when an elderly distant cousin gave me several pages of a copy of a handwritten German-language Jewish family register that had been brought to America in 1941. My cousin helped me read "Berlizheimer," a name I knew. Then he showed me the name "Kaz," a name I had never heard with respect to my family. He read the name of the village of "Mühringen" written at the top of the page. No one had ever mentioned Mühringen to me, nor had any stories been handed down. All I had known was that my great grandfather had come to the American Midwest in the mid-nineteenth century from Germany. And so began my journey to learn about my family.

I now know that the subjects of the portraits in my grandparents' home were my great great great grandparents Joseph David Berlizheimer (1761-1855) and Gustel Kaz Berlizheimer (1779-1861). The documents I found later in the village, county and state archives revealed their story and the history of rural Jews in south Germany. Up to 1870, over ninety percent of the Jews lived like my ancestors in the villages and small towns.

Joseph David peddled fabrics in the Black Forest Region. Gradually he rose from peddler to merchant. He served as the president, *parnas*, of the Mühringen Jewish community and on the kingdom wide emancipation committees. He appears the successful burgher. One of their children, David, opened a fabric shop and started a cottage-weaving factory in the house bought by Gustel's father, Moises, in 1796.

David died of lung disease in 1849, leaving his second wife with young children. Mina Gundelfinger Berlizheimer and her stepchildren tried to keep the weaving business

a float, but hard economic times and the collapse of the weaving industry made that impossible. The business went bankrupt, and Mina had no choice—like so many other Christians and Jews—but to immigrate to America. In 1857, Mina and her children joined other Berlizheimers who had already settled in the young city of Chicago. Mina died four years later when my great grandfather was 16 years old.

The story of Gustel Kaz Berlizheimer's father, Moises Kaz, illustrates the wide range of documents that can be uncovered in the German archives. In 1994 I met Hans Peter Müller, the author of the Mühringen village history. He helped me find yellowed, fragile and dusty documents about the Berlizheimer family and Moises Kaz in the Mühringen archive, which was then located in the village hall. When the village hall closed for the day, we sat outside the Adler Inn, and he translated some documents for me.

Looking at a house insurance register he read, "Joseph David Berlizheimer took over the house in Mühringen previously owned by Moises Kaz who was living in Rottweil." The name "Moises Kaz" leaped from the page! He was my great great great great grandfather, as listed on the handwritten family register. Since there were no notations on the family register, I had assumed that Moises had lived his entire life in Mühringen. So I drove about 35 minutes south to Rottweil. The director of the town archive greeted me with incredible enthusiasm. He showed me the large houses that Moises Kaz and his descendants had owned in the nineteenth century, and where the Jewish community had worshipped for decades. He also told me the story of how Moises Kaz saved the town from Napoleon's army in 1799. I spent hours in the archives uncovering even more information about Moises' life, and how he and his family impacted the history of the rural Jews.

I did the research for the book *Portraits of Our Past: Jews of the German Countryside*, over five years. While looking for documents, I learned how the German archives were organized, and how someone who does not

read or speak German could track down information. Although I generally thrived on the challenge of uncovering documents, more precise research techniques would have saved me hours of frustration. In most instances, the information presented here reflects my experiences doing research in Baden-Württemberg, but it can be used as a guideline to undertaking research in the archives in the other German states.

Of course, for *Portraits of Our Past* the events of Moises Kaz's life are placed in chronological order. The genealogist, on the other hand, needs to know where to find the information. So I will explain his story in that way.

Before we begin the nuts and bolts of doing research in the archives, I need to emphasize the important role history books played in my research. That first year I bought or photocopied parts of books that pertained to Mühringen, Rottweil or Württemberg Jewish history. Then I checked all the text and citations and made a detailed list before I returned to the German archives the next year. Unfortunately, due to archive reorganizations, most of the citations were no longer valid, but at least these lists gave me a road map of what I should be able to find.

And so I started looking into the old volumes and documents to find out about the life of Moises Kaz. In the village archive (*Gemeindearchiv*) of Mühringen, mid 18<sup>th</sup> century community tax lists (*Gemeindesteuerkataster*) included a Löb Kaz, coming from Nikolsburg, a Jewish community in Bohemia. Löb was the given name of Moises' father on the Jewish family registers. In the contract book (*Kaufbücher*), Moises was listed as a guarantor, as a purchaser of apartments, and then in 1796, as a purchaser of an expensive house (see illustration 2). His signature was in Hebrew indicating that he probably did not write German. The contract books often list only the seller in the index so each page needs to be studied to find the buyer. The fire insurance register (*Brandversicherungskataster*) was the volume that enabled me to discover that Moises Kaz had moved to Rottweil. It is organized by house number; often the



*Joseph David Berlzheimer*



*Gustel Kaz Berlzheimer*



*Moises Kaz's headstone*

information in the remarks column is very pertinent. By means of the property registers (*Güterbücher*), I was able to trace the ownership of Moises' house until his descendants sold it when they were bankrupt and immigrated to America in 1857. These heavy volumes list property number, owner, previous and subsequent owners, and the property value. They are organized by name or property number, and sometimes a single index serves several volumes.

The Jewish cemetery documentation (*Jüdische Friedhofsdokumentation*) listed the grave of Moises Kaz. In the cemetery, although the headstone was greatly weathered, I could make out the two fingers still visible from the outstretched hands of the priestly benediction. This confirmed that Moises was indeed a Kohen (see illustration 3).

Since Moises Kaz did business in the town of Rottweil from the 1780s and moved there in 1803, the next archive level was the town or city archive (*Stadtarchiv*). The best source was the community and town council minute books (*Gemeinderatsprotokolle* / *Stadtratsprotokolle*). These are chronological and usually with an index, and list in detail all the deliberations of community or town councils including transactions, certificates, citizen status, trade status, relations with the town, complaints, etc. Each volume has an index, and the indexes are usually at the beginning or end, but sometimes they are located in the middle. In the index, individuals are listed under last names, or first names, or also under "*Juden*," "*Jud*" and "*Israeliten*." Sometimes the index is incomplete. In most volumes, the pages are numbered 1 followed by 1b; then 2, 2b; and so forth. It is important to photocopy the front page of the volume or any identifying number.

In the minutes books I found the story of how Moises Kaz, at the town's request, had bought the silver owned by the churches and guilds in 1799 when Napoleon's army was threatening to ransack the town. I spent days trying to find the contract itself. I couldn't find it in the index or by going page by page. Finally I said, "I give up" and placed the

heavy volume on the table. Looking down, I saw it had opened to the contract – it had just been placed unbound between the pages of the volume!

Trade tax registers (*Gewerbsteuerkataster*) list individuals with trade category and amount of tax paid. Here I could track the success of Moises Kaz's store and then his bankruptcy in the 1820s.

Contracts (*Verträge*) include engagement, wedding, and estate documents. They are listed and numbered in chronological order by the date of the end of the process. The categorization of these contracts and also of emigration documents does not differentiate, and therefore separate, Jewish and Christian parties.

When Moises received his permission (protection letter, *Schutzbrief*) to do business and live in Rottweil, he published a small announcement in the local newspaper. Looking patiently through issues of the newspaper (*Zeitung*) provided information about Moises' business including his stock and his subsequent bankruptcy. These volumes sometimes have an index.

The types of documents described above can be found in both the village and town/city archives. Many of these have an archive organization register (*Findbuch* or *Repertorium*), that is usually typed or at least not written in the old German script.

Rottweil came under the political control of the Duchy of Württemberg in 1801. Therefore, the information about Moises Kaz also had to be tracked in regional and state archives (*Staatsarchiv*). Often transactions or proceedings initiated at the local or county government level proceeded to the regional and state levels of government, and then returned to the local or county level. (For links to the specific German archives, see [www.lad-bw.de](http://www.lad-bw.de)) These archives have a complex organization system, fixed times for ordering materials, and more rigid photocopying schedules. The state archives have many archive registers: I found documents about Moises Kaz by searching under his name, under Rottweil, and under the broader topics of Jewish legislation and

petitions (which often did not identify him by name).

One of the books I found that first year was a legal history of the Jews to 1828. There I found an 1807 decree by the king in favor of Moises. Unraveling that story entailed many long documents as Moises' petitions to buy land at auction or from bankrupt buyers were turned down at all levels of government and by the high courts.

The king, however, decreed that any subject who was capable of developing land or having it developed could do so regardless of his faith. From this decision came an 1811 decree allowing Jews to own land. I found the decree in the annual Württemberg law register (*Regierungsblatt*). Some indices are located in the middle of these law volumes.

Jewish family registers for each locale (*Jüdisches Familienregister, Ortssippenbuch*) gave me the basic information about the Kaz family. In the Rottweil Jewish family registers I found that Moises was born in 1750 and died in 1829. The registers are located in the state archives in Württemberg. They are also located at the Jewish Community Administration in Stuttgart (*Israelitische Religionsgemeinschaft*), and some original volumes are in the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Givat Ram Campus, Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

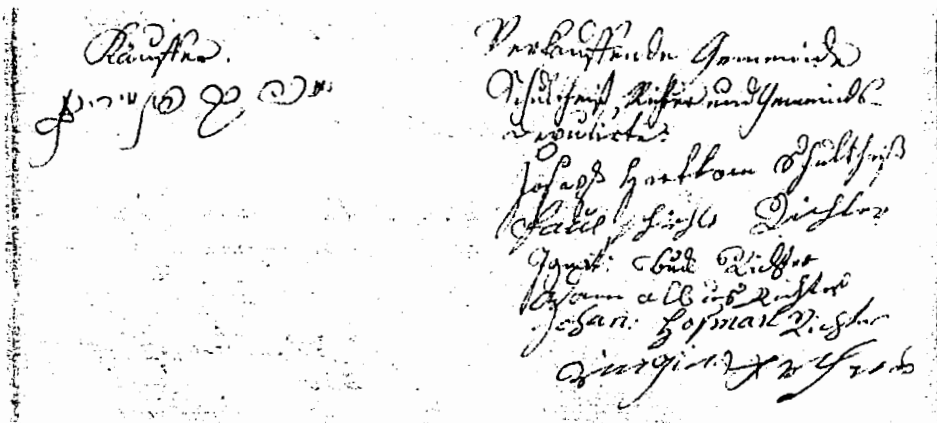
I had been reading the Rottweil histories in which the success of a Rothschild as a town doctor in the 1840s and his subsequent ownership of the town's newspaper were described. In the family registers, I found that

this Rothschild (no relation to the banking family) was the grandson of Moises Kaz.

Documents relating to Jewish affairs – from the community to kingdom wide issues – are housed in the Ludwigsburg State Archive, 30 minutes north of Stuttgart. Moises founded the Rottweil Jewish community in 1806; in the archives we can find the organization petitions and documents pertaining to problems of even such a very small Jewish community. We find that the Ministry of the Interior gave the Rottweil community permission to have a “church” and to set up a fund for the poor, both under its own local administration.

The Ministry stated that the synagogue and religious objects that Moises Kaz personally owned in his house were separate from the “church's” possessions. The archives of the Jewish Superior Church Authority (*Königlich Israelitische Oberkirchenbehörde*) – with its jurisdiction over “church” taxes, rabbis, teachers, and even the apprenticeship program after 1828 – give detailed information about all the Jewish communities and their members. The Ludwigsburg State Archive has an excellent archive organization book for Jewish subjects, people, and places.

My research in the German archives revealed the story of Moises Kaz and his descendants. Their story is part of the history of the rural German Jews in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The portraits of Moises Kaz's daughter and son-in-law are his legacy for future generations.



Handwritten text in German, likely a contract or legal document, featuring a signature and several lines of text. The signature is written in a cursive script and appears to be "Moises Kaz". The text is also in German and includes names like "Joseph Kaschauer" and "Georg".

Section of Moises Kaz's contract with his signature

### Using the German State Archives

Documents are organized in basically the same way in each of the State Archives, but the designations differ from archive to archive. Ask a staff member to check your order form to be sure you have written the required information correctly. Two citations illustrate the system:

HStASt E 146/2 Bü 1193 I and StAS Wü 125/23 Bd. 1 Nr. 28.

1. Name of archive. HStASt is the designation for the Central State Archive in Stuttgart, and StAS is the abbreviation for the State Archive in Sigmaringen.
2. Documents are organized into broad subject matter sections based on governmental sectors and departments called *Bestände*, a “file cabinet.” E 146/2 and Wü 125/23 indicate the subject matter section.
3. Within that “file cabinet” the documents are organized into *Büschel*, “file drawers.” These “drawers” can contain only a few files or a stack two feet high. Bü 1193 I and Bd. 1 Nr. 28 are examples of these file drawer designations.
4. Within the “drawer,” the files are usually organized chronologically, but it is best to check all the files. In some cases, the files are numbered or the pages within a file are numbered, and you should use that number for your photocopying list. Identifying the document by date, however, is the most consistent method for your own records.

After you photocopy a document, write the archive, name of volume, page number, and location of the volume in the archive on the back of the document. Be sure the date is on the page you photocopied or search for a date in the preceding pages.

When in doubt, photocopy. You never know what additional information you will find when you have time to study a document. The cost of photocopying in the state and some town archives can be quite high, while some local archives do not charge a fee.

\* Adapted from *Portraits of Our Past: Jews of the German Countryside*. Copyright 2001 by Emily Rose, by permission of the publisher, The Jewish Publication Society, 2100 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

The German edition, translated from English, is entitled *Als Moises Kaz seine Stadt vor Napoleon rettete: Meiner jüdischen Geschichte auf der Spur* (When Moises Kaz Saved his Town from Napoleon: On the Trail

of My Jewish History), was published by Konrad Theiss Verlag, Stuttgart in 1999.

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## A Brief History of the Jews in Zdunska Wola

*Daniel Wagner*

### Introduction

My mother's mother, Esther POTAZNIK, was born in 1907 in Zdunska Wola, a small town west of Lodz. There were 8 brothers and sisters (and possibly a ninth one) in the family, all born in Zdunska Wola. In the mid-1920s Esther met her future husband David KRELL, from Warsaw, and they immigrated to Liège, Belgium. They were soon followed by two of Esther's siblings: Aron and Ewa (who married Max BRUNENGRABER). Through a maze of lucky circumstances and hiding places in Belgium, these three brothers were the only ones to survive the Holocaust. The rest of the family, which had stayed in Poland, vanished in the concentration camps, including Esther's mother Bajla POTAZNIK (née HERSZKOWICZ), whose name appears on the lists of the Lodz Ghetto. The fate of Esther's father, Abram Wolf POTAZNIK, remains a mystery to this day. According to one version, he was dragged out of a synagogue in Lodz and killed by Poles. No one knows for sure. Esther's husband – my grandfather David – lost his entire family, including his parents: Hanoch KRELL and Sura Rachla RECHTDYNER, and his brothers: Chenek, Chaim Lajb, Mendel, and a sister whose name is unknown. Esther and David lived the rest of their lives in Liège until their deaths in 1970 and 1982, respectively. They had two daughters: my mother Frida Paulette and her sister Annie.

I cannot remember a single occurrence when Esther and David spoke about the family members they lost in the Holocaust. Not with me, and not with my mother. That part of their lives was unmentionable. The POTAZNIK clan was deeply rooted in Zdunska Wola, and I have been able to reconstruct a family tree back to 1796 by using the Mormon microfilms of the Zdunska Wola metrical data, and the 20th century metrical data stored at the USC (Town Hall) in Zdunska Wola. That reconstruction includes details about Esther's brothers and

sisters, and their children. As a matter of fact, I have discovered – and was the only one to know about – the names of 16 members of Esther's family and of 6 members of David's family, who were murdered in the concentration camps. They are now registered in the Pages of Testimony in Yad Vashem, which I see as the last – and only achievable – responsibility we owe to our lost ancestors. Parts of the POTAZNIK and KRELL family trees are presented in Figures 1 and 2.

I have visited Zdunska Wola several times in the last few years and the following account is a summary of the information I have gathered about the town and its former Jewish life.

### The Jewish presence in Zdunska Wola

Jews lived in Zdunska Wola from the late 18th century until World War II. Present-day Zdunska Wola has a population of approximately 50,000, with no Jews left (except possibly for a few isolated individuals). In 1788 there were 11 Jewish families in the settlement of Czekai and 12 peasants families in the village of Zdunska Wola. The parental families living in Czekai in 1788 included the following individuals: WARSHAWSKI – a furrier; WARSHAWSKI, Itzik – a tailor; YACOBOWITZ, Wolf – a tobacco merchant; ZULTA-BRODA – a furrier; CZARNI – a tailor; KOCHMAN – a merchant; LEWEK – a baker; OBASHNI – a tailor; a barber (name unknown); TABAZNIK, Wolf (probably a tobacco merchant); BERKOWICZ (occupation unknown); MASLOWSKI, Paritz (occupation unknown).

Only at the beginning of the 19th century did the settlement of Czekai also acquire the name of Zdunska Wola. According to D. Kij, four Jewish families resided in Zdunska-Wola in 1806: Abram WROCLAWSKI, Berek POTOCKI, Mordka DAJ CZ and Hilel BERGMAN. Zdunska Wola belonged to the gmina [commune] of Lask. A rapid development of industry occurred in the first



half of the 19th century, and the population of Zdunska Wola increased significantly. A wooden synagogue existed from 1826, or even from 1775 according to Goldberg. In 1828 a burial fraternity [Chewra Kadisza] was formed and the cemetery was founded. A brick synagogue was constructed in 1858. The first Rabbi was Lewi CYBIS (Kij). Between the

two World Wars, two Hebrew schools were active, and three Jewish bank cooperatives and a magnificent Kahal building (housing the commune administration and a Talmud-Tora school) existed. In 1921 the Jewish population was 7,885, which represented 47.6% of the total population. In 1939, the number of Jews estimated from several sources was as follows:

	Source 1	Source 2	Source 3
<b>Total population</b>	25,000	27,000	30,000
<b>Jewish population</b>	10,000	9,330	12,000
<b>Percent Jews</b>	40 %	34.5 %	40 %

**Source 1:** D Kij, in:

[www.jewishgen.org/cemetery/e-europe/pol-w-z.html](http://www.jewishgen.org/cemetery/e-europe/pol-w-z.html)

**Source 2:** A. Galinski "Getto w Zdunskiej Woli" ("The Ghetto of Zdunska Wola"), in BIULETYN, Główniej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej XXXV, Warszawa 1993, pp. 142-156.

**Source 3:** P. Rosenberg, in "The Zdunska Wola Book", Israel Press Ltd (1968), pp. 22-25.

A good understanding of the extent of the Jewish presence in Zdunska Wola between 1900 and 1942 may also be learned from the Jewish metrical data books stored at the USC [Town Hall], which include approximately 20,000 individual birth, marriage, and death certificates.

The Nazis annihilated the entire Jewish community of Zdunska Wola. From 1939 to 1942, Jews were either murdered, left to starve, or deported from the town. September 1942 marks the end of the Jewish presence in Zdunska Wola, through the liquidation of its ghetto.

During World War II, the Jews of Zdunska Wola were confined to a ghetto, established along well-defined boundaries (Juliusza, Rynek, Sieradzka, Steszyccka). They were mentally and physically abused and tormented, and left to starve and die of hunger or torture. Lists of Jews hanged in public on the Zdunska Wola ghetto grounds from March to August 1942 are included in Galinski's article. These lists are based on the research findings of regional commissions in Lodz and Zdunska Wola, and of a regional court in Sieradz and Zdunska Wola. Eventually, in August-September 1942, the ghetto was liquidated. The Jewish population – several thousand

people, those who had survived – was brought to the Jewish cemetery, where the Germans selected the stronger ones, about 1200 to 1300, (I. Tabacksblatt), to remain alive to be used as labor. The rest of the Jewish population was to be massacred in the cemetery by the SS soldiers. After the killing of a few hundreds, about 8000 were sent to their death in Chelmno or transported by train to the ghetto in Lodz, for slave labor and further deportation. A schematic map of the ghetto limits and the Jewish buildings appears in "The Zdunska Wola Book." A monument was erected in 1993 in the cemetery, above the mass grave, in memory of Jews murdered by the Nazis during the 1942 liquidation of the Zdunska Wola ghetto. The Jews of Zdunska Wola were robbed of all their possessions: money, clothes and houses. The synagogue was totally destroyed by the German army and nothing was left of it. No memorial plaque exists as yet at the site of the Synagogue. Most Jewish sites in Zdunska Wola have disappeared.

### **The Jewish cemetery**

The formal owner of the cemetery is the Jewish Community in Lodz, headed by Mr. Symbcha Keller. Two committed Jewish groups

outside of Poland are the "Organization of Former Residents of Zdunska Wola in Israel," currently headed by Mr. Yehuda Krool (about 400 members), and an Internet group comprising descendants in various places (Australia, USA, Canada, France, Belgium, and other countries, currently about 80 members), administered by Bernard Markowicz (USA) and myself. The Office of the Mayor of Zdunska Wola (specifically, Mr Jacek Hillebrand) is involved in current activities regarding the cemetery clean up and restoration. A local group of citizens is also concerned by the future of the cemetery.

#### **a. Historical perspective**

The Jewish cemetery of Zdunska Wola was founded in 1828. It is located in Kacza Street and has an area of about 2 hectares. Orthodox, Conservative and Progressive Jews were buried in this cemetery. During recent visits (from 1998 to 2001) by A. Ud, Y. and S. Krool, A. Holtzman, and D. Wagner, and thanks to the efforts of the students of the Yotvata Maale Shaharut School, the Jerusalem Arts and Science School, and the Zdunska Wola Gymnasium No 5, the names and inscriptions on the tombstones were recorded. According to our most recent survey (October 2001), there are currently 963 visible tombstones, including 295 with surnames and 668 patronymics (which was the more traditional Jewish way). I believe that the total number of gravestones is probably as high as 1200 or more. It is the largest Jewish cemetery in the Sieradz region. The oldest gravestone is that of Elazar LIPSZYC, who died in 1837. The last recorded Jewish burials were in 1946. Eventually, when the names recording process is complete, a full listing will be published in a book form.

A total of 1008 Jewish cemeteries have been identified within the territory of present day Poland. Of these, 521 cemeteries have no visible tombstones, 134 have between 20 and 100 tombstones, and 83 have between 100 and 500 tombstones. Only 37 cemeteries (3.6 % of all Jewish cemeteries in Poland) have between 500 and 5000 remaining tombstones. With its 963 gravestones, the cemetery of Zdunska

Wola is, therefore, one of these few valuable testimonials. Only seven Jewish cemeteries (two in Warsaw, two in Wroclaw, Lodz, Krakow, Bialystok) have over 5000 monuments.

The Jewish cemetery is the only remaining concrete testimony of the Jewish presence in Zdunska Wola since the early 19th century. As such, its historical value is imperative. Several well-known individuals and Rabbis are buried in the cemetery, including Szmul GRINSZPAN (who wrote books on the Torah), Sarah Rahel KATZ (whose father was Rabbi Nisen of Bialystok), Eliezer LIFSHIC (Head Judge of the rabbinical court in Zdunska Wola, whose father had the same highly regarded role in the "Beit Hilel" court in Lublin), Menahem Mendel LIPMAN (Head Judge of the rabbinical court in Zdunska Wola), and several individuals belonging to famous rabbinical lineages (such as descendants of the Rabbi of Gur).

Noteworthy individuals whose origins are in the Zdunska Wola Jewish community include Rehavam Zeevi, the Israeli Minister of Tourism who was recently murdered in Jerusalem (his father was born in Zdunska Wola under the surname WOLKOWICZ), the late Israeli General Haim Bar-Lev (formerly WROCLAWSKI), and the former American Ambassador in Israel Martin INDYK (his family emigrated to Australia in the 1920s).

#### **b. The current condition of the cemetery**

The Nazi destruction of Jewish buildings and cemeteries in Poland, with the goal of eradicating every trace of Jewish existence, was followed by half a century of neglect. Despite the recent profound and welcome change in the assessment of these sites as significant to Polish-Jewish history, an enormous task lies ahead to halt and reverse deterioration and abandonment. In the Zdunska Wola cemetery, trees and plants are growing everywhere and increasingly cover the tombstones. Vegetation overgrowth is a constant problem. Many stones have been turned over, are broken, or have been erased by the weather. An unknown number has been vandalized and marble plates with inscriptions have been stolen. Overall, many stones are in

FIGURE 1 – Family tree of Abram Wolf POTAZNIK and Bajla HERSHKOWICZ

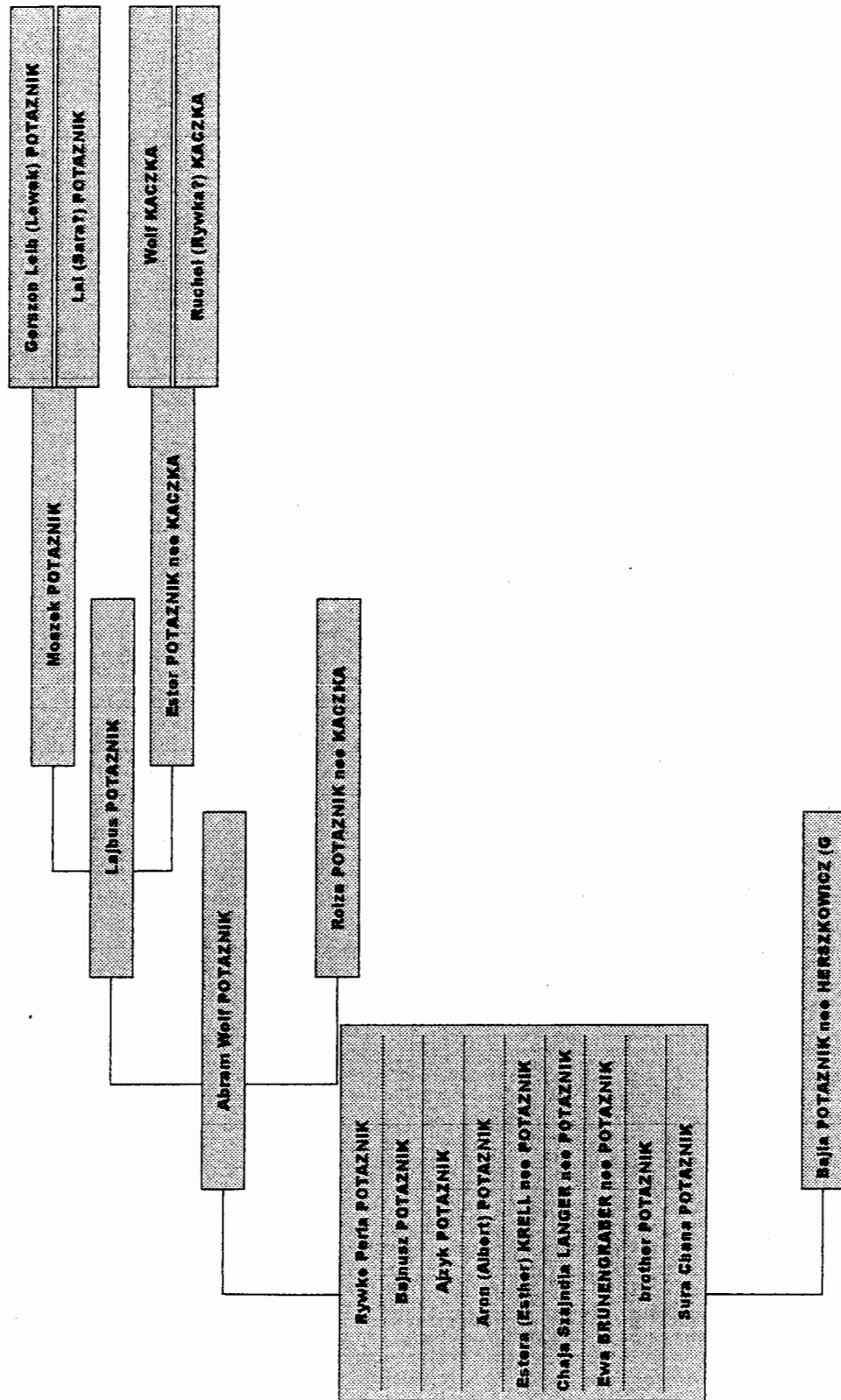
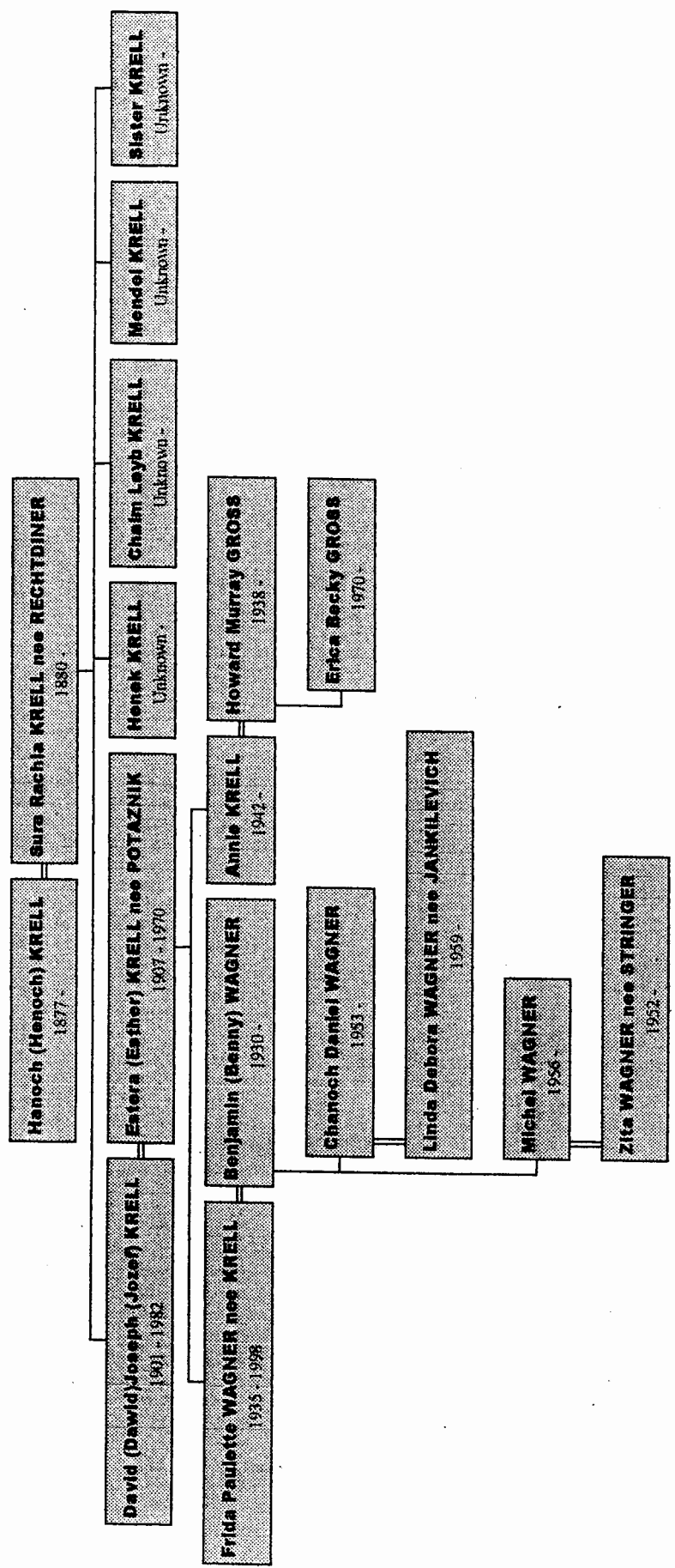


FIGURE 2 – Descendants of Hanoch KRELL and Sura Rachla RECHTDINER



poor condition and there is a lot of restoration work to be done. A full cleaning and restoration of the cemetery is imperative.

The cemetery is voluntarily taken care of by local, concerned citizens (Ella and Renek Bartsch, Kamila Klauzinska, Tomek Polkowski). A masonry wall, which is partially damaged, surrounds the cemetery. The original wall was destroyed during World War II and was restored by private donations and efforts (Mr P. Grinbart and Mr A. Schwarzbart, from Frankfurt/Main). The old gate is not used anymore, and it is in a precarious state. Up to half of the surviving stones have fallen or are broken. Many stones were removed but their location is not known. The cemetery is rich in finely carved headstones dated from the 19th and 20th century. Some have traces of painting on their surfaces. Inscriptions are in Hebrew, Yiddish and Polish (and at least one in German). The cemetery was seriously vandalized during World War II, and has been mildly vandalized in the last 10 years. Serious threats include security and vandalism because the surrounding wall is easily crossed.

In early October 2001, the cemetery was divided into sections and all sections were measured. Based on this work, a detailed cemetery map was drawn. A few days later, the Israeli and Polish children who worked in the cemetery (including my son Jonathan, with his classmates from the Jerusalem School of Arts & Science) restricted their gravestone deciphering activity to two sections only. They added a total of 150 new names to the cemetery listing, including the section location. A total of 963 names are currently included in a computerized database, including 295 with surnames and 668 with patronymics.

### **The future**

In the last few years, with the advent of the World Wide Web, new relationships were created worldwide between many Jewish descendants of ex-residents of Zdunska Wola. This has created a welcome momentum, encompassing the larger existing group of older ex-residents in Israel, who suddenly understood that it might now be

possible to better take care of what was left of the Jewish heritage in Zdunska Wola, including the cemetery, and to perpetuate more concretely the memory of their lost families. Trips were organized to Poland, and meetings between older and younger descendants were held both in Israel and in Zdunska Wola. More importantly, contacts were recently established between the Polish authorities, local concerned residents, the Historical Museum, local high schools (Gymnasium) and the Jewish descendants. All have expressed their concern about the Jewish cemetery, which they acknowledge to be of profound historical importance to the town. There currently is a strong willingness to act. Provided that all groups and individuals share their vision and efforts, it is hoped to renovate the cemetery in a time frame of two to three years, or perhaps even less. Plans are also being made to publish a book about the cemetery.

Various crucial actions may be implemented to commemorate the Jewish community of Zdunska Wola in general, and to preserve the history and beauty of the Jewish cemetery in particular. The most important one is, I believe, the educational activities that should be initiated among the younger generations in Zdunska Wola itself and among the younger descendants in Israel and abroad. The local Historical Museum is playing a role of great importance with the presence of a Jewish Room, which could be expanded. However, the most important task is the development of contacts between youngsters, of joint activities such as restoring the cemetery, meetings and lectures in schools, and more. The objective would be to develop the awareness of younger generations of elements of Jewish culture and history in the context of the town of Zdunska Wola. It is also important to continue and develop the sensitivity of Local Town authorities towards local Jewish sites and the lost Jewish culture in Poland.

Additional information about Jewish life in Zdunska Wola, and the Jewish cemetery, is available on the following web sites:

[www.weizmann.ac.il/wagner/ZdunskaWola/Contents.htm](http://www.weizmann.ac.il/wagner/ZdunskaWola/Contents.htm)

[www.jewishgen.org/JRI-PL/zdunwola.htm](http://www.jewishgen.org/JRI-PL/zdunwola.htm)  
[www.geocities.com/Paris/Rue/4017/zdunska/zdunska.htm](http://www.geocities.com/Paris/Rue/4017/zdunska/zdunska.htm)

### Postscriptum

A year or two before her death in 1998, my mother mentioned that the genealogical research I was doing on my father's side was wonderful and fascinating. "When you have some time, I hope you'll research also my side of the family," she had then said. It may have taken some time, and she is not here to see it anymore, but it is being done. Thoroughly.

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### Acknowledgements

Each one of the following people has been kind, helpful and influential in his own way: Josef Matusiak and Teresa Wojciak (Director and Vice-Director at USC Zdunska Wola), Jacek Hillebrand (Vice-Mayor of Zdunska Wola), Jerzy Chrzanowski (Director of the Historical Museum of Zdunska Wola), Piotr Skorek (Historical Museum of Zdunska Wola), and Ella and Renek Bartsch, Agnieszka Daniel and Kamila Klauzinska.

FIGURE 1 – Family tree of Abram Wolf POTAZNIK and Bajla HERSZKOWICZ

FIGURE 2 – Descendants of Hanoch KRELL and Sura Rachla RECHTDINER

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# The Hasidic Rabbinate

## Part II

*Yehuda Klausner*

### Introduction

In the first part of this article (Klausner 2001) we presented the historic background concerning the birth and foundation of the Hasidic movement and the persons responsible for its formation – the **Baal Shem Tov (BESHT)**, and his early collaborators. We discussed some aspects of the rivalry between the newly conceived movement and the counter movement, the “**Mitnagdim**,” under the direct leadership of R’Eliyahu Hasid the Gaon (HaGRA), and also listed the names of the members of the second and third generations of the movement.

In this second part we will discuss the latter generations and describe the organization of the movement, the “**dynasties**.”

### Hasidic Generations

Against all odds, especially the opposition of the “**Mitnagdim**” Rabbinate, the Hasidic movement took off and found appeal among the underprivileged people in the small towns and villages in the Pale of Settlement, who were deprived of any social, cultural and financial status. The movement that started in Podolia spread to the Ukraine, Galicia, Moldavia, Romania in the near vicinity, and to the more distant Austria-Hungary, Poland, Belarus, Lithuania and Russia (see map in the Hebrew version of this article).

As Israel b’Eliezer (1700-1760), the **BESHT**, is considered the founder of the movement, his disciples are considered the second generation. This generation includes R’Dov Ber **Friedman** (1704-1773), known as the “**Magid of Miedzyrzec**,” senior to the **BESHT** in accomplishments, who helped the **BESHT** educate and indoctrinate the second generation of disciples, mostly accomplished Rabbis themselves who, excited by the new movement, came and joined it.

R’Dov Ber was the teacher of the second and third generations of Hasidic Rabbis as well, while they in turn were the masters of the

fourth generation and so on.

Eight generations can be traced from the time of the **BESHT** until the present day (see Appendix).

In each generation there were disciples that stood out and had the appeal, charisma and stamina to form and head Hasidic dynasties, some of which are still viable today. On the other hand there were disciples who did not form Hasidic dynasties, and their names, in the first and second generation, were given in the first part of *The Hasidic Rabbinate* (Klausner 2001).

### Hasidic Dynasties

The following distribution of dynasties according to generations and the names of their founders is based on Alfasi (Alfasi 1977). The succession of generations is given below.

R’Dov Ber **Friedman** was the teacher of the second and third generation, as mentioned above. Many of his disciples founded their own schools, established dynasties and were surrounded by followers. A few of them became teachers themselves and their disciples became the teachers and leaders of new dynasties of the subsequent generations. See Appendix for the succession of generations. The teachers in each generation are marked with an asterisk\*.

The list of dynasties in the Appendix contains around one hundred original dynasties, each headed by an Admor (see next chapter) with its original location. Some of the dynasties were small and localized, while others enjoyed thousands of followers and were spread over many towns. They formed sub-dynasties headed by new Admorim, who were sons, sons-in-law or relatives of the main Admor, and the sub-dynasty was named after the location of the new Admor. For instance, one of the largest and most viable dynasties, the **Twerski** dynasty of Chernobyl, was subdivided into over 30 secondary, tertiary, etc. dynasties.

Most of the Twerski Admorim perished in the Holocaust. Those few who survived restored the dynasties and reside today in New York, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Montreal, London, Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv and Bnei-Brak. Another moderate size but not less important dynasty is that of the Hagers of Kosow, with sub-dynasties established now in New York, Monsey, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa and Bnei Brak.

Two Hasidic movements, Habad and Braslav, did not promote the dynasty concept through sub-dynasties:

- a. The Habad movement of R'Shneur Zalman of Lyady remained a centralized organization with one Admor at its head. At his death, he was replaced by a new Admor. However, Habad made extensive use of *Shlihim* – emissaries or envoys – sent by the Rabbi to remote or less remote places in order to bring the message of the organization and the Rabbi to those places. Habad became a large, perhaps the largest, and most influential Hasidic movement. Habad is unique within the Hasidic movement and differs in many other ways from the regular dynasties.
- b. The Braslav Hasidic movement founded by R'Nachman (1772-1810) of Wroclaw, a great grandson of the BESHT (the son of Feige the daughter of Edel the daughter of the BESHT), did not establish a dynasty. R'Nachman was a unique personality of high qualities and appeal. Later in his life, he moved to Uman where he eventually died. His followers did not install, after his death and to the present, any new Rabbi to lead them. The Braslaver Hasidism is nevertheless an influential and growing movement today.

### The Admor

The principles of Hasidism, mentioned in the first part (Klausner 2001), state that the level of the God-fearing and righteous *Tzaddik*, the highest level in approaching God, might be attained by prayer and total devotion to God. The person who attained this level would merit

being the leader of the congregation and could mediate between God and the people. The *Tzaddik* was the one in whom the people could confide, who would comfort them in their misfortunes and grief, advise them in their daily endeavors, pray for them, bring their grievances before God and share their happiness and rejoice in their feasts. The *Tzaddik* was admired and respected by the people and was thus awarded the title Admor, an acronym for *Adonenu Morenu v'Rabbenu* (*our Master, Teacher and Rabbi*) and was called affectionately Rabbi or Rebbe. Out of respect, admiration and esteem for the Rebbe his followers named their newborn boys after him. They also formed around him a sort of court, with the Admor at its head.

While most Admorim were humble and modest in their daily life and in the relationship with their followers, there were a few whose behavior was different. R'Shalom Shachna b'Dov Ber Friedman of Prochowice, for example, after his father the Magid of Mierzyrzec died installed a regal style in his court, with all the pomp and show, including changes in his clothing style. His son R'Israel Friedman of Ruzhany, the founder of the Ruzhany dynasty and a much-respected figure by both Hasidim and Mitnagdim, continued with that style. R'Zvi Hirsh b'David Hager of Pistiany, the grandson of the founder of the Kosova dynasty, built for himself a large Bet Midrash and his brother R'Yechiel Mechl b'David Hager built a big house where he was surrounded by his followers. Hasidim supported their Admor to the best of their ability and felt proud to be concerned with his well being, even to the extent of making Hasidim of other dynasties envious.

While many attained the level of *Tzaddik* and the title of Admor on their own merit and achievement, particularly in the early generations, in the latter generations the title was passed on by inheritance from father to son, and was not necessarily based on scholastic record. Charisma was an additional factor that was considered when naming an Admor. There were also some extreme cases such as R'Shlomo Benzion b'Yeshaya



Meshulam Twerski who was named Admor of Chernobyl in the United States at the age of 13. An even more extreme case was that of R'Israel b'Asher Perloff of Stolin who was orphaned at the age of 4, became Admor at age of 6 and was called the "Yenuka of Stolin" ("the Child-Rabbi of Stolin"). He grew up to be a wise educated Rabbi versed in the sciences and an accomplished composer, and had thousands of followers.

The behavior of the Admorim was diverse. There were some that were detached from the people, lived in seclusion, prayer, meditation and study, making provisions for receiving only those in need of consultation. On the other end there were those who felt free to come to the community and communicate directly with the public and were easily accessible by their flock. And of course there were those in between.

Many Admorim practiced various forms of Tzedaka (charitable deeds) like Pidyon Shvuyim (redemption of prisoners) and support of the poor, with some even spending all their earnings on this. There were others with eccentric and odd habits. R'Yitzchak b'Mordechay Leifer of Stanislawow faced his followers with his face covered, R'Benyamin b'Yechiel Leifer of Cluj never tasted meat, R'Shlomo Zalman b'Avraham Frenkel of Debica never slept in his bed, R'Shabtay b'Shlomo Zalmina Zuckerman of Ruscova in the United States used to feed the animals each morning. Some Rabbis pursued hobbies or practiced some trade or craft: R'Mordechay B'Yochanan Twerski was a brass and silver carver in Jerusalem, R'David b'Mordechay Zusha Twerski of Hotzalas and R'Avraham b'Chayim Meir Yechiel Shapira of Drohobycz-Jerusalem were accomplished and

Avne Nezer by R'Avraham b'Zev Nachum Bornstein  
Beer Mayim Chayim by R'Chayim b'Shlomo Tierer  
Bne Yisachar by R'Zvi Elimelech b'Pesach Shapira  
Chidushe HaRIM by R'Yitzchak Meir b'Israel Alter  
Darche Tshuva by R'Zvi Hirsh b'Shlomo Shapira  
Divre Chayim by R'Chayim b'Arye Leib Halberstam  
Imre Emet by R'Avraham Mordechay b'Yehuda Arye Leib Alter

recognized artists.

Still, the Rabbis led a very ascetic life of self-denial, fast and devoted prayers. Although not removed from their followers in their personal practice, they kept away from earthly pleasures. They served God with their body and soul. Therefore singing and dancing were part of Hasidic gatherings and prayers, and the festive communal meals (the "tish"), were led by the Rabbis themselves, who sometimes composed the tunes that were sung. Some were famous for composing the tunes for various prayers, which drew many worshippers to the synagogue. Sometimes an entire dynasty, like the Wisznice dynasty, was renowned for its tunes that were sung on every occasion. The **Hagers of the Kosow-Wisznice** dynasty and the **Taubs of the Kuzmir-Modzsitz** dynasty are also famous for their musicality and have a long line of musically endowed Admorim. Other dynasties also had composers and lyricists who contributed their share to Hasidic music.

### **Literary and Scientific Endeavor**

In spite of the fact that Hasidic Rabbis were generally not considered Talmidei Hahamim – Torah scholars – many of them were indeed real scholars, bright and witty. R'David b'Yitzchak Twerski of Skavira, for example, completed the Mishna every month. In contrast to the common belief, there were Admorim who also served as Posek – Rabbinic arbitrator. The literary work of Hasidic Rabbis and Admorim was restricted mainly to Rabbinic literature, commentaries on the Torah and the Talmud as well as Responsa literature. The vastness and abundance of that literature permits us to quote only a few works and their authors:

**Imre Noam** by R'Meir Yechiel b'Eliezer **Horovitz Rubin**  
**Lev Sameach** by R'Chanoch Heinich b'Shmu'el Meir **Rokach**  
**Maor Vashemesh** by R'Klonimus Kalman b'Aharon **Epstein**  
**Minchat Elazar** by R'Chayim Elazar b'Zvi Hirsh **Shapira**  
**Noam Elimelech** by R'Elimelech b'Elazar Lipman **Weissblum**  
**Ohev Israel** by R'Avraham Yoshua Heshl b'Shmu'el **Manes**  
**Sfat Emet** by R'Yehuda Arye Leib b'Avraham Mordechay **Alter**  
**Tanya** by R'Shneor Zalman b'Baruch of Lyady  
**Yismach Moshe** by R'Moshe b'Zvi **Teitelbaum**  
**Yitav Lev** by R'Yekuti'el Yehuda b'Elazar Nisan **Teitelbaum**

Several Admorim had very wide interests, and were even open and receptive to general culture and science, while others studied general or Jewish philosophy. R'Shalom b'David **Halperin** of Vaslui, R'David Yehuda Arye b'Avraham Yoshua Heshel **Twerski** of Kantyn, R'Natan b'Chayim **Gedalya Rabinovitz** of Izbica were interested in science while R'Menachem Mendl b'Levi **Yitzchak Shneorson** of New York had an engineering education from the Sorbonne. Some Admorim mastered medicine and often helped the sick among their people. R'Aharon b'Shimshon **Gardiya Dr.** of Miedzyrzec was the physician of the Prusian King and R'Dov Ber **Friedman** of Miedzyrzec became his patient. In imparting cure for the maladies and relief in the daily burdens of their followers, some of the Admorim were much revered and looked upon with awe. On the other hand, there were many that practiced "healing," wrote kameot (amulets) and were considered "miracle workers."

### **Hasidic persecution and the Holocaust**

Opposition to the Hasidim came from within, the Mitnagdim, and from the authorities as well. R'Klonimus Kalman b'Aharon **Epstein**, one of the founders of the Krakow-Neustadt dynasty, was excommunicated by R'Yitzchak b'Mordechai **Halevi**, the Av Beit Din – head of the rabbinic court of Krakow, and was subjected to years of humiliation by the community.

The Mitnagdim sometimes went so far as to denounce the Hasidim to the authorities, which twice led to the arrest of R'Shneor Zalman of Lyady the leader of the Lubavich dynasty (Habad). Many Rabbis were arrested under the Soviet regime. Some were exiled to

Siberia, others were killed by the mob as Jews, like R'Shlomo b'Moshe **Gotlieb** of Karlin and R'Avraham **Eichenstein** of Baranowicze. Against R'Avraham Moshe b'Emanuel **Weltfreud** of Rozprza the blood libel was raised.

The Holocaust superseded all these persecutions and in the period of five years approximately 350-500 Hasidic Rabbis and Admorim were murdered. The list of victims can be found in many publications. It should be remarked here that there were Rabbis who rejected opportunities to escape and preferred to go to their deaths together with their community, among them R'Eliezer b'Yechiel **Mechl Halperin Halevi** of Korets, R'Shlomo Chanoch b'Yechezkel **Rabinovitz Hakohen** of Radomsk, R'Kalmish b'Israel **Yosef Finkler** of Radoszyce, R'Avraham b'Yosef David of Damits, R'Baruch b'Shalom **Safrin** of Komarno and others.

Many Hasidic Rabbis survived the death camps, and after their liberation immigrated either to Israel or the United States, where they reestablished their Hasidic court and dynasty.

### **The Hasidic Immigration to Eretz Yisrael**

Eretz Israel played a central role in the Hasidic movement from its conception. The Baal Shem Tov himself and some of his close disciples toyed with the idea of leaving Europe and going to the Holy Land, but for technical reasons their desire never materialized. Baal Shem Tov's bother-in-law, however, R'Avraham Gershon **Ashkenazi** of Kitow, was the first Hasid who immigrated to Eretz Israel in 1747 where he lived for 14 years until his death.

A continuous immigration of individual Rabbis or small groups followed. Some came for a short visit while others decided to stay permanently. There were also those who came to settle but due to hardships of life and climate or health problems had to leave.

Some Hasidic Rabbis supported the religious parties, the **Mizrachi** or the **Agudat Israel** and even non-religious Zionist movements like **Hovevei Zion**. The Hasidic movement did not act uniformly in its relationship to the many Zionist groups that were organized. At first, they opposed Zionism in general, but with time and the tireless efforts of Rabbi Israel b'Moshe **Friedman** (1854-1933) of Czortkow, some of the leading Rabbis joined Agudat Israel and others like the Hungarian **Teitelbaum** Rabbis and the Romanian **Hager** Rabbis supported the "Mizrachi" line. The main opposition came from R'Yisachar Dov b'Yoshua **Rokach** (1854-1927) of Belz, who had his own organization "Machzikei Hadat". It is impossible to mention all supporters of Aliya to Eretz Yisrael and certainly not the hundreds of Rabbis that actually immigrated to the Holy Land defying their leaders' wish and instruction. Immigration was halted by World War II and the Holocaust, but most of the surviving Rabbis and their Hasidic flock settled in Israel. Some settled in the United States. Some leaders deserve mention for their special contributions.

R'Menachem Mendl b'Moshe (1730-1788) of Vitebsk immigrated in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the Holy Land and settled in Safed and Tiberias in spite of the fact that his close colleague R'Shneur Zalman was a fierce opponent of the Zionist movement.

R'Israel Chayim b'David **Morgenstern** (1840-1905) of Pila was an ardent Zionist. He pleaded for the Aliya of 1000 Rabbinic families to Eretz Yisrael, but was met with intense opposition by R'Yehuda Arye Leib b'Avraham Mordechay **Alter** (1847-1905) of Gora and consequently the response was limited.

R'Avraham Yakov b'Israel **Friedman** (1884-1961) of Sadegora survived the Holocaust. When he came to the Holy Land, he took it upon himself to sweep its streets in recompense of being forced to sweep the

streets of Vienna.

Contrary to all Habad leaders before him, R'Menachem Mendl b'Levi Yitzchak **Shneorson** (1902-1995) the last leader of the Habad movement, took a Zionist stand and supported Aliya more than any of the other Hasidic leaders. A detailed account of the Hasidic immigration and settlement in Eretz Yisrael, including names, may be found in Alfasi (Alfasi 1986).

### **Names**

It is important as genealogists to say a few words about names, specifically the "given" name. We are accustomed that given names in the family repeat themselves every third generation in the honor and memory of the grandfather. In the Hasidic dynasties this custom is highly intensified. The name of the Tzaddik is repeated not only by his close or extended family but by his disciples and followers. For example, the names Elimelech, Melech that were a rarity at the beginning, became widely used after R'Elimelech b'Elazar Lipman **Weissblum** (1717-1786) of Lesayzk.

The affiliation of a member to a dynasty could be, in many cases, detected by his name. In the **Friedman** dynasty of Miedzyrzec the names Avraham, Shalom, Israel and Yitzhak became frequent. Meir and Aharon became frequent in the Przemysl dynasty. Yehiel was a common name in the **Magid** of Zloczew's dynasty. In the **Twerski** dynasty of Czernobyl the names Nachum, Mordechay and David returned again and again. In the **Hager** dynasty of Kosow the names Chayim and Menahem were frequent. The **Rabinovitz** dynasty of Przysucha used the name combination Yakov Yitzhak and the **Teitelbaum** dynasty of Ujhely used the name Yekutiel. The **Rokach** dynasty used the names Shalom, Elazar and the combination Yisachar Dov. In R'Yakov Yosef's dynasty of Ostrog one third of the Rabbis were named Yakov Yosef and another third were named Elyakim. In the later generations, due to inter-marriages between dynasties the name peculiarity and distinction has disappeared.

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## Appendix

### First generation

\* R'Israel b'Eliezer **Baal-Shem-Tov (BESHT)** 1698-1760 of Medzhibozh

### Second generation

\* R'Dov Ber b'Avraham **Friedman (Magid)** 1704-1773 of Miedrzyrzec  
R'Pinchas b'Avraham **Aba Shapira** 1720-1790 of Korets  
R'Shabtay **Unknown** 1655-1745 of Ruscova  
R'Meir b'Yacov **Unknown** 1711-1773 of Przemyslan  
R'Zvi Hirsh b'David **Kaminker** -1780 of Kamionka  
Additional disciples of the BESHT listed in (Klausner 2001)

### Third generation

\* R'Yechiel Mechl b'Yitzchak **Spravidliver** 1721-1786 of Zloczew  
R'Nachum b'Zvi **Twerski** 1730-1798 of Chernobyl  
\* R'Aharon b'Yakov **Perloff Hagadol** 1736-1772 of Karlino  
R'Yakov Yosef b'Yehuda Arye Leib **Unknown** -1790 of Ostrog  
\* R'Elimelech b'Eliezer Lippman **Weissblum** 1717-1787 of Lezajsk  
R'Meshulam Zusha b'Eliezer Lippman **Weissblum** -1800 of Hanipoli  
\* R'Shneor Zalman b'Baruch **Unknown** 1745-1812 of Lyady  
R'Levi Yitzchak b'Meir **Unknown** 1740-1809 of Berdichev  
R'Shimon Shlomo b'Avraham **Wertheim** -1790 of Savran  
R'Chayim **Unknown** -1787 of Indura  
R'Arye Leib b'Shalom **Unknown** -1827 of Volochisk  
R'Zvi Hirsh b'Shalom Zelig **Magid** -1802 of Nadvorna  
R'Shlomo b'Avraham **Lutzker** 1740-1812 of Skole  
R'Avraham **Aba Weingarten** of Soroca  
R'Meshulam Feivish b'Aharon Moshe **Heller** 1740-1794 of Zbarazh  
R'Gedalya b'Yitzchak **Rabinovitz** -1802 of Linitz  
R'Chayim b'Shlomo **Tierer** 1760-1819 of Cernauti  
\* R'Shlomo b' Moshe **Gottlieb Halevi** ר"י 1738-1792 of Karlino  
Additional disciples of R'Dov Ber Friedman (Magid) listed in (Klausner 2001)

### Fourth generation

\* R'Mordechay b'Dov Ber **Shapira** 1748-1800 of Naskiz  
R'Shmu'el b'Mechl **Ginsburg** -1818 of Davidgrodek  
R'Zvi Arye b'Avraham **Landa** 1741-1811 of Olkusz

R'Yitzchak Isik b'Moshe Yechezkel **Taub** 1751-1821 of Kala  
 R'Moshe Arye Leib **Erblich** 1745-1807 of Sasow  
 \* R'Yakov Yitzchak b'Avraham Eliezer **Horovitz** (the Seer) 1745-1815 of Lublin  
 \* R'Israel b'Shabtay **Hoffstein** 1736-1814 of Kozienice  
 \* R'Avraham Yoshua Heshl b'Shmu'el **Manes** 1755-1825 of Opatow  
 R'Aharon b'Moshe **Horovitz** Halevi 1766-1828 of Strashla  
 R'Mordechay **Perloff** 1742-1809 of Lachowicze  
 \* R'Menachem Mendl b'Yakov Koppel **Hager** 1768-1825 of Kosow  
 Additional disciples of R'Elimelech Weissblum

#### **Fifth generation**

\* R'David b'Shlomo Zvi **Biederman** 1746-1814 of Lelow  
 R'Klonimus Kalman b'Aharon **Epstein** Halevi 1751-1827 of Krakow  
 R'Yitzchak Isik b'Zvi **Eichenstein** 1740-1800 of Safrin  
 R'Naftali Zvi b'Menachem Mendl **Rubin-Horovitz** 1760-1827 of Ropczyce  
 R'Natan Neta **Unknown** -1811 of Chelm  
 R'Shmu'el b'Avraham Yeshaya -1820 of Karow  
 R'Meir **Rothenburg** Halevi -1827 of Opatow  
 \* R'Uri b'Pinchas **Unknown** (HaSaraf) -1826 of Strzelsk  
 \* R'Yakov Yitzchak b'Asher **Rabinovitz** (The Holly Jew) 1766-1813 of Przysucha  
 R'Yeshayahu b'Meir **Weltfreud** 1758-1831 of Przedborz  
 R'Yosef b'Mordechay **Kazis Neuhaus** of Chelm  
 R'Moshe b'Zvi Hirsh **Schiff Teitelbaum** 1759-1841 of Ujhely  
 R'Zvi Elimelech b'Pesach **Shapira** 1783-1841 of Dynow  
 R'Arye Leib Epstein -1837 of Ozarow  
 R'Mordechay David b'Zvi **Ungar** 1770-1843 of Dombrowa  
 R'Yitzchak Isik b'Shmu'el Zanvil **Gartner** -1826 of Leczyca  
 R'Arye Leib b'Chayim Asher **Lipshitz** 1767-1846 of Wisnicz  
 R'Avraham David b'Asher **Wahrman** 1771-1840 of Buchach  
 \* R'Simcha Bunim b'Zvi **Unknown** 1767-1827 of Przysucha  
 R'Yisachar Dov Ber b'Yitzchak **Baron** 1765-1843 of Radoszyce  
 \* R'Shalom b'Elazar **Rokach** 1779-1855 of Belz  
 R'Yehuda Zvi b'Shmu'el Zanvil **Brandwein** 1780-1844 of Stratyn  
 R'Yechezkel b'Yosef **Panet** 1783-1845 of Karlsburg  
 R'Zvi Hirsh b'Yehuda Arye Leib **Unknown** 1778-1846 of Rymanow  
 R'Shlomo Arye Leib b'Baruch **Unknown** -1843 of Leczna  
 R'Yosef **Green** 1787-1839 of Jarczow  
 R'Arye Leib b'Elyakim Getzl **Liebersohn** of Pruszkow  
 R'Shimon b'Israel Arye Leib **Elbaum Mariles** 1759-1850 of Jaroslaw  
 Additional disciples of R'Yakov Horovitz (the Seer)

#### **Sixth generation**

R'Yechezkel b'Zvi Hirsh **Taub** -1855 of Kazimierza  
 \* R'Yitzchak b'Shimon **Kalish** 1779-1848 of Warka  
 \* R'Menachem Mendl b'Yehuda Arye Leib **Morgenstern** 1787-1859 of Kock  
 \* R'Chayim b'Arye Leib **Halberstam** 1793-1876 of Zacz  
 R'Shlomo b'Dov Zvi **Rabinovitz** Hakohen 1803-1866 of Radomsk  
 R'Shalom b'Yakov Yosef **Rosenfeld** Halevi 1800-1851 of Kamionka  
 R'Moshe b'Israel **Falier** 1784-1858 of Kobryn  
 R'Yakov Arye b'Shlomo **Gutterman** 1792-1874 of Radzymin  
 R'Mordechay Yosef b'Yakov **Leiner** 1801-1854 of Izbica

- \* R' Yitzchak Meir b' Israel **Rothenberg-Alter** 1799-1866 of Gora
- \* R' Avraham b' Refael **Landa** 1744-1875 of Ciechanow
- R' Avraham b' Yitzchak Matityahu **Weinberg** 1804-1883 of Slonim
- R' Shmuel Aba b' Selig **Zichlinski** 1810-1879 of Zychlin
- R' Yehuda Pesach b' Avraham **Unknown** 1802-1865 of Lipsko
- R' Shlomo Zalman b' Avraham **Frenkel** 1804-1858 of Wielopole
- R' Eliezer Zev Wolf b' Chayim **Rabinsohn** 1800-1852 of Buchach
- Additional disciples of the disciples of R' Yakov Horovitz (the Seer)

#### Seventh generation

- \* R' Yehuda Arye Leib b' Shlomo **Eger** 1815-1888 of Lublin
- R' Avraham Yosefe b' Eliyahu **Lehrman** 1857-1891 of Koniskowola
- R' Yechiel Meir **Lipshitz** 1816-1887 Husiatyn
- R' Avraham b' Zev Nachum **Bornstein** 1839-1910 of Sochaczew
- R' Shraga Feivel b' Zvi Hirsh **Danziger** -1848 of Alexander
- R' Yisachar Dov Ber **Thornheim** Hakohen 1803-1877 of Wolborz
- R' Uri b' Efraim Zvi **Yalles** Hakohen 1833-1910 of Sambor
- R' Meshulam Feish Levi 1821-1875 of Tesin
- R' Zvi Hirsh b' Aharon **Friedman** 1790-1874 of Lesko
- R' Naftali Hirtz **Unknown** -1897 of Ratzfert
- R' Shmuel b' Shraga Feivel **Frenkel** 1814-1883 of Komod-Darag
- R' Yoshua Heshl **Fried** Hakohen 1824-1921 of Kopycz
- R' Yosef Meir b' Shmuel Zvi **Weiss** 1838-1909 of Szapinka
- R' Yeshaya b' Moshe **Steiner** 1852-1925 of Kereszt-Ur
- R' Zadok b' Yakov **Rabinovitz** Hakohen 1823-1900 of Lublin

#### Eighth and last generation

- R' Menachem Nachum b' Yehuda Arye Leib **Epstein** 1846-1918 of Kobrin
- R' Avraham Moshe **Weintraub** -1915 of Marshakow
- R' Meir Yechiel b' Avraham Yitzchak **Holzstock** Halevi 1851-1928 of Ostrowice
- R' Aharon Yeshaya **Fisch** 1815-1928 of Hadas
- R' Aharon **Rothe** 1894-1947 of Satu-Mare
- R' Yehuda Arye Leib **Ashlag** 1886-1954 of Parysow
- R' Avraham Yoshua b' Moshe Arye **Freund** 1856-1932 of Naszod
- R' Eliezer **Fisch** 1880-1944 of Bikszad
- Independent Admorim.



## Mustarabim, Morishcos or Turks

*Shmuel Shamir*

Translated from the Hebrew

Some thirty-four years ago, after the liberation of the Old City of Jerusalem, my father Eliyahu, my brother Raphael, my wife Martha and I went on a tour of the Jewish Quarter. There my father showed us an old house and pointed it out as belonging to our family. He told us that this house had been passed from generation to generation in accordance with the will of Baruch Mizrahi that was written in Jerusalem in 1643. It included a specific directive to the generations that would follow stating that this property was not to be sold or mortgaged until the coming of the Messiah, as he wanted to return to live there after the resurrection of the dead that will take place with the arrival of the Messiah. At that time, we had not seen the will.

The house was situated among the ruins that the Jordanians left behind. From out of the house an old Arab woman who lived in one of the rooms suddenly appeared. She immediately identified our father and said that she remembered the time he would accompany my grandfather when he came to collect the rent.

After our father's death, I found some yellowed and deteriorating printed sheets. Looking them over, I discovered a will and the details of a legal dispute from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century concerning property encroachment between my great-grandfather, Eliezer Mizrahi, and his neighbor, the printer Roitman. Roitman constructed a building in his courtyard and went beyond the property line and intruded into the property of Baruch Mizrahi. Eliezer Mizrahi was one of Baruch's descendants at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He lived in and took care of the house of Baruch Mizrahi fulfilling the will's provisions.

After discovering these pages I had them bound and distributed them to the members of our family. Since that time, I have been researching the history of our family, proceeding carefully at a snail's pace. This

has been an interesting and difficult research, involving among other things the study of the history of Jerusalem and its Jewish community.

My father said that our family belonged to the Mustarabim, that is those Jews who never left the city of Jerusalem. My Uncle Yitzhak and his friend Professor Joel Rivlin had a different version – that we descended from Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrahi who was among the leading rabbis of the east in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a member of the Romaniote community and chief rabbi who lived in Constantinople between 1450 and 1526. He was a descendant of the Morishcos. That term is used to describe the Jews who came from Arabic speaking countries in the Mediterranean basin. Still another account has us as being descendants of the exiles from Spain and that our family was one of the first four that settled in Jerusalem after the expulsion from Spain in 1492.

In my research I built a family tree and in so doing I revealed very interesting information: that there was the book of the *gabaim* (synagogue officials) of the old Yohanan ben Zakkai synagogue, recording contributors, also including a list of tourists dating from one hundred years before the fall of the Jewish Quarter in 1948. I also discovered antique ark curtains from the 17<sup>th</sup> century – one is in the Jewish Museum in London and the other hangs on the wall of the living room in my house. I found an old manuscript of Hayim Vital who was among the disciples of the Ari Hakadosh (Isaac Luria), the Safed Kabbalist. This manuscript was concealed in the binding of an old book that found its way to my parents' apartment. I studied and searched the Nafus books of the Turks and the lists of the Montefiore censuses that were conducted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I published articles on these and other items in *Bam'araha*, the publication of the Sephardic community of Jerusalem and in *Et-Mol*, a periodical of the University of Tel Aviv.

As I will point out later, I did not succeed in finding an answer as to which of the three possibilities concerning our family's origin is correct. Are we descendants of the Mustarabim – the early Hebrew speaking residents of Jerusalem who predate the expulsion from Spain, or do we stem from the Morishcos – the Arabic speaking Jews from the Mediterranean basin who settled in Eretz Yisrael or do we originate with the exiles from Spain?

Personally, I was happy that the riddle facing me has not been solved, for the more I progressed the more satisfaction I got in researching the history of Jerusalem and of our people in Eretz Yisrael. As an example, I read the *History of the Jews of Turkey* by Shlomo Rosanes and the books of Yitzhak Ben Zvi (the second President of Israel) *Eretz Yisrael under Ottoman Rule – Four Centuries of History, Studies and Documents*, along with the articles and books written by Bernard Lewis, Amnon Cohen and Uriel Heyd. I read other enlightening articles by Meir Benayahu on the history of the *Ferera Beit Midrash* as well as the books by Ya'akov Barnai on the Jews of Eretz Yisrael in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Minna Rozen on the Jewish community in Jerusalem in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and Dror Zeevi's volume on the Jerusalem District in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. There were various articles including the history of the yeshivot of Jerusalem at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries by Shelomo Zalman Havlin and *Kore Hadorot* by Conforti and this does not complete the list. In my archival and ancient manuscript research, I met with experts and I enjoyed perusing microfilms of files of the Chamber of Commerce in Marseilles - these contain registers of the captains of ships that sailed the Mediterranean in previous centuries. I got pleasure wandering and roaming in various places, but until now I have had no success in solving the mystery of our family's origin.

There was no such thing as a population census in Eretz Yisrael in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. However, Bernard Lewis, Uriel Heyd and Amnon Cohen attempted to estimate the number of residents both in Eretz Yisrael and Jerusalem by using Turkish poll tax records

that listed taxpayers. These ledgers are written in Turkish using Arabic letters without vocalization. As stated by these documents, the number of Jewish residents in Jerusalem in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century approached one thousand. According to Uriel Heyd, Safed, Jerusalem, Gaza and Shechem (Nablus), Hebron and villages contained some ten thousand Jews, who made up about three per cent of the total population.

The books of non-Jewish travelers arrive at different conclusions, but according to Professor Joshua Prawer and others, one cannot trust their figures.

The will of Baruch Mizrahi, dating from 1643, was first published in 1820 in *Hikrei Lev*, a book of responsa by Rabbi Eliyahu Hazan (1741-1820), the chief rabbi of Alexandria. It appeared again in 1905 along with the transcript of the legal proceedings between Eliezer Mizrahi and Roitman. It was presented as a compromise and published on the recommendation of the rabbinical court of the time with the approval of Rabbi Eliashar who was known at Yisa B'racha.

Unfortunately, very little written material from the 17<sup>th</sup> century survived, and we researchers inspect, pore over and scrutinize any possible lead. I tried to find the name of Baruch's father but was not successful. The accompanying name, Mizrahi, is imprecise, and I was unable to determine its origin. It is probably a combination of the Hebrew letter 'Mem' with the word *zarhi*. In the period with which we are dealing, the names of both the taxpayer and his father were recorded; thus making it impossible to uncover a family name. The names of the three members of the rabbinical court who witnessed the will did not contribute to the research. As I did not find the name of Baruch recorded in the lists of that period, I assume that he was probably a scholar and in keeping with the practice of the time was exempt from paying taxes.

Signed as witnesses on the will are the three members of the rabbinical court: Israel ben Benjamin, a native of Egypt who was known in Jerusalem as one of the most important teachers, Israel ben Ezra and Shabbtai Polastro.



Shabbtai Polastro was one of the scholars of Saloniki who moved from Polastro in Greece to Jerusalem where he taught Torah to students in Jerusalem and in Hebron. Even though I have not found their names on contemporary documents, these rabbis were known in Jerusalem, Egypt and Saloniki. The will was prepared and signed in Jerusalem prior to the appearance of the false messiah, Shabbtai Zvi in 1662. He declared himself the messiah in Izmir in 1648, and after the rabbis of Izmir resolved to banish him from the city in the years 1651/4 he began his wanderings in Greece and Turkey. He returned to Izmir in 1655, converted to Islam in the same year and died in 1675. At this point, it is appropriate to call attention to the fact that at that time, the belief in the coming of the messiah and in the resurrection of the dead was widespread in Jewish communities. A consequence was that moving to Jerusalem and Safed steadily increased in these years in spite of the decrees and acts of extortion of the Pasha Ibn Faroukh.

As I have stated, I was disappointed that nothing came of my attempt to solve the puzzle of my family's origin. Examination of the book *Kore Hadorot* by Conforti and the study of an anonymous manuscript dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century deepened my knowledge but the mystery remains. To tell the truth, I am happy that things have turned out as they have, since my study and search will continue.

One of the interesting consequences of searching for roots was my meeting with the Dutch television film producer Zev Kedem. He was intrigued by the story of the house and will of Baruch Mizrahi, the man who

dreamed that he would return and live in this house when the dead are resurrected with the coming of the messiah. Kedem sought descendants of the author of the will and thus came to me. He combined the story of Baruch Mizrahi and the legend around him in a film he issued in 1978, in which we see people from Jerusalem, members of different faiths – Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Armenian and Coptic. He also includes Moshe Safdie the architect who designed the reconstruction of the Jewish Quarter and the plaza in front of the Western Wall, along with Teddy Kollek, who was then mayor of Jerusalem and who promised to fulfill the condition of the will upon the resurrection of the dead.

I derived great satisfaction and enjoyment from the search for the roots of my family where I see reality and legend mixed together with the day-to-day life in Jerusalem.

**Bibliography:** See at the end of the Hebrew version of this article.

*Shmuel Shamir (Mizrahi), a Jerusalem native (b. 1923), was a member of the first graduating class of the Law School of the Hebrew University. An active attorney, his many outside interests include genealogy. A proficient journalist, he has published in numerous newspapers and journals including Haaretz, Davar, Haboker, Yideot Aharonot, Et-Mol, Bama'arakha, Karka, Lebeit Avotam and others. He has researched and traced his family's roots in Jerusalem from 1643 to the present day. Married to Marta, he is the father of Irit, Yael and Zvi.*



## Memories from the Ivey Ghetto in the Eyes of a Sixteen Year-Old

*Elimelekh (Misha) Melamed*

Translated from the Hebrew

### **The Invasion of the German Army**

On Saturday evening, 21 June 1941, I returned home from a party in school celebrating the end of the year of study. It was quite late, but I walked slowly knowing that the following day I could sleep and did not have to get up early.

The next day, 22 June, I awoke at 7:00 in the morning to the sound of noise in the streets of the city. Tanks of the Red Army moved in easterly and westerly directions and there was a sense of panic. On the radio, they announced that the Soviet Foreign Minister, Molotov, would address the citizens of the Soviet Union. At 8:00 AM, Molotov delivered his famous speech and announced that Nazi Germany had attacked in a deceitful manner, the Soviet Union. The Germans bombed airports in the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Lithuania and destroyed several hundred Soviet airplanes on the ground. The Red Army and its Air Force joined in the defensive battle against the Germans. A state of war was declared.

I was fifteen and a half years old and tensely followed the developments.

Towards the end of the week, German aircraft bombed the town of Ivey. Half of May 1 Street (Vilner Gass/Vilna Street in Yiddish) was destroyed. Most of the Jewish homes and some Polish homes went up in flames. Many of the Jewish residents fled to the neighboring villages of Strizynieta, Starczenieta and Sougucie. Soviet rule collapsed and as a result, the villagers began to plunder and steal first from the government warehouses and then from the Jewish homes. On 30 June, the German troops entered Ivey and already on the following day, the Germans ordered the Jewish males to report for hard physical labor. I worked in cleaning German army cannon and I was witness to maltreatment of the teachers of the Hebrew school Tarbut who had been libeled against by Polish Anti-Semites. Every day Jews between the ages of 16 and 60 were taken for various and unusual labor tasks, some needed and others not. At the end of the day's work, they distributed loaves of bread to

the laborers.

### **The Liquidation of the Intellectuals**

On 2 August 1941 (the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av), the Germans ordered all Jews between 16 and 60 to report to the Market Square. During some six hours, they took 220 men, spiritual leaders, teachers, pharmacists, communists (except for physicians) who were singled out by Polish collaborators, loaded them on trucks and executed them some kilometers away from the town in the vicinity of the village of Stoniewiczze. But at that time, we still did not know that they all were put to death since the Germans claimed that they had been sent to work in the west.

### **The Jewish Residential Area**

In September 1941, the German government declared a "Jewish Residential Area." Jewish families were concentrated on a number of streets in the town and they were only permitted to live in that area. In October of the same year, 800 Jews from the towns of Traby and Lipniszki and from villages in the area were moved into the Jewish area of Ivey, increasing the feeling of overcrowding. Another 200-250 Jews from the town of Bakszty and from the village of Borysowo were added to the area in the beginning of February 1942 making the congestion unbearable.

### **The Mass Slaughter**

12 May 1942 was the most tragic and terrible day in the history of the Jews of Ivey. In the morning, all the Jews, including women, children and old people, were again assembled in the town square. Under heavy guard of SS units and local gendarmes, the Polish police and Lithuanian units the selection began. Family after family was directed to Bernardiner Street. On the balcony of number 11, the house of the Bloch family, stood Rudolf Werner and Leopold Windisch from the regional commissariat in Lida, the mayor of

the city Bialkovsky and the commandant of the local gendarmes Bauer.

At the intersection of Bernardiner, Moschchizki and Gminna Streets, some of the families were sent right to Moshchizki Street (about 500 people), some were directed left to Gminna Street (about 500 people) and the vast majority, more than 2,500 people were marched in the direction of the Catholic church and from there by foot, while being beaten, to the direction of the village of Stoniewiczze. My family and I were sent left. There were six of us: my father, a physician Dr. Isaac Melamed; my mother Emma Melamed; my older brother Ephraim (Fima) age 19; my sister Aviva age 7; myself and my maternal grandmother, Sarah Crystal. I walked between my mother and my grandmother. My father, as a physician, walked wearing a white band of the Red Cross on his arm. We were concentrated several hundred meters from the intersection and the Germans commanded us to sit down in the street. We heard the sound of machine guns and rifles firing in the distance.

About an hour later, Rudolf Werner, one of the SS officers who directed the *Selection*, arrived in a car and demanded that we hand over the silver, gold and objects of value. A large blanket was spread in front of the car and after all the items of value were gathered, the blanket was taken into the car and Rudolf Werner addressed us in two sentences: "Jews, do not worry. Your lives are spared."

A few hours later, all the Jews who had been directed to the right and to the left, numbering some 1,000, were concentrated in the north part of Iyve in a number of streets behind the market square. There they set up a Ghetto surrounded by a wall of barbed wire.

Before we dispersed to the houses the second SS officer, Leopold Windish addressed us and said: "Your fate depends on our successes on the front. For the time being, you will remain alive and you will pay for your lives by your work for the German government."

After the people began to scatter to the houses in the Ghetto, the Polish police forced their way into the assembled Jews and grabbed some 50 young people, including my brother Ephraim and myself. They led us opposite the Polish police headquarters building, gave us

shovels and under heavy guard led us to the area of the village of Stoniewiczze in order to cover the pits that held those they murdered.

When we got to the pits, several hundred meters from the village of Stoniewiczze, a most horrible site was revealed before our eyes – that of some 2,500 bodies partially or completely naked, men, women, children and the old. There were still signs of life among some of them. The Polish police and the German gendarmes circulated among the victims and when they saw signs of life among some of them, they shot and killed them in cold blood. I recognized some of the victims, friends, neighbors and neighbors' children. The shock was overwhelming. We worked in a stupor as if under hypnosis. We worked until a late hour, between 5 and 6 hours, until we covered the pits with earth and chlorine. They were 35 meters long, 5 meters wide and 3.5 meters deep. When it began to get dark, we returned to the Ghetto broken, crushed and apathetic.

### **The Iyve Ghetto - 12 May to 31 December 1942**

The Ghetto had a number of small workshops producing such items as shoe polish, candles, baskets woven from straw and boughs, rope and leather. These projects employed several hundred workers. Besides this, there were daily work crews that went to the forests, to the sawmill and others. Periodically, the Germans required a few dozen laborers for work in more distant places such as Lida, Krasne, Oszmianka, Rozanka near Zoludek and others. In these places, there was not adequate food and the sanitary conditions were far worse than in the Ghetto. In light of this, there was conflict between the Ghetto residents, the Judenrat and the Jewish police. During the months of July and August 1942, there were rumors in the Iyve Ghetto about partisans organizing in the forests.

The rumors led to the setting up of an underground in the Ghetto, led by Moshe Kaganovitz, my father – Dr. Isaac Melamed, Moshe Stutsky and the deputy head of the Jewish police Kalmanovitz from the town of Trab. The goals of the organization were as follows: acquire weapons, establish contact

with the partisan units in the forest and attempt to escape from the ghetto to join with the partisans to fight and wreak revenge on the Nazi enemy. The young people, including myself, enthusiastically joined this underground. Not everyone was taken into confidence and only those who could be relied upon were included.

### **Escape from the Ghetto**

On the last day of 1942, December 31, the Germans surrounded the Ivye Ghetto. Having learned from experience and with apprehension, my older brother and I decided to join our mother in a hiding place, a bunker deep in the ground at our neighbors. In the local terminology, such a place was called a *malina*. A heavy snow fell that evening and night. At midnight, I left the hiding place to see what was happening in the Ghetto. I went up to the attic and looked around through the small window. Snow covered the entire area. Near the Ghetto fences, Germans and Polish police armed, of course, patrolled. Between their rounds, there were a few minutes when it would be possible to cross by crawling under the fence while holding up the barbed wire. When I told the others in hiding what I saw, most of them decided to escape from the Ghetto. On my brother's advice, we took white sheets with us to act as camouflage. We crawled under the barbed wire fence in groups of two or three people and passed over to the other side, the Aryan part of Ivye.

The entire group, numbering some 12 individuals, began walking in the direction of the village Miszukowicze, some 8 kilometers from Ivye, by way of the area where the Tatars lived, Murawszczyzna. One of the girls in our group, Haya Kozlovska, lived in that village before the war and knew the way. Efraim had a small bottle of sulfuric acid and I had a large kitchen knife. Our mother, who was with us, knew a resident of the village by the name of Marila.

After two or three hours of vigorous walking in deep snow, we reached the village Miszukowicze. The group spread out among the village houses and we, my mother, my brother and I, went into Marila's house. At first, she was very frightened; she calmed

down later and after we gave her a sum of money and gifts, she agreed to go to Ivye in the morning to find our father, Dr. Melamed, who remained in the Ghetto along with our sister Aviva and our maternal grandmother, Sara Crystal (my father, my sister and my grandmother were at a different hiding place in the Ghetto and we did not find them when we fled). Mother wanted her to tell father to try to escape from the Ghetto with Aviva and grandmother and to join us.

The following day, 2 January 1943, my father, Aviva and my grandmother arrived on a horse drawn wagon owned by a gentile named Minko. He was father's former patient and he agreed, after being paid a hefty sum to smuggle them to the village where we were hiding. Father also brought certain things from our house like clothing, food and some medications. He told us that that very evening as the Germans encircled the Ghetto, some 400 people escaped, most of them young people and members of the underground. Some were armed with rifles and pistols. After searching for the Partisans for several days and nights in the cold and snow and after the Germans had posted notices in the Ghetto stating that they only want to transfer a contingent of workers to the east and to Lida and after the youngsters' families urged them to return, more than half of the Jews who fled returned to the Ghetto. We and numerous others were resolute not to return to the Ghetto.

### **Our First Meeting with the Partisans**

After a stay of a few days in the village of Miszukowicze, we relocated to a larger place Mikolajow. One of the villagers was father's patient and he volunteered to hide us until the end of the war. We politely declined his generous offer and we asked him to help us meet the Partisans who were in the area. A few days later, in the evening hours, five Partisans from the Stalin Brigade under the command of Yasha Horoshayev came in. Efraim and I immediately joined Horoshayev's unit and father was appointed the head doctor of one of the units of the Stalin Brigade. Efraim received a rifle immediately as he had undergone pre-army training in the Vilna Gymnasium. There was no limit to my joy when I received,

after a short period of training, a rifle with 50 bullets. After physical and spiritual humiliation, after the beating and murdering my fellow Jews, I was able to fight and take revenge. I was willing to sacrifice my life in the struggle against the Nazis. I was free, a Partisan with a rifle, thrilled and ready for any battle against the murderous degenerate Germans. A large portion of the young people who fled from the Iyve Ghetto on the evening of 31 December joined various Partisan units operating in the Naliboki forest. Many joined the Jewish unit of Bielski. Most of them took an active part in the fight against the Nazis and their collaborators, among them my brother Efraim, who was killed in battle with the Germans while serving as a scout for the unit, during the siege at the end of July 1943. He was 20 years old when he died – May their memories continue to be a blessing.

In December 1967, I was invited to the city of

Mainz, Germany, as a witness in the trial of Leopold Windisch and Rudolf Werner, the perpetrators of the massacre in Iyve. Rudolf Werner died in jail and Leopold Windisch was sentenced to life in prison.

*Elimelekh (Misha) Melamed was born in 1926 in Yazlowiec, Eastern Galicia to Dr. Isaac Melamed (1893-1955) and Emma Melamed (nee Kristal) (1898-1952). The family moved to Iyve in the vicinity of Lida in 1929 and at the end of 1942 escaped from the Ghetto and joined the partisans. Elimelekh Melamed arrived in Israel in July 1948 in the framework of Gahal [Recruits from Abroad] and participated in the battles of Latrun and Jerusalem. After his discharge from the Israeli Army, he held various posts in the Treasury Department until his retirement in 1991. He currently lives with his wife in Tel Aviv and is the father of two sons and has two grandsons.*

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**The Institute for Hebrew Microfilmed Manuscripts at  
The Jewish National and University Library  
Summary of a visit  
*Jean-Pierre Stroweis***

In 1951, the Institute for Hebrew Microfilmed Manuscripts was created at the initiative of Prime Minister David Ben Gurion and located within the Ministry of Education and Culture.

In 1961, when the Jewish National and University Library moved to its present building on the Givat Ram Campus, the Institute was relocated near the already existing Department of Hebrew Manuscripts that was already in the building.

The microfilmed manuscript collection includes some 70,000 items; the original documents being dispersed all over the world in 500 libraries. This collection, together with the Hebrew Manuscript collection is thought to be the largest in the world, comprising nearly

95% of all existing Hebrew Manuscripts. Major items include old and rare Biblical, Talmudic and Rabbinic literature, and a large part of contents of the Cairo Geniza.

Nearly 95% of the microfilmed items have been computerized and the task should be completed in 3-4 months. The Institute employs the ALEPH documentation program used by most of the university libraries and research institutes in Israel. It has the great advantage of being accessible via remote telnet, although this requires a PC computer with Hebrew alphabet capabilities.

The catalog includes the following items of interest to genealogists:

Pinkassei Batei Knesset (synagogue registers)  
Pinkassei Batei Din (Rabbinical tribunal registers)  
Pinkassei Hevrot, society registers, including burial societies (Hevrot Kadisha)  
Pinkassei Mohel (circumcision registers)  
Family lists (Reshimot Mishpahtiot)  
The four Montefiore Censuses of the Jewish

population in Eretz Yisrael

The Institute has several microfilm readers and printers. It is open from Sunday to Thursday, 9:00 to 17:00.

The director of the microfilm department can be reached at richler@vms.huji.ac.il

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## Book Review

**Jewish Officers in the Polish Armed Forces, 1939-1945**, by *Benjamin Meirtchak*, published in 2001 (in English) by the Association of Jewish War Veterans of the Polish Armies in Israel, 319 pp.

*Jean-Pierre Stroweis*

Benjamin Meirtchak offers us another contribution to his authoritative work of commemorating and documenting the service of Jews in the Polish Armies during the Second World War.

His former 5-volume series of booklets "Jewish Casualties in the Polish Armed Forces" (see *Sharsheret Hadorot* Vol. 15, No. 3) lists the names of thousands of Jews, killed in action in the various Polish Armed Forces during WWII. This series was translated into Polish and published in Poland in June 2001.

In this new work, Benjamin Meirtchak focuses on his 4,879 fellow Jewish officers who, like himself, participated in the Polish war efforts. Although Jews were generally not promoted to the rank of officer, because of anti-Semitism, numerous Jews did become officers, many were war heroes and a considerable number were medical doctors.

Following the methodology of his earlier books, Meirtchak initially provides the historical background of the involvement of

the various Polish Armed forces in the War. The rest of the book contains four lists of individuals who were officers (victims and survivors), providing such basic information as: surname, given name, birth date and place, army unit, rank, and fate, if known.

Meirtchak's main sources are the Central Military Archives (Warsaw) and the Sikorski Historical Institute (London).

The book's four lists are:

\* 2,661 Jewish officers in the Polish Army at the beginning of the war (September 1939).

\* 402 Jewish officers in the Polish Armed Forces in exile in France, Norway, North Africa, General Anders Army, the Eastern Polish Army (Italy) and the Western Polish Army.

\* 1,550 Jewish male officers in the Polish People's Army.

\* 164 Jewish female officers in the Polish People's Army.

Benjamin Meirtchak was promoted in April 2001 to Lt. Colonel (Reserve) by the Polish Minister of National Defense as what was, no doubt, an acknowledgement of his achievements.

A very valuable contribution to existing published information on this subject.

## **JGS Journal Abstracts**

*Compiled by Harold Lewin*

In our guide to JGS literature in English, considerations of space economy have unfortunately forced us to exclude fascinating accounts of journeys to ancestral villages, much parochial news and numerous descriptions of successful family research. The articles selected here are perforce mainly those thought to contain information likely to be of more direct benefit to a wider circle of family history researchers. If the reader does find something relevant to interests, priority must be given to locating and reading the original article, since these abstracts can only hint at the content. We ask forgiveness from the authors for any changes of title and missing credits. **Explanation:** A note such as **3pp. (4)** that ends an abstract, indicates an article length of about **three pages** with its location in **Ref. No. 4** (see **Key to Journal References**). Similarly, **1p** relates to an item having a length of one page or even much less.

### **AUSTRALIA**

**Shanghai HIAS Lists.** Peter Nash writes about his examination of Shanghai HIAS lists held by the Central Archives of the Jewish People in Jerusalem. The 5 lists cover mainly the 1943-1949 WWII and post-war period, and include names of refugees applying to emigrate from Shanghai to Australia. **1p. (1)**

### **BALTIC STATES**

**Lithuanian Records Filmed.** The Family History Library has almost completed its filming of Jewish vital records in the State Archives of Lithuania. The collection parallels, with scattered differences, the inventory printed in *Jewish Vital Records Revision Lists and Other Jewish Holdings in the Lithuanian Archives* and published by Avotaynu. **1p. (3)**

### **BELGIUM**

**Museum of Deportation & Resistance in Mechelen (Malines), Belgium.** Marcel Apsel describes holdings of the Museum of Deportation & Resistance in Mechelen,

Belgium. The article deals largely with Judenrat records. The Belgium resistance organizations succeeded in keeping 3,000 Jewish children out of the hands of the Nazis. A database collected by the Belgian municipalities survived WWII and the 212 files are deposited at the Jewish Museum in Brussels. **3pp. (1)**

### **CHINA**

**Shanghai HIAS Lists.** Peter Nach describes his examination of the Shanghai HIAS lists held by the Central Archives of the Jewish People in Jerusalem. The 5 lists mainly cover the 1943-1949 WWII and post-war period, and include names of refugees applying to immigrate to Australia. **1p. (1)**

### **FORMER SOVIET UNION EXCLUDING BALTIC STATES**

**Ellis Island Database: From Micro to Macro Level.** In this article, Neville Lamdan explores patterns of Jewish emigration from Europe between 1892-1924 by examining data on emigration from two *shtetlach* of Belarus. His task was complicated by the many spelling variations of the place names. **3pp. (1)**

**German & Polish Archival Holdings in Moscow.** Edward D.Luft describes many genealogically valuable archival records from Germany and Poland (and other countries) in the State Archives of the Russian Federation in Moscow. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington is currently microfilming these records. The article also lists many other useful sources. **3pp. (1)**

**Naming Russian Jews.** John Klier writes about the history of registration of names of Russian Jews and of the changes in naming habits that evolved over the years. He mentions Jewish students in St Petersburg who sought to divest themselves of the diminutive names given at birth by traditionalist parents. These were seen as embarrassing in polite society. One of the ironies of Russian-Jewish

naming history is that many Jews acquired a full name before the Russian peasants. 4pp. (4)

## **GERMANY**

**Determining When An Ancestor Moved to Berlin and his Place of Origin.** Edward D.Luft suggests several sources for determining the origins of an ancestor who took up residence in Berlin and the date of the move. 3pp. (1)

**German & Polish Archival Holdings in Moscow.** Edward D.Luft describes many genealogically valuable archival records from Germany and Poland (and other countries) in the State Archives of the Russian Federation in Moscow. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington is currently microfilming these records. The article also lists many other useful sources. 3pp. (1)

## **GREAT BRITAIN**

**1901 Census for England and Wales.** This census, comprising 32 million names, went on-line on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2002. It is now possible to search the index by name or address via the Internet without payment. There are fees to view the text transcripts and actual census images. 1p. (3)

**Anglo-Jewish Records – the Missing Years.** Angela Shire reviews the available and missing Anglo-Jewish records of births, marriages and burials, relating to the mainly Ashkenazic community in England, and of current progress in the task of transcribing/indexing this voluminous material. 3pp. (4)

**In Exploring 1901 Census Online – 2,** Laurence Harris states that the system is not yet a success. Since its launch, it has been so overloaded that it has been inoperable, or withdrawn for remedial work. Laurence makes several suggestions for improving the facility. 3pp. (4)

## **ISRAEL**

**Yad Vashem Providing Deportation Lists from Slovakia's Four Major Assembling/Labor Camps.** The 4 camps are:

Zilina, Novaky, Vyhne and Sered. Zilina was used during 1942 mass deportations because it was the closest to Auschwitz. A list of the major towns involved is included. 1p. (3)

## **POLAND**

**German & Polish Archival Holdings in Moscow.** Edward D.Luft describes many genealogically valuable archival records from Germany and Poland (and other countries) in the State Archives of the Russian Federation in Moscow. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington is currently microfilming these records. The article also lists many other useful sources. 3pp. (1)

**Some Problems of Polish Research.** Although Aubrey Jacobus bases his article on a quest for clarification of genealogical relationships within his own family, the difficulties encountered can affect any of those with Polish roots and it is good to be aware of them. 2pp. (4)

**Krakow Banns and Marriage Registers.** Judy Wolkovitch Krakow Town Leader, JRI-Poland/JGS Project, reports on the extracts of the 23,000 Krakow Banns and Marriage Registers (1879-1939) that have been uploaded to the Jewish Records Indexing-Poland database and can now be searched via the JRI-Poland website at [www.jewishgen.org/jri-pl](http://www.jewishgen.org/jri-pl). 1p. (3)

**Lodz Records Initiative** by Shirely Flaum describes the JRI-Poland Seven-Year Initiative for the City of Lodz PSA Project. The aim is to index 43,501 birth, marriage and death records for the period 1899-1905. 1p. (5)

## **UNITED STATES**

**The Ellis Island Database: From Micro to Macro Level.** In this article, Neville Lamdan explores patterns of Jewish emigration from Europe between 1892-1924 by examining data on emigration from two *shetlach* of Belarus. His task was complicated by the many spelling variations of the place names. 3pp. (1)

**Ellis Island Database.** Stephen P.Morse has added two features to his site that allows



searching the Ellis Island Database in one step. These features apply only to the "Jewish Passengers" version of his search engine at <http://home.pacbell.net/spmorse/ellis/ellisjw.html> One powerful aspect of Morse's one-step webpage is to allow searching using the initial character of both given name and surname. 1p. (3)

**1930 United States Census.** The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) released the 1930 Federal population census on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002 and the microfilmed copies will be opened for research at 13 of the National Archives regional facilities across the U.S. 1p. (3)

#### **GENEALOGY SOFTWARE & THE INTERNET**

**New Permutation Program for the Hamburg Emigration List.** Edward Rosenbaum describes his new shareware program that automatically provides alternative spellings of the surname being searched. It is available for download at: <http://erosenbaum.netfirms.com/hamburg.shtml> 11p. (6)

#### **GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH – GENERAL**

**Jewish Genealogy in the First Decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.** This article by Gary Mokotoff traces the history and progress of organized Jewish genealogy from its beginnings only 30 years ago. One important observation is the declining membership of Jewish genealogical societies and the growing membership of SIGs. Gary makes the case for payment of an annual fee in order to access a genealogical database on the ternet rather than relying on a visit to a local repository. Note his comments on the

power of sophisticated search engines. 2pp. (1)

#### **HOLOCAUST RESEARCH**

**Old & New Information Sources on Holocaust Victims & Survivors.** Peter Lande writes about his aim of compiling a single database of all Holocaust victims and survivors. The article is an edited version of a talk given in November 2001. 4pp. (5)

**Museum of Deportation & Resistance in Mechelen (Malines), Belgium.** Marcel Apsel describes holdings of the Museum of Deportation & Resistance in Mechelen, Belgium. The article deals largely with *Judenrat* records. The Belgium resistance organizations succeeded in keeping 3,000 Jewish children out of the hands of the Nazis. A database collected by the Belgian municipalities survived WWII and the 212 files are deposited at the Jewish Museum in Brussels. 3pp. (1)

**Clark University Center for Holocaust Studies** Marlene Zakai describes the Center at Clark University dedicated to teaching, research and public service. The collection of Holocaust material has a large number of individual Holocaust memoirs published by survivors. There are also books of genealogical value. The article includes a list of Yizkor books held by the Center. 3pp. (2)

**Dachau Prisoner Information.** A 5-CD-ROM collection, taken from captured German Records, is available from JewishGenMall, a division of JewishGen, Inc. The CDs contain info on approximately 122,000 prisoners who were held at Dachau concentration camp. 1p. (3)

### KEY TO JOURNAL REFERENCES

REF	JOURNAL	GEOGRAPHICAL AREA	ISSUE	YEAR	VOL.	No.
1	AVOTAYNU	International	Winter	2001	XVII	4
2	MISHPACHA	Greater Washington	Fall	2001	20/21	4
3	DOROT	New York	Summer/Fall	2001	22	1
4	SHEMOT	Great Britain	March	2002	10	1
5	SHEM TOV	Canada	December	2001	XVII	4
6	SHEM TOV	Canada	March	2002	XVIII	1

