

# שרשרת הדורות

## חקר תולדות המשפחה היהודית



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## **From the Pen of the Editor**

*Dr. Rose Lerer Cohen*

I wish to apologize for the long wait for this edition of *Sharsheret Hadorot*. Unfortunately due to unforeseen difficulties, publication was put on hold. These difficulties have been ironed out and I sincerely hope that when you read your journal you will conclude that it was worth the wait.

This edition again touches on the many aspects of the vibrant and fascinating world of Jewish Genealogy. Valery Bazarov gives us insight into the HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) Archive in New York. Chana Furman, James Montel and Tony Ornesanez Palast, share their family histories with us. Shmuel Shamir shares with us the history of the Neuberger clan and its Twentieth century heritage. These family histories span many continents and introduce us to new areas of research. I, your editor and Yaron Ben Naeh explore aspects of Sepharadi research.

The *Sharsheret Hadorot Missing Persons Bureau* focuses on an article by Peter Lande on of George Mantello. Mandl/Mantello, who was recently recognized as a Righteous Gentile by Yad Vashem. In the regular column News from Israeli Archives, Museums and Libraries we learn about a Yad Vashem the largest Holocaust archive in Israel. We are also introduced to The Archive of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) and the Dor LeDor Museum in Kiriyyat Bialik.

Jordan Auslander is our expert on American Research and Karen Franklin on Looted Art and Judaica. Esther Ramon brings us news from foreign Journals.

Thank you to Esther Chipman-Frame for the translation and also to my editorial board for their continuing support.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of *Sharsheret*.



**Mazal tov to our Society  
on being awarded  
the 2010 Stern Grant  
at the recent IAJGS conference  
held in Los Angeles, California.**

## President's Message, June 2010

### Facing the Challenge

*Michael Goldstein*

At the mid-point of 2010, I am proud to tell you that our Society's membership has already surpassed the combined 2009 membership of the Israel Genealogical Society and JFRA (Jewish Family Research Association). Increasing and maintaining that membership will be a reflection of how we face the challenges before us: how well we serve our membership, how well we adapt to a dramatically-changed genealogy world, and how creatively we rise to new challenges ahead. It is one of those challenges in particular which I would like to share with you now.

You are reading *Sharsheret Hadorot*, a bilingual genealogical journal now published in both print and web format. The addition of a web format has greatly expanded the journal's relevance, enabling the reader to successfully reach links and to search by topic and name. So where is the challenge? Increased costs and the decreased availability of volunteer translators, for a start. After many years of enjoying the services of volunteer translators for *Sharsheret Hadorot*, the IGS, like all organizations, is feeling the depletion of voluntary resources. Of course, for cost and labor-

efficiency, *Sharsheret Hadorot* could be transformed into a journal presenting only articles in the language in which they were written. The journal would be smaller, with greatly lowered production costs. Yet we would lose our uniqueness and *raison d'être*. Our bilingual journal serves to expand the respective genealogical worlds of our readers.

While continuing to seek volunteer translators, we have begun to face the challenge and growing pains of assuring continued translation. This demands added financial resources, for membership income cannot bear such a burden. We require specialized translators with the skills to produce technical translations into the language unique to genealogy. Our editor and editorial board are making yeoman's efforts in this and other areas, and it is our challenge to help and support them. To this end I will be discussing with our members and supporters the establishment of a *Sharsheret Hadorot* Fund to provide the resources to assure that *Sharsheret Hadorot* remains the flagship of our society, carrying out the vision and mandate set forth at this outstanding journal's inception.

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## Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)

*Valery Bazarov*

### *HIAS Director Family History and Location Services*

At the end of the nineteenth century, the constant flow of Jewish immigrants from Russia gave birth to HIAS. Founded in 1881, HIAS assists Jews and other groups of people whose lives and freedom are at risk, through rescue, relocation, family reunification, and resettlement. Since its inception, HIAS has rescued and resettled nearly 4.5 million people. HIAS's offices throughout the world (USA, Israel, Russian Federation, Ukraine, Austria, Argentina, Ecuador, Venezuela, Kenya, and Chad) provide a wide array of legal and support services.

HIAS's mission is guided by Jewish values and the shared history of migrations, HIAS helps Jewish and other refugees and migrants escaping violence, repression, and poverty find safety and security in the United States, Israel, and elsewhere; facilitates their resettlement and other forms of assistance through a network of local service agencies; advocates on their behalf at the international, national, and community levels; and connects each generation of Jews, one to the other.

HIAS archival records contain a collective memory of millions of Jews who immigrated to the US in search of a better life. These records are of great value for those who are looking for their roots. Sometimes the historical records help to reunite the families separated by generations.

#### **Early years**

HIAS officially started on November 27, 1881 as the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society – HEAS.<sup>1</sup> The society provided assistance for immigrants arriving through Castle Garden; for those who needed a roof over their heads, a shelter was set up on Ward Island. Besides this immediate assistance, the Society helped

immigrants find employment in New York and New Jersey and established agricultural colonies in other states to provide land on which they could settle. Among the volunteers working for the organization at that time was Emma Lazarus, author of “The New Colossus,” the poem later inscribed on the Statue of Liberty.<sup>2</sup> Since 1883, the Society experienced a number of transformations until in 1902 it finally accepted the name of Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society.<sup>3</sup> Since its inception the Society was present at the points of entry for the new arrivals, first on Castle Garden, and since 1892 on Ellis Island. However, in 1904 a special HIAS Ellis Island Bureau, was organized with Alexander Harkavy as its first manager.<sup>4</sup>

The Society, now known as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, was active on the island facilitating legal entry, reception, and immediate care for the newly arrived. In the half-century following the establishment of a formal Ellis Island bureau HIAS helped more than 100,000 Jews who might otherwise have been turned away. The bureau provided translation services, guided immigrants through medical screening and other procedures, argued before the Boards of Special Enquiry to prevent deportations, lent needy Jews the \$25 landing fee, and obtained bonds for others guaranteeing their employable status.

The Society also searched for relatives of detained immigrants in order to secure the necessary affidavits of support to guarantee that the new arrivals would not become public charges. Lack of such affidavits and/or material means impacted a large number of immigrants: of the 900 immigrants detained during one month in 1917, 600 were held because they had neither money

1. New York Times, Nov. 28, 1881, p. 8.

2. Felder, Deborah G., Rosen Diana, *Fifty Jewish Women Who Changed the World*, NY, 2003, p. 45.

3. Wischnitzer, Mark, *Visas to Freedom*, New York, 1956, p. 37.

4. Forward, June 3, 1979, p. 4.

nor friends to claim them. Through advertising and other methods, the Society was able to locate relatives for the vast majority of detainees, who in a short time were released from Ellis Island.

Many of the Jews traveling in steerage on the steamship lines across the Atlantic refused the non-kosher food served on their journeys and arrived at Ellis Island malnourished and vulnerable to deportation on medical grounds. In 1911, the Society installed a kosher kitchen on the Island.<sup>5</sup> Between 1925 and 1952, HIAS's kosher kitchen provided more than a half million meals to immigrants; in the peak year, 1940, 85,794 meals were served. The Society also provided religious services and musical concerts at Ellis Island. It ran an employment bureau and sold railroad tickets at reduced rates to immigrants headed for other cities.

In 1909, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society merged with the Hebrew Sheltering House Association and became universally known as HIAS. By 1914, HIAS had branches in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Boston, and an office in Washington, D.C.

In the summer of 1911, HIAS set up an Oriental Department to meet the growing needs of immigrants from the Balkans and Near East, who began arriving in the U.S. in considerable numbers.<sup>6</sup> Between 1908 and 1913, approximately 10,000 Jewish emigrants left the Middle East for the U.S.<sup>7</sup>

During this period, resettlement of Jewish immigrants included assistance in obtaining U.S. citizenship. For this a rudimentary knowledge of English and familiarity with American institutions were mandatory. In addition to classes given at its own building, HIAS arranged educational courses for the immigrants through a network of local Jewish organizations. From 1909 to 1913, HIAS helped more than 35,000 new immigrants become naturalized citizens.

5. Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, Third Annual Report, 1911, p. 12.

6. Ibid, p. 11.

7. Wischnitzer, p. 68.

8. Wischnitzer, p. 81.

## **World War I**

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 brought the largest influx of Jews from Eastern Europe to date: 138,051 in that year alone. However, when the North Atlantic became a battle zone and German submarines seriously impaired overseas passenger traffic, immigration numbers plunged. The war made it increasingly difficult for American-based families to maintain contact with their scattered family members behind enemy lines. To address this, HIAS sent one of its operatives to Europe to establish communications. He succeeded in securing permission from the German and Austro-Hungarian High Command for residents of the military zones to write short messages to their families to be distributed by HIAS in New York. HIAS also accepted and delivered messages sent by the zone's non-Jewish population. By war's end, HIAS had transmitted a total of 300,000 communications on behalf of separated families.<sup>8</sup>

The Russian Revolution of 1917 – and the following civil war, famine, and pogroms that left about 50,000 Jews dead – created another surge of emigration from the former Russian Empire. HIAS continued to help these immigrants find safe haven despite growing anti-immigration sentiments in the U.S.

Between the years 1909 and 1919, HIAS registered 482,742 immigrants arriving in the U.S. HIAS's Ellis Island Bureau interceded with 28,884 held for special inquiry, of which 22,780 were admitted based on second hearings, with only 6,104 deported. During this period, HIAS facilitated the naturalization of 64,298 immigrants.

## **Between the Wars**

The dislocation and turmoil following the Great War led to acts of anti-Semitism throughout the former war zone, especially in Poland, Romania, Russia, and Hungary. While other Jewish agencies, most notably

the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, supplied Jews in the affected countries with food, clothing and medical supplies, HIAS created a worldwide network of Jewish organizations to provide assistance in immigration to the USA, Canada, South America, Australia and China. The establishment of HICEM in 1927 proved critical to the later rescue operation that saved thousands of Jewish lives during World War II<sup>9</sup>.

HICEM resulted from the merger of three Jewish migration associations: New York-based HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society); ICA (Jewish Colonization Association), which was based in Paris but registered as a British charitable society; and Emigdirect, a migration organization based in Berlin. HICEM is an acronym of these organizations' names.<sup>10</sup>

The agreement between the three organizations stipulated that all local branches outside the U.S. would merge into HICEM, while HIAS would still deal with Jewish immigration to the U.S. However, Emigdirect was forced to withdraw from the merger in 1934, and British wartime regulations later restricted the ICA from using its funds outside Britain.

### **World War II and the Holocaust**

By the time World War II broke out in September 1939, HICEM had offices throughout Europe, South and Central America, and the Far East. Its employees advised and prepared European refugees for emigration, including helping them during their departure and arrival.

HICEM's European headquarters were based in Paris. After Germany invaded and conquered France in mid-1940, HICEM closed its Paris offices, moving to Marseille in the so-called "free zone" of France, and to

Lisbon, Portugal. Until November 11, 1942, HICEM employees were at work in French internment camps looking for Jews who met U.S. State Department immigration requirements and were ready to leave France. At the time of the German invasion of France, there were approximately 300,000 native and foreign Jews living there; however, the State Department's attempts to curb immigration meant that the number of applicants far exceeded the number allowed to leave. With the German occupation of France, HICEM moved to the small village of Brive la Gaillarde. Here a small group of HICEM employees – establishing contact and cooperation with the local underground forces of the French resistance – succeeded in smuggling Jews out of France to Spain and Switzerland. Twenty-one HICEM employees were deported and killed in the concentration camps or in direct combat with the Nazis.

During this period, HICEM in France worked closely with HICEM in Lisbon, which as a neutral port was the path of choice for Jews escaping Europe to North and South America. Other organizations also moved their European offices to Lisbon at that time, including the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (known as the JDC or Joint) and the American Friends Service Committee.

From 1940 onward, HICEM's activities were partly supported by the Joint. Despite friction between the two organizations, they worked together to provide refugees with tickets and information about visas and transportation, and helped them leave Lisbon on neutral Portuguese ships. In all, some 40,000 Jews managed to escape Europe during the Holocaust with HICEM's and the JDC's assistance. HICEM was dissolved in 1945; HIAS continued its work in Europe under its own name.<sup>11 12</sup>

9. Valery Bazarov, "HIAS and HICEM in the system of Jewish relief organizations in Europe, 1933- 41", *East European Jewish Affairs*, V. 39, Number 1, April 2009, p. 69-78.

10. Donna F. Rayan, *The Holocaust and the Jews of Marseille*, University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 1996, p. 137.

11. Bazarov, Valery, "Racing with Death: HIAS (HICEM) Lisbon Files (1940-1945)." *Avotaynu*, 20, no 4 (2004): 23-7.

12. Bazarov, Valery, "Out of Trap: HIAS French Files." *Avotaynu*, 21, no 3 (2005): 18-21.

## **The Displaced Persons**

In the wake of World War II, HIAS assumed its most massive job to date – assisting with the emigration needs of the approximately 300,000 Jewish displaced persons throughout the former war zone. Nearly every surviving Jewish family in Central and Eastern Europe had been separated, with parents and children scattered throughout many countries. Reuniting them so they could emigrate as a unit was one of the primary tasks for HIAS workers in the field. Obtaining documents required for emigration was difficult as throughout the war people had fled from one place to another, escaped from concentration camps to hide in villages and forests, then reappeared under assumed names. Identity papers were destroyed; false papers, fabricated papers, or, most often, no papers at all, were common. HIAS's operations set up for DP work in Germany and Austria at the end of 1945 was the largest in the history of the organization and it kept growing with the flood of refugees streaming out of Poland and Romania.

HIAS offices functioned in Hoechst, Frankfurt, Munich, Foehrenwald, Stuttgart, Berlin, Bremen, Hanover, Regensburg, Baden-Baden, Vienna, Linz and Salzburg, with HIAS representatives stationed in the camps themselves.<sup>13</sup> Besides Germany, HIAS worked in France, Italy, and Eastern European countries such as Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria. HIAS functioned in Shanghai until 1950, helping refugees who had escaped eastward from Nazi-occupied Europe to immigrate to Australia, the Americas and Europe.

From 1945 to 1951, HIAS sponsored and assisted a total of 167,450 emigrants: 79,675 of these immigrated to the U.S.; 24,049 to the British Commonwealth; 24,806 to Latin America; 38,920 to Israel and other countries.

13. Wischnitzer, p. 210.

14. See Bibliography 8 and 10.

## **Rescue of Jews from Muslim Countries, Hungary, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Poland**

Since 1950, HIAS's activities have closely mirrored world events. In 1956, HIAS rescued Jews fleeing the Soviet invasion of Hungary, and evacuated the Jewish community of Egypt after their expulsion during the Sinai Campaign. During the Cuban Revolution, HIAS set up operations in Miami to rescue the Jews of Cuba.

During the 1960s, HIAS rescued Jews from Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya and arranged with Morocco's King Hassan for the evacuation of his country's huge Jewish community to France and, eventually, Israel. Of almost one million Jewish refugees from Muslim countries, about 80,000 were resettled by HIAS.<sup>14</sup>

In 1965, HIAS was instrumental in the passage of an American immigration law which finally replaced the National Origins Quota, liberalizing decades of restrictive admissions policies. In 1968, HIAS came to the aid of Czechoslovakia's Jews after the suppression of the "Prague Spring," and to Poland's Jews after pogroms racked that country.

In 1975, following the fall of Saigon, HIAS worked with refugees from Southeast Asia. In 1977, HIAS helped evacuate the Jews of Ethiopia, which culminated in several airlifts to Israel. In close coordination with Israel, HIAS played a central role in rescuing Jews from Syria and Lebanon. In 1979, the overthrow of the Shah in Iran precipitated a slow but steady trickle of Jews escaping the theocracy of that country, home to one of the world's oldest Jewish communities.

## **The Soviet Jewry Exodus**

Beginning in the mid-1960s, HIAS returned to the work initiated at its founding – assisting immigrants escaping Russia with their arrival and resettlement needs in the U.S. Close to a century later, a new Jewish exodus from the previous Russian Empire – now the USSR – started with a trickle of departures. Throughout the entire era of the

Soviet Jewish exodus, HIAS's operations centered around two beliefs: 1) Israel is the homeland for the Jewish people and 2) emigrants have the right to live together with extended family in their country of choice.

On December 3, 1966, Premier Alexey Kosygin said in Paris that "if there are some families divided by the war who want to meet their relatives outside of the USSR, or even to leave the USSR, we shall do all in our power to help them, and there is no problem."<sup>15</sup> In stark contrast to the premier's words, the Soviet authorities did everything in their power to prevent Jews from leaving the country, implementing anti-Semitic, anti-immigration campaigns that included harassment, economic pressure, and an increasingly bureaucratic visa-application process. These methods deterred many would-be applicants, who abandoned the process once their initial applications were denied.

During the early years of exodus, the number of departures depended largely upon the status of the United States-Soviet relationship and upon financial pragmatism. In hopes of achieving economic benefits from the US, the Soviet government sporadically opened its emigration gates, sometimes even in contradiction of its own legislation. Thus, despite the "Diploma Tax" that was instituted in December 1972 and required exiting Jews to pay for the higher education they received in the USSR, the government allowed two groups of 900 persons each to leave shortly thereafter without paying. By March 1973, the tax was revoked in the face of extreme pressure from the international public community and the Soviets' fear of not being awarded Most Favored Nation status by the U.S. In December 1973, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, which linked trade agreements with the USSR to freedom of its citizens to emigrate, was passed in the U.S. Congress by a landslide. This dramatic legislation was no small measure of the degree to which the Soviet Jewry struggle had won the moral support of

the West and had galvanized the American Jewish community into action. The Soviet authorities were now subject to criticism not only from scattered groups of dissidents and refuseniks, but from tens of thousands protesting in front of Soviet embassies and consulates around the globe. Over time, these combined factors impacted the numbers of the Jews leaving the Soviet Union.

HIAS was involved from the beginning of the Jewish exodus from the USSR. In December 1966, HIAS organized a campaign to encourage American Jews to invite their Soviet relatives to join them in the U.S. The Soviet Union initially allowed limited exit visas to the U.S., though eventually, regardless of their final destination, Soviet Jews who received permission to emigrate were granted exit visas only to Israel.

Early on, Vienna became the first stop for all Jews exiting the USSR. There they were greeted by a representative of the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) and by HIAS, and were asked to determine their final destination. Those who were going to Israel were assisted by JAFI; those headed for the U.S. or elsewhere were processed by HIAS. After a short stay in Vienna, those destined for the U.S. were transferred to Rome, where they were processed by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

In August 1972, HIAS obtained U.S. parole status for hundreds of Russian refugees waiting in Rome, cutting their transit time from six months to six weeks. Parole made immigration possible without delay for all members of a family unit reunifying with their relatives in the U.S., who were formally considered their "sponsors".

In an effort to alleviate the financial burden on communities accepting increased numbers of Russian refugees, HIAS negotiated with the U.S. State Department a one-time \$300 per-capita grant for Russians who emigrated from Europe to the U.S. after January 1974. HIAS passed along the full amount to each resettlement agency.

15. Fred A. Lazin, *The Struggle for Soviet Jewry in American Politics*, Lexington Books, NY, 2005, p. 30.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the years of perestroika and glasnost, the political face of the Soviet Union changed, as well as the course of Jewish history. Jews were now free to assemble, to worship – and to leave the country. But as the number of emigrants swelled in Rome, significant backlogs developed and the time between arrival in Rome and the HIAS interview grew to three weeks. By the summer of 1989, overall processing time took 70 – 80 days. This situation was further aggravated by the denial of refugee status by the INS for an increasing number of Soviet Jewish applicants.

In Washington, then-Attorney General Richard Thornburgh announced a new policy of unilateral review of all previously denied cases, using “the most generous standards for that review.” The effect was immediate: INS began its review of the denied caseload in October, resulting in the overturning of more than 95 percent of the previous denials. As a result, the percentage of denials dropped from 40 to 2, eliminating the backlog.

Parallel activity was taking place in Congress, as this issue was brought to members’ attention by HIAS and the Council of Jewish Federations (the precursor to the United Jewish Communities). In November 1989, President George H.W. Bush signed into law the Morrison-Lautenberg Amendment, which established that a member of a category group “may establish a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion by asserting a credible basis for concern about the possibility of such persecution.” This amendment, which has been renewed a number of times, is still in force today and greatly facilitates processing for refugees from the FSU, Indochina, and Iran.

In late September 1989, the State Department announced a major change in

processing refugee admission for Soviet applicants. With a decreasingly hostile environment inside the USSR, the U.S. instituted a system that allowed Soviet Jews to apply and remain in the FSU while waiting for notification of status. From autumn 1989, those seeking family reunification in the U.S. applied for immigration processing at the U.S. Consulate in Moscow.

In 1994, HIAS opened an office in Moscow and, in 2003, one in Kyiv. Today, these offices closely monitor conditions in the former Soviet Union (FSU) and assist refugees bound for resettlement in the U.S. and other countries.

Overall, between 1966 and 1998 HIAS assisted about 400,000 Soviet Jews to immigrate to the U.S.<sup>16</sup>

### **HIAS in and for Israel<sup>17</sup>**

Although HIAS’s connection with immigration to Palestine goes back to the early 1920s, the first touch with the future State of Israel may be dated as early as May 17, 1915 when two young men expelled from Turkey arrived in New York and were met on Ellis Island by HIAS’s representatives. Their names were Ben Gurion and Ben Zvi.<sup>18</sup> After WWI, HIAS offices in Kovno, Riga, Danzig, Bucharest and Istanbul helped emigrants to go to Palestine. In Istanbul HIAS was entrusted with the distribution of Palestine immigration certificates.

When immigration to Palestine declined in the period 1927-32, HICEM (HIAS European affiliate) assisted the transportation of halutzim and allocated \$100,000 for this purpose.

The ascending of Nazism in Germany during 1933-39 coincided with a period of impoverishing of Polish Jewry, which caused massive immigration to Palestine. HICEM contributed \$307,250 for the transportation of 6,145 refugees from Germany in different European countries and at the same time helped transport to Palestine 8,000 refugees from Eastern Europe.

16. HIAS Annual Report for 1998.

17. For the sources for this chapter see Bibliography 10 and 12.

18. HIAS arrival records, 1915.

HICEM contributed to Youth Aliyah by transporting 1,000 children out of a total of 5,000 brought to Palestine in the period ending in 1939. This action was duly acknowledged at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Zionist Congress at Basel in 1946.

During WWII, cooperation between HICEM and the Jewish Agency for Palestine increased significantly. Until 1944, HICEM represented the Jewish Agency in Portugal and Spain and was recognized as such by the British Passport Control Office. In 1944 Palestine offices were opened in Lisbon and Casablanca and HICEM helped the first direct sailing to Palestine of 800 refugees from Spain and Portugal. David J. Schweitzer, a HIAS representative, escorted the refugee transport. As a result of his negotiations with the Jewish Agency HIAS opened an office in Tel Aviv under the directorship of Chaim Lerner, former director of HIAS in Chernovitz (Bukovina). HIAS helped immigration of Yemenite Jews from Aden, Bucharian Jews from Iran, and of deportees of Mauritius, whom the British now gave permission to enter Palestine, their original goal. In 1947, HIAS, in cooperation with the Jewish Agency organized the voyage of the S.S. Providence from Marseille to Palestine with 360 Jews on board. These people, many of them orphans, had survived the Nazi concentration camps.

After the establishment of the State of Israel, HIAS continued its active role in supporting Jewish immigration. In 1949 HIAS contributed \$280,000 to support 20,000 Polish Jews making aliyah to Israel. HIAS also funded the building of houses for new arrivals near Lydda and Beersheba in 1951.

In August of 1955, HIAS opened the doors of a modern hostel in Beersheba, which received the name of HIAS House in the Negev. Israel's President, Itzhak Ben-Zvi spent a night in the hostel and left a praising message on the register. I wonder if he remembered the day forty years before, when he and his friend David Ben Gurion arrived from Egypt to New York and were welcome by HIAS.

In 1960s and 1970s HIAS working with the Jewish Agency and other agencies played an

important role in "Operation Moses" and "Operation Solomon" and helped thousands of Jews from North Africa and Ethiopia to escape persecution.

For over twenty years, HIAS has demonstrated its unwavering commitment to the education of olim through scholarships. Each year, HIAS Scholarships help scores of promising new Israelis to fulfill their educational dreams.

The scholarship competition is open to olim from all countries. To be awarded a scholarship, students must show educational excellence, financial need, and a demonstrated commitment to community work.

In Israel, as around the world, HIAS is committed to the development of humane refugee laws and systems. In 2001, HIAS established the first-ever refugee law course in Israel and in 2003, co-formed the first Israeli refugee law clinic. Established at Tel Aviv University's Buchman Law Faculty, the clinic is today the premier institution of refugee law knowledge and expertise in Israel.

HIAS has been working closely with the Israel Ministry of the Interior (MOI) and the UNHCR to train MOI personnel to fully assume the responsibilities of Refugee Status Determination in Israel.

### **HIAS Archives**

HIAS archives are rich with over 125 years of Jewish history. They chronicle the modern day drama of a people who have migrated throughout the world for centuries.

After the Holocaust, HIAS assisted thousands of Jews to leave a devastated Europe and to find new homes and build new lives in freedom. Working in the displaced persons camps, HIAS helped survivors locate family in the United States, secure visas, and travel to their new homelands.

HIAS archives contain the arrival cards and sometimes invaluable files of those individuals and families who migrated from the displaced persons camps to the United States. The files are also available for the immigrants who arrived to the US since 1960s from different countries including but not limited to Poland, Hungary, Cuba, Egypt

and of course the Soviet Union. This information is available for these people or the members of their families.

Although HIAS has been in existence since 1881, we have access to HIAS documents only from 1909 through today. If information is needed about someone who arrived to the United States with the help of HIAS prior to 1909, there will likely be no related documents.

If one is looking for someone with whom you have lost contact (or wish to establish contact), HIAS can conduct a search in the U.S. and/or abroad. An inquirer must provide some basic information about the person sought, such as first and last name, birth date and birthplace, country of immigration, and when contact last occurred.

HIAS archives are not open to the public; however, request for information can be forwarded to HIAS Family History and Location Services and the workers of this department will gladly conduct the needed search.

HIAS address is:  
333 Seventh Ave. New York, NY 10001

More detailed and contact information can be found at [www.hias.org](http://www.hias.org)

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S.S. Providence sailing from Marseille to Eretz Yisrael with 360 Holocaust survivors, many of them orphans, April 4, 1947.

## **The Journey and the Burden – a Surrealistic Meeting of Past and Present – Piotrkow Trybunalski**

*Chana Furman*

The saga began back in 1997 by chance when I discovered that my grandmother, the mother of my mother Zissel Benchevski was born in Piotrkow Trybunalski. As usual, the older generation was sure that we the younger ones knew all about it. The knowledge of it was taken for granted by them.

My interest in genealogy was what kindled the interest of my uncle, who was the youngest son of Zissel and Aharon BENCHEVSKI. During the years 1993-2003 my repeated requests to my Uncle “Motke” Mordechai Ben-Zur to write down his memories of the family was not taken seriously. He could not understand why I was “nudging” him to do so all the time. On the other hand, deep down, he was happy that someone from the younger generation was truly interested to know about the family history, slowly but surely putting the pieces together in order to understand the lifestyle from a previous time and place.

With this piece of information, I tried to make contact with the Landsmanschaft group of fellow Piotrkow members in Israel. I put myself on their mailing list and thus was informed of the annual memorial day of Piotrkow. In the course of time, I made contact with the former residents and told them what I was looking for.

As I am a Sabra and didn't belong to the group of Holocaust survivors I had to explain my interest to these people concerning their town. It was not easy to connect between me, the Sabra, and them, the survivors, especially since my grandmother left the town at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century whereas they were born, raised and lost their families there.

There were members of the community who made trips to Piotrkow both to recall where they had come from and also for ceremonies to commemorate those who perished. In addition, they worked to create a memorial

termed the “righteous tent” in the “new cemetery”. There was even a memorial ceremony in Piotrkow in 2007.

In 2008 there was supposed to be the “Jewish sabbatical” in Piotrkow. What does this term mean? Recently, there began a movement to remember the Jewish communities and their culture. Jews come not only from Poland but from all over the world to participate. The sabbatical is a long weekend devoted to a number of activities connected to the Jewish history of the town. These activities include: memorial services in the cemetery, spending a full Shabbat in the town and establishing a “synagogue” for that occasion. Guided tours of the Jewish sites in the town are undertaken, enabling former residents to point out the personal aspects such as the house they lived in or the shop their grandfather had, the school they attended etc. The Polish government took this concept one step further and inaugurated a “week of Jewish culture” a week before the specific town program. This enabled the festival to have plays in Yiddish, films, music and lectures centered around this theme. There are also towns which “utilize” the week to have local reportage about Polish Jews or about themes connected to Jews.

Four years ago, the second and third generation of the Piotrkow residents began to organize the activities connected to the town and its Jewish roots. One of the new ideas was to have a small group of people going to Piotrkow a week earlier in order to try and map out the Jewish cemetery and photograph the Jewish tombstones. The oldest tombstone found was from 1793.

Piotrkow Trybunalski is a city which is over 800 years old and was given the honor of a recognized site by UNESCO. Jews began living there as early as 1620. The modest beginnings were around commerce in the local market and later these Jews settled in the town. By the eve of World War II there were over 35,000 Jews living there. Most of

the Jews continued to live near the center of the old town around Trybonelski Square. Jews were engaged in all occupations and did not belong to one social class. There were both secular schools and “heders”. Many of the youngsters graduated from gymnasia=academic high schools. All the various youth movements and Zionist organizations were represented. Life seemed to be taking its natural course. Only with the rise of Nazism, did the Jews begin to suffer not only being forced to live in one cramped quarter, but with the addition of some 15,000 Jews from the surrounding areas as well. As long as the businesses were considered “essential” Jews continued to work at them. The Jewish community did its best to serve the needs of its members and provide the basic necessities to all.

The big “aktias”=roundups, took place between 3-10 Tishri 5703 (14-21 October 1942). According to one of the survivors only 550 people returned after the war. Just after the war in 1946 a pogrom, known as the Kielce pogrom, broke out in the town and Poles shot at Jews indiscriminately. On that same day, the last survivors left the town forever.

In April 2008, there was a notice about organizing a “Shabbat” and a “working group”. I joined the group knowing that I could contribute both in working around the cemetery and in trying to trace relevant documents in the archives.

Before leaving, the group arranged to have a translator working with the group for the complete four day mission to the town. At the same time, connections were made with the mayor and the local officials whose help we needed in order to fulfill our two goals.

My grandmother Zissel Benchevski, was born the daughter of Daniel MARKOVITZ in 1882. This I learned from what was written on her tombstone. She died on 7 Tishri 5695 (16 September 1934) in Sokolka. Grandmother Zissel was the second wife of grandfather, Aharon Benchevski. According to the story that I had heard from my Uncle Motke, most probably Grandfather Aharon became a widower close to the time his second son was born.

He left the two young sons with the family of his late wife in Sokolka and was on the road in order to make a living. Grandfather Aharon was a carpenter and had his toolbox with him which enabled him to work wherever he found a job.

I have not yet been given an explanation why he tarried in Piotrkow Trybunalski except for suspecting that perhaps he had relatives there or in the vicinity. Otherwise, it is difficult to understand how the locals made him a *shidduch* (=match) with one of their own. The marriage could not have been later than 1902 since his first born child Yana was born on 15 September 1903. The young family returned to Sokolka before the birth of the second son Avraham on 22 December 1905. This is the information I found after reading the abridged documents pertaining to the births of Yana and Abraham.

With the above data I set out on my journey. In addition, I managed to find a few more details about my grandmother after “milking” my older cousins and reading what my mother had written back in 1958. My mother was Leah FRIEDMAN nee Benechevski. She wrote: “I travelled to Warsaw in Piotrkow.” Motke gave me the explanation that it was clear what she meant; i.e. take the train from Sokolka to Warsaw and from there then get on the train to Piotrkow. It was so easy yet so complicated.

The first thing I did upon arriving in in Piotrkow Trybunalski was to go back in time, meaning trying to get my bearings in the center of the town. My first encounter with the local cemetery was very painful even though I had been given information beforehand. Words cannot describe the emotions felt at the initial meeting with Yanina, the local caretaker of the cemetery. She lives in the house where the mikva once stood (for body purification). A short inquiry made it evident that she was the daughter of the assistant of Mr. Horowitz, the last president of the local hevra kadisha = burial society. She had the book with the names and details of the 200 people buried there. This collection was alphabetized in 2007.

Close to the entrance of the cemetery had been gathered pieces of the tombstones which

had been used as floor tiles for the roads and sidewalks all over the town. There were fragments of 98 tombstones. Three pieces successfully put together made one tombstone. Immediately we began to photograph and write down a list of the pieces trying to classify them. This part of the cemetery was prepared as the place where the memorial ceremony was to be held on that Friday. We continued to map out the cemetery so we could build a list of chores for the next few days. We knew from the beginning that this chore would not be easy as each and every one of us was connected to the place with all his heart. We learned that the Polish government had planned to take the broken tombstone pieces and put them in concrete at the entrance as a type of memorial.

The following morning on our second day of work we were surprised by the appearance of four local youngsters looking for a summer job. They were employed to take out the weeds. Later in the day a student from the Krakow University majoring in Jewish studies joined us. She helped us in writing down the information on the tombstones. She told us that in this way she improved her knowledge of Hebrew and had done this work in other cemeteries in Poland.

We now realized that we had to reappraise the programs we had planned before learning of the realities of the situation. We had to be realistic and decide what could be done within the few days we had and what could not be done. We divided up the cemetery into areas beginning with the entrance. We gave each area a number and began a systematic work schedule for each area. Each tombstone got a number and was photographed and the data on it recorded in writing. This was helpful for the member who did the photography. Since daylight was long we were able to get much work done.

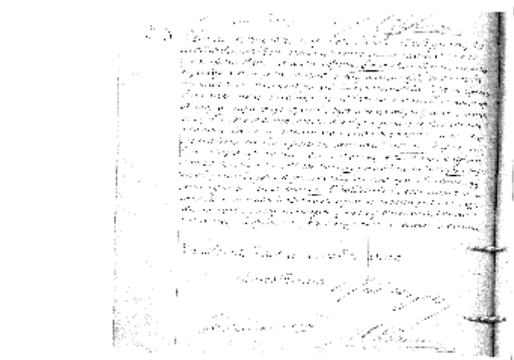
What about the tombstones themselves? With the existing knowledge we can approximate the existence of about 1000 tombstones. We did not reach all the tombstones in order to put them on the list. The reason for this was that they were under the ground and weeds had grown up on them

and it was impossible in the short time we had to fulfill this chore. In many places the tombstones were face down or broken in half which also made our work difficult. In addition, many of the tombstones still standing had lost the inscriptions on them. We were left with partial data either the family name or the first name and only parts of the dates. On many of the tombstones prior the 1920's there were no family names especially in the case of women. They did have the name of the father of the woman. A story in itself was the marital status of the woman. It was written if she was single or married and the economic status of the family. On some of the tombstones from the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were Latin letters giving the family name and the first name. This was usually on the back of the tombstone. Our goal of listing the tombstones that were above ground was achieved and we are preparing a computerized list of almost 900 tombstones.

Visiting the local archives was also part of our program. Before our trip we had made a list of requests for documents. We were sent to the State Archives in Piotrkow Trybunalski. Informator O Zasobio Archiwum Panstwowego W Piotrkowie Trybunalskim. Unfortunately, on our first day at the archives we did not have a translator so all our communication was through pantomime. What finally enabled communication was the word "genealogy". Being an international term the head of the archives understood what we were interested in and thus we could progress.

Besides the requests that had been made prior to our visit, I had a photo of a document stating the birth of my aunt Yana HALPRIN nee Benchevski. In addition to the details of my aunt there was a note where the document was located in the archive. The detail 248/1904/6 enabled the archivist to search for material from 1904, book number 6 and document 248. Thus, this book was brought before us (the dimensions are 45-5- cm height, 30 cm width and 20 cm thick) and was opened to document 248. This was the original birth certificate. Interesting enough, all the local staff was excited to see

how happy I was to see this original material. Immediately, they took the book and made a photocopy. The price of one page is 12 Zloti (1 Zloti = ca 1.2 NIS) while the document was only half a page and thus only 6 Zloti. Personally, I have not yet been able to get additional information on the history of my family in Piotrkow.



The second step was to understand how this archive works. Is the data computerized? How can one find individuals? The computer only has an index with a list of names. The index has the town Piotrkow and the surrounding villages. Since the director of the archives saw that I knew what I was doing he permitted me to look for familiar names on the computer. We started with four books. It transpired that the data had been gathered from the census. Piotrkow was part of Russia until World War I.

What can one learn from these books? In fact, all the information tells about the families living in the town. The first item is the head of the family and his address. It gives both his family name and his first name. The wife is always listed with her maiden name. Then we get the date of birth (in full if known), the names of the parents of both the husband and the wife and their birth dates. The earliest date was 1803. If one of the partners comes from another place then the name is given. If one of the parents was an important personage then there is information on it. Each child gets a separate entry. Of course, the address and the occupation of the head of the household is given as well as the taxes paid and permits

given to the head of the family. If the head of the household is the owner of the apartment or the house, this information is also noted.

As far as genealogy goes, we have three generations including dates and place of birth. We began collecting data according to the requests made by members of the group. Since we did not have a translator, people who were in the reading room volunteered to read out the names and addresses in the 'old' Russian language with all the possibilities. Very quickly, we were able to build family trees from the data at hand.

In reality, it is now possible to reach all the archives either through an email or a regular letter asking for information in that archive. One has to take into account that the request for information and a copy of the document necessitates paying a fee. It is possible to get the help of students who know English and are only too happy to help and make a small living from it. All these documents can be acquired at the Civil Registry Office or Urząd Stanu Cywilnego.

In addition, in Piotrkow we were in close contact with the local historian. I am also in contact with the historian of Sokolka. The Piotrkow historian is in his forties and is a very educated man who speaks a number of languages (German, French, English and a little Hebrew) besides Polish. His job is to collect information from people and stories about the town in order to publish them in the monthly journal of the town. During the week we were there we were escorted by the historian Pavel Reising who was very helpful in "opening doors" for us. He also had an in-depth interview with one of the participants from our group, a woman who is 81 years old and was a child during the Holocaust. She survived and built a new life for herself. The lady was interviewed in Polish as she speaks the language fluently and the interview appeared in the local journal.

During the very full week I managed to get to the train station which my mother had noted in her diary so many years before and which had sparked my curiosity as to the whereabouts of my family. I stood on the platform facing the station and walked inside just as my mother Lea Friedman nee

Benechevski, had done some 58 years before. Thus I had come full circle in chronicling my mother's family history.

The Sabra who came from her secure home in Israel to such a forlorn place had found that she was indeed very close to it. I walked the streets of the Jewish quarter and tried to imagine how it must have been in the days when my mother grew up there. Was this the route my grandmother had taken my mother when doing the shopping for Shabbat? Perhaps it was on the other street? Did my great-grandfather *daven* (=pray) in the big synagogue or in one of the smaller ones? Did he have a profession or did he work in a shop? I could feel that I was connected to

where my family once lived and worked. This trip in 2008 brought me closer than ever to this past which is my family's history.

This is dedicated to the grandmother I did not know Zissel Markovitz nee Benchevski 5642-7 Tishrei 5635 (1882-16 September 1934).

*Chana Furman nee Friedman, born in Eretz Yisrael, living in Lakhish Area since 1960. In 1989 she started her genealogical research of the families: Banczewski-Markiewicz-Friedman and PLOTNICK-FURMAN from Poland. IGS member since 1997. Between 2000-2007 was IGS President. From February 2009, IGS Treasurer. Married to Emmanuel, mother of three and grandmother of nine.*



## Connecting the Montel Families of Marseille, Nice, and Cuneo

*James Montel*

### Introduction

When I researched the genealogy of the Montel families in Marseille, the earliest ancestor I found connected directly in the family tree was Raphael David MONTEL, born in 1815. Although we had much information about his descendents in Marseille from the 1800s to present (as described in previous articles published in *Sharsheret Hadorot*), some major questions were left open. Where was Raphael born and where did his family come from? How were the Marseille Montels related to Paul Montel and other Montels in Nice? How, if at all, were these families related to other Montels in southern France or in Italy?

In considering the many possible directions for further research, I narrowed the field to three options: 1) doing serious research in the *Juifs du Pape* sources in the Marseille-Avignon region, where there are known to be many Montels on record; 2) looking into records in Nice, where a family friend and presumed relative was born; or 3) looking into some communities in the Piedmont region of Italy, where there are also

historical records of Montels. Because I am based in Israel and engage in genealogy as a hobby, and not a full-time enterprise, I also decided to exhaust all possible means of research using the Internet and snail-mail media before embarking on any travel abroad. The results of this have been quite surprising.

### Raphael David Montel

While investigating possible leads available on the Internet, I came across a genealogy website (<http://juifs.du.pape.free.fr/>) documenting descendents of the *Juifs du Pape*, Jews who had lived under Papal protection in the county of Avignon several centuries ago. There I found listings for two direct ancestors, Salomon Raphael Montel and his father Raphael David Montel. I immediately wrote to the website owner, Jean-Paul Bourlac, to find out more about his sources and research activities. Up to this point, the Montel genealogy had been based largely on oral history and details passed on by numerous family members, but I had not seen very many actual birth, marriage, and

death (BMD) records. Bourlac was conducting a systematic survey of BMD records for *Juifs du Pape* names in the Bouches-du-Rhône departmental archives in Marseille. In an independent effort, he had already collected numerous BMD records related to the Montel genealogy.

After some initial correspondence with Bourlac, I sent him a copy of the detailed article I had written for *Sharsheret Hadorot* and the GEDCOM file of the work that I was doing. Using that information, in the electronic archives of the Bouches du Rhone he was able to locate at least one BMD record for almost everyone in the family tree. For some people, he located the complete set of birth, marriage, and death registrations in Marseille. Using the information on the registrations, we were able to find leads to numerous other relatives and greatly expand the known genealogy. This was just the kind of synergy I was hoping would result from the publication of the initial family tree. While Bourlac had easy access to the archives in Marseille and the local area, I had the benefit of direct oral history from family members, and relatives I could consult as new information became available.

One of the first new discoveries that Bourlac found was the death certificate of Raphael David Montel, dated April 17, 1876, Marseille. Among other information on the certificate, it stated that he was born in Cuneo, Italy, and was the son of the late Isaac Shalom Montel and Rosa CASSIN. So this was the answer to the first major question I had been trying to solve. The Montels of Marseille descended from a Montel family in Cuneo, a small town in the Piedmont region of Italy. This came as a very pleasant surprise because it fit right in with some prior research. In her three volume history of *The Jews of Piedmont*, Renata Segre describes how numerous *Juifs du Pape* families from the county of Avignon had migrated to Piedmont-Savoy in the 15 and 16 hundreds. Among the *Juifs du Pape* family names she documented in Cuneo and other Piedmont communities were CAVAILLON, LATTES, LUNEL, and MONTEL.

### **Soterica Paolina Montel**

The next major find brought more questions than answers. Bourlac sent an electronic image (JPG file) of a marriage certificate dated August 27, 1854 from an archive in Nice. Written in Italian in the Catholic parish of St. Reparate, the certificate was for the marriage of Soterica Paolina Montel to Giulio Serafino ORENCO. Born in 1826, the bride was 28 years old and the daughter of "Israelites" Rosa Cassin and the late Isaac Montel of Cuneo. The priest performing the marriage wrote a note on the certificate stating that the mother of the groom had expressed her dissent to the marriage and that the mother of the bride had not explicitly objected.

Now we had at least two children of Isaac Shalom and Rosa from Cuneo. Soterica was 11 years younger than Raphael, so perhaps there were also other siblings in between.

I was not aware of any descendants of Soterica and Giulio, and no one in the family knew anything of Soterica. Given the circumstances of the mixed marriage, it is not surprising that this would be left out of the oral histories of the family. I would find out later on, however, that the circumstances were even more complicated.

### **The Photos Arrive**

Meanwhile, a package of photos arrived from my parents, who are in their upper eighties and reside in the U.S. These were photos of Montel family members which had been in safe keeping for many decades in a cellar at the Montel residence in Marseille. After my aunt died in 2002 and the apartment was sold, the box was sent to my mother, who was the only person left in the family who could identify many of the photographs. Many of the photos were individual portraits dating from the 1870s through the 1950s, and fortunately she was able to identify and label most of them.

As I looked through the photos, I realized that the third pillar of this genealogical project had just fallen in place. The first major part had been the documentation of the available oral history and collation of data and documents that existed within the

family. The second major part had been the collection of a large body of actual BMD certificates from archives in France. And now, there were actual photographs of ancestors to complement the family history.

Many of the portraits were the card photos (about 10.5 by 6.5 cm) in the style popular in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It did not take me long to home in on a particular photo of a white-haired man wearing a three piece suit and a fancy looking overcoat. As is the style on card photos taken in the 1860s and 70s, there was the place name on the front bottom and a fancy logo of the photographer on the back. My mother had labeled the photo Raphael David Montel, and the logo was of the photographer B. Fachinelli, Cairo, Egypt. I immediately phoned my mother in Arkansas to ask her how Raphael had gone from Cuneo to Marseille to Egypt.



Raphael David Montel

### **Raphael David Montel in Cairo in the 1860s**

Raphael was born in Cuneo in 1815. Sometime between then and 1845, he made his way to Marseille, where his son Salomon was born. Raphael was a mechanic by profession and had a business selling machinery and contracting mechanical services. Based in Marseille, he was at the right place at the right time to offer his services for the construction of the Suez Canal, which was the reason for his presence in Cairo. The engineering and technical expertise for the construction of the Suez

Canal was supplied entirely by the French which took place from 1859 to 1869, when it opened for service. The photo was, therefore, most likely taken during the 1860s. Raphael died in Marseille in 1876 at the age of 61.

A second photograph was even more intriguing. It was slightly smaller and noticeably thinner than all the other card photos in the box, was highly faded and looked quite a bit older. Perhaps it was taken with an earlier photographic technology. The man in the photo looked very old and had a rather stern if not unhappy expression on his face. The logo was of humble design compared to the other photos, but it clearly identified the photographer as G.G. Cavatore of Cuneo. This was a tremendous find, because it is the only photograph, and indeed the only object of any kind in the family heirlooms, that can be identified as originating from Cuneo. Although we cannot be certain, our best guess of a lone photo of a very old man from Cuneo is that it would be of the family patriarch, Isaac Shalom Montel. If this is true, the photo would have been taken in 1854 or earlier.

### **The Paul Montel Path: Searching in Nice**

Having traced the path from Cuneo to Marseille, I now focused my attention on clarifying the mystery of Montels in Nice. Paul Montel, was born in Nice in 1876 and died in 1975. Throughout his lifetime, he maintained contacts with several Montel family members of the Marseille branch. My great-grandfather, Salomon Montel used to visit Paul's father in Nice, where they sometimes took photographs. Paul Montel and his father had always been considered cousins, but we didn't know how they were actually related.

Among his contributions in mathematics, Paul is known for his studies in the theory of analytic functions. Related to this, the *Montel Theorem* and the concept of a *Montel Space* are named for him. He was elected to the French Academy of Sciences in 1937, and was dean of the Henri Poincaré Institute of Mathematics at the University of Paris.

## Paul Montel in Paris in the 1950s



Paul Montel

Although there is a good deal of information available about his mathematics career and his numerous publications, we had very little genealogical information to go on. Family members were not even sure of the names of his parents, although we knew that his father was A. Montel, a photographer in Nice.

After some initial searching via Internet, I joined the *Association Généalogique des Alpes-Maritimes* (AGAM) in order to gain access to genealogical resources in Nice and correspond with experts in the local area. With the generous assistance of Gerard Monteil, President of AGAM, the first major find was Paul Montel's birth certificate, which also contained details about his marriage and death. He was born Antoine Paul Aristide Montel to parents Pierre Aristide Montel and Anaïs MAGIOLO. Aristide was listed as 28 years old at the time of Paul's birth.

Now that I had the name and age of Paul's father Aristide, I could look for Aristide's birth certificate as the next target. The online archives of the Department of Alpes-Maritimes are fantastic, containing vital records back to 1814. Research can be tricky, however, because of the political history of Nice. Between 1815 and 1860, Nice was part of the Kingdom of Sardinia. All the vital records up to 1860 are in Italian and are in the registries of individual Church parishes and synagogues. In 1860, Nice became part of France, and from then on, the vital records are in French and maintained in civil registries of the French administrative district.

Since Aristide was 28 years old in 1876, I did the math and started searching the birth records from late 1847 through 1849. The birth registries in Nice in the 1840s were kept separately in 17 different parishes and one Israelite community. Aristide's wife was not Jewish, and it was uncertain at this point whether one or either of his parents were Jewish. Therefore, I had to search all 18 registries and found neither a birth milah nor a baptism for this person. However, by chance, I found another document that took me by surprise. This was the baptism of Soterica Paolina Montel in the parish of St. Jacques in 1846. It listed her parents as Israelites and merchants, Isaac Shalom Montel and Rosa Cassin, in the town of Cuneo. She received the Christian name Teresa, which also appeared on her marriage registration of 1854.

Interesting as this was, I was at a dead end with regard to Aristide. If the birth registration of Paul Montel clearly stated Aristide's age and that he was from Nice, why was there no birth record? I wrote to Bourlac to see if he could help.

Bourlac checked in the same online archive, but instead of looking for a birth registration, he looked for a marriage in the years immediately before Paul Montel's birth. Indeed, he found the civil registration of Pierre Aristide Montel and Anaïs Magiolo, married on October 10, 1874. Aristide's mother was clearly identified as Soterique Pauline Montel, and there was no father listed. This document, in French, was a highpoint in this search because it established the direct line from Paul Montel to the Montels of Cuneo and helped us document his relationship to the Montels of Marseille. This also confirmed the oral history in our family that Salomon Montel and Paul Montel's father were first cousins (see chart of family tree). It would seem that the memory of Soterica had been completely lost, but this was not entirely so. A realization that seemed obvious only after seeing the actual BMD records was that Paul Montel was named after his grandmother Paolina.

According to Aristide's ages that were listed on his marriage registration and on the birth registration of Paul, Aristide's own birth should have been found in the archive in 1847 or 48. Neither Bourlac nor I was able to find it, so he consulted a genealogical colleague for help. About two months later, André Farache sent an email with the certificate attached. After searching the same archive, Farache suspected that perhaps there had been a mistake in the orthography. So instead of looking for the last name, he kept his eye out for first names. The record he found (in Italian) did not have a last name at all, and the first names were switched. "Aristido Pietro" of "unknown parents" was baptized in the parish of St. Dominique on June 28, 1847. A note written in the margin in French (and therefore sometime after 1860) stated that a Madame Soterique Pauline Montel, born in Cuneo, Italy and residing in Nice, officially declared and recognized Aristide as her son. This is verified in an 1870 civil document called a *reconnaissance* (i.e., recognition), in which Soterica legally recognizes him as her son after having given him up to the Parish some 23 years before.

### **Astounding Records in Israel**

A few years ago, my wife, Judy, did some research at the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem. Among its collections, the archive contains a major portion of the communal records of the Jewish community of Cuneo. Although we did not know of any direct genealogical connection at the time, this was of definite interest as a source of Jewish history in Piedmont-Savoy. Many documents from the synagogue and communal organizations in Cuneo had names on them, and Judy had made copies of some that listed Montels. I decided it was time to pull out the files and have a look.

Several documents showed the name of Isaac Shalom Montel. He was a signatory on the charter of the Talmud-Torah Association in 1816. His name also appears on a memorial calendar from 1908. While the calendar lists the Hebrew date (day and month) of his

death so that one may say kaddish on that day, it does not include the actual year.

In the accounting report of the Israelite Charity Association for 1867, it lists the sum of money that was given for the funeral of Rosa Cassin and includes the date of her death. With this information, I was able to obtain her death certificate from the Municipality of Cuneo.

The most fascinating find so far in the Cuneo records were some letters in French. In Cuneo, there was a factory that made matzah and various confections that were kosher for the Passover holidays, and it filled orders from the local region in Italy and France. Several letters from Nice were concerned with the order and payment details to the matzah factory.

One such letter of April 11, 1898 was written by Salomon Cassin, a metal worker in Nice, to Joseph Montel, Administrator of the Israelite Charity Society in Cuneo. The letter supplied the accounting and payment details on behalf of Albin Montel, Paul Montel, Emile Montel, Eugene LATTES and Cassin – all of Nice. So it would seem from this, that Paul Montel still had some connection with Cuneo and perhaps also with his grandmother Soterica, who could still have been alive at the time. It is noteworthy that the names Lattes and Cassin also appear frequently in the Cuneo synagogue records, and it is quite likely that all of the people listed on this matzah order were either originally from Cuneo or, like Paul, were descendents of people who had come from Cuneo to Nice one or two generations before.

### **Drama and Connection**

Although we will never know the details, it is apparent that the lives of Raphael David and Soterica Paolina Montel were full of drama and suspense. Both of them left the small-town life of Cuneo in the Piedmont hills of Italy for life in the big port cities. Raphael sought his fortune in Marseille and left many descendents to tell the story. (He had two spouses and several children, who are outside the focus of this article.) His younger sister, Soterica, left home, very likely in tragic

circumstances of some sort, and was baptized in Nice at the age of 18. A year later, she left an infant at the doorstep of a church, and a few years after that she entered into a marriage for which parental dissent was documented. It seems likely that she kept contact with her son, however, because he was given her family name and because they were legally reunited some years later.

The existence of Soterica was entirely unknown to the Marseille family, but her legacy lives on through the photography of her son, which gives us the faces of many of our ancestors in the 1800s, and the groundbreaking mathematical accomplishments of her grandson, which are cited to this day in text books, scholarly papers, and on the Internet.

Now that the genealogical connection to Cuneo has been established, the next direction for research has become clear. I hope to focus now on digging deeper into the Cuneo communal documents archived in Jerusalem, and then to pursue the Montel and Cassin genealogy further back in Cuneo and Piedmont.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Jean-Paul Bourlac, Gerard Monteil, and André Farache for their assistance in locating original BMD documents in France; Arthur and Reine Duell for their work on the photographs and the oral history, and Judy Montel for the fruits of her archival research in Jerusalem.

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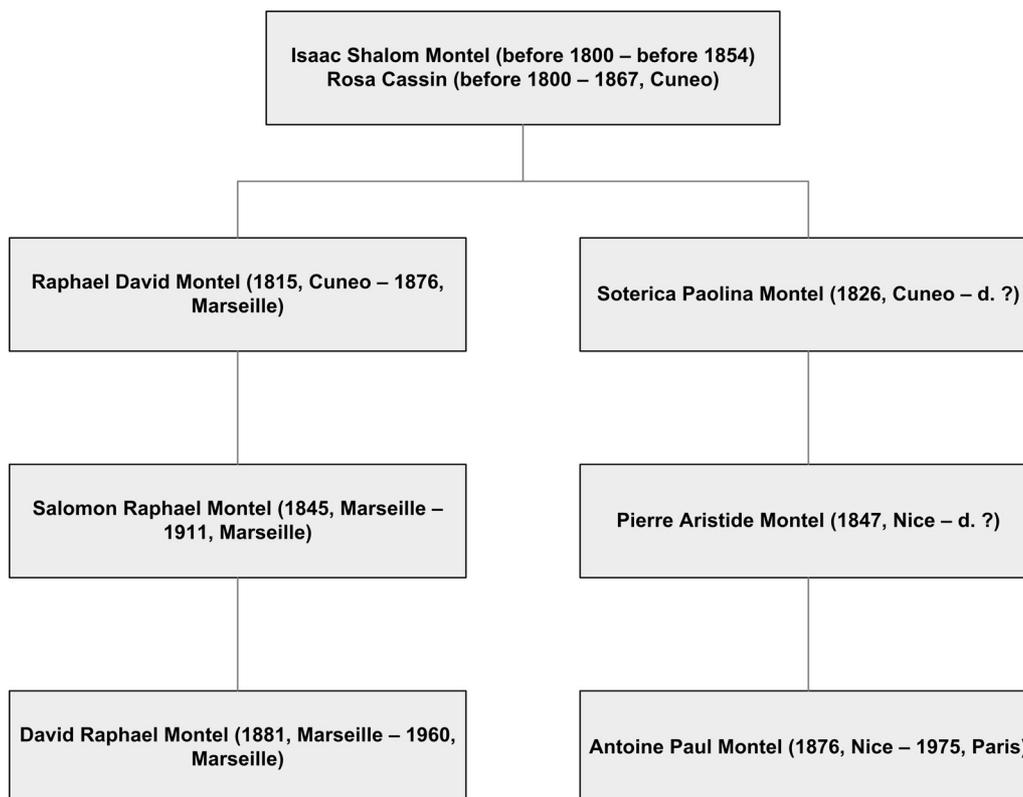
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## The Neuberger Clan and its Twentieth Century Heritage

*Shmuel Shamir*

The twentieth century offered the world Albert Einstein's Law of Relativity. It was followed by all manner of research work which eventually spawned space travel to the moon and other planets, and the discovery of electronic waves and light waves (by Heinrich Hertz, 1897-1957), and the path to space was laid through wireless communication. The world took on the appearance of a spot in the Universe.

In the twentieth century there was an outburst of anti-Semitism in central and western Europe, while the national aspirations of the Jews also gathered pace.

In this century significant gains were made in culture, in spiritual and material areas, in education and both in the length and quality of life. It is here that we find the Neuberger clan, and their contribution to enhancing life for the coming generations.

**Albert Neuberger** was born on April 15 1908, Hassfurt in Bavaria, Germany, and died in London on August 14 1998. When he was born, Hassfurt was a small village with, in 1910, only 2,811 residents including 125 Jews. The Jews who lived there were orthodox religious and they had a Torah academy which also served as a synagogue, *mikveh* (ritual bath) and cemetery. There were also educational institutions. Many of the Jewish residents were cattle and sheep traders, and there was a doctor and veterinarian, a teacher, butcher and two farmers. During the economic embargo, from April 1 1933, SS guards blocked the entrance to Jewish stores. However, the inhabitants and dignitaries of the city ignored them and entered the Jewish stores by the back door and continued doing their shopping there.

By 1938, 60% of the Jewish residents of the village relocated to Germany, and the other emigrated to the United States, England and Palestine. But 16 Jews survived there until 1942, after which they were exiled and sent to death camps at Isbicain and Lublin district, and perished in the Holocaust.

The village was located near to the regional capital of Würzburg, which was founded in 1719. The city had 125,000 inhabitants, including the various generations of the Neuberger family. The city sits on the banks of Main River and has a church from 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries, with luxurious residences for monks and church officials. Information about the Neuberger family, through the generations, can be found in biographical dictionary Jews in Würzburg 1900-1945 which attempts to put together an extensive collective biography of the local Jewish community. The details for the dictionary were gathered in 1980, with the help of archivist Cordula Kappner and the Jewish Cultural Association in Würzburg. The dictionary was expanded and developed by Prof. Reiner Stratz.

This booklet contains numerous details of births and deaths, as well as short biographies of ordinary people and of others who became well known. Many files in the Würzburg archive were lost during the fierce air strikes on May 16 1945, which left



5,000 people dead. During these attacks the index of the residents' catalogue was also destroyed. In an historic error the Nazis forgot to destroy the archive, and to conceal the Gestapo's actions. The catalogue contains documentation about 1,100 out of 18,000 personal files on the Jewish

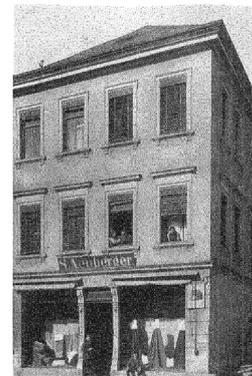
inhabitants. Many files contain information about the lives of Jews who were persecuted following the pogrom of November 9 1938. Prof. Stratz obtained information about the members of the community from these files, and from a list of taxpayers, and from a list of voters and from statistical lists. The lists also included the addresses of Jewish descendants who dispersed around the world – to England, South Africa, New Zealand, the United States and Israel. In the 1938 pogrom the Jewish school was closed and was later used to coral Jews before they were sent to the death camps. This booklet is now housed in the National Library in Jerusalem, at the Leo Baeck Institute in New York, Harvard University and Cambridge University, and also in the Central Zionist Archives.

Albert Neuberger's father, **Max Meyer** (1877-1931) and his mother **Bertha** (nee Hiller, 1888-1974) were orthodox Jews who gave their descendants an orthodox Torah education. The father, who traded in cloth, foresaw the Germany economic disaster which was to follow World War One, and he managed to survive the crisis without any of his family being hurt. Academics (yeshiva students from Poland) and teachers were invited to stay at the Neuberger home, to teach the children religious studies and Hebrew. Church clergymen were also invited, to teach the children Greek, Latin and German, and to widen the children's horizons with general knowledge.



Max Meyer was the son of Shmuel and Gretzel (nee Zeltz) Neuberger. He was born

in Würzburg, at house 199 on the main street. The building is still standing. Max and Bertha had three children: Albert (born in 1908), Grete (1912) and Herman Naphtali (1918).



Albert was accepted by the school in Hassfurt at the age of 9 and continued his studies at the Würzburg high school and later at the university there. In his first year at university he studied neurology, medicine and legal science, but later decided to devote himself to medicine. He completed his degree with honors and shortly afterwards continued his studies at the university in Berlin and became aware of unrest in Germany. After considering the situation he moved to London in January 1933 and started a new career path in biochemistry research and researched the materials of the human organism and the chemical changes that take place in the body. While he was in Germany Albert, in 1932, was a member of the religious Zionist movement. With his acute senses Albert foresaw the danger of the Nazis' rise to power. He managed to escape the inferno before Hitler became chancellor. His emigration to England spurred his sister Gretha to move to Palestine, while his brother Herman Naphtali moved to the United States and the family survived the Holocaust.

Albert Neuberger was one of the leading scientists in the biochemistry field who made important contributions to numerous scientific fields in his work and served in many positions in England, Israel and elsewhere in the world. His greatest contribution to the world of science, both in



terms of originality and involvement in the discovery of glycoproteins – sugared proteins.

In 1936 Neuberger started research work into ovalbumin (the protein of chicken eggs). This enabled him to produce relatively large amounts of protein for research into its properties. This was a wise choice as the methods of isolation and cleaning proteins from the cell at the time were not advanced, and large amounts of protein were required for research.

During his work Neuberger isolated the protein but also detected the presence of sugars, which went with the protein, even though he employed a range of innovative biochemical methods to try to obtain pure protein.

In 1938 Neuberger published a paper that set out a theory which was innovative at the time, and is still relevant today. It determined that the cell contains sugared proteins – glycoproteins. He claimed that the sugars that accompany the proteins are not the result of pollution during the cleaning process of the protein, rather sugars that naturally bond with the protein. According to Neuberger's theory there is no need to continue to clean the protein. Instead one must examine which are the sugars that fix themselves to the protein, what their function is, and when and at which stage they fuse with the protein, based on the assumption that the sugars are part of the protein and have a biological role.

Neuberger's theory was highly innovative at the time. He determined it despite the fact that contemporary methods were limited. His knowledge in the fields of biochemistry and chemistry, and the laboratory results he achieved over the years, encouraged him to draw conclusions and confirmed his assertions and led to scientific developments in the field, and laid the foundation for a new scientific field relating to complex sugars.

Over a period of 25 years, because of the world war, Neuberger did not research this field, and he later resumed this research work with collaborators, in around 1956. During this time, together with his colleagues,

Neuberger succeeded in identifying the sugars that connected with various proteins, such as ovalbumin, and in ratifying his theory from 1938, using a more innovative method of isolating and identifying molecules in the cell.

The discovery of the glycoproteins, the sugared proteins, comprised an important breakthrough in two directions:

- a. In the area of identification, isolation and cleaning of these molecules from the cell.
- b. In the field of research into their functioning and their importance in the living cell.

And, in particular:

- a. The range of types of proteins in the living cell is very wide and, as such, it was difficult to identify and isolate specific proteins. The fact that the proteins were sugared made it simpler to isolate them, based on the proteins fused with the proteins. This opened the door to identification of glycoproteins and their involvement in different processes in the living body.
- b. Identification of the processes in which the glycoproteins were involved and their specific role in the cell led to the study of processes taking place in the cell, focusing on breakdowns that lead to illnesses and attempts to repair defects in the cell, and to cure these ailments.

The processes in which glycoproteins are involved – a partial list:

- \* Maintaining the stability of various proteins in the cell: such as proteins in the immune system found in the blood.
- \* Glycoproteins are located in the cell membrane and act as a sort of identity tag. It is a sort of address written on the protein which indicates its location and its function. Blood types (A, B, AB, O) are determined by glycoproteins on the cornea which encompass the red blood cells. Organization of cells into tissues is determined by identification of glycoproteins. Channeling proteins to various

parts of the cell is based on glycoprotein signs.

- \* The sugar part of the glycoproteins changes over time, and depends on the age of the cell, the surrounding conditions, and as a response to materials in the area, Aging-related disease can be prevented if these changes in the sugars are prevented.
- \* The sugar part of the glycoproteins is responsible for identifying the cells in the body: an encounter between an ovoid cell and a sperm cell, organizing cells into tissues and organs in a developing embryo. On the other hand, cancerous cells stop recognizing each other, probably due to changes in the glycoproteins.
- \* Some of the hormones in the body are glycoproteins.
- \* An attack of viruses and germs on the body often occurs by fusing with glycoproteins in the casing of the attacked cells.

This partial list indicates that the glycoproteins are a large and important group of molecules in the body, with varied and important roles. They are involved in the functioning of the cell in a normal state, and any problem with their functioning can lead to ailments which can be prevented by means of adequate knowledge of these molecules.

Albert Neuberger was a warm family man, gentle and modest with a clear, sharp and well-balanced mind. He was an excellent teacher who trained many scientists who became well known and won awards, including the Nobel Prize in their field.

When Albert arrived in London he lived the life of a polyat. He took an interest in, and wrote papers on the life sciences, law, medicine, history and literature, as well as in the natural sciences. He passed two examinations in organic and inorganic chemistry from which he started his interest in clinical medicine back in Würzburg. Over time he engaged in and taught chemistry, which quickly became his main field of interest.

It is interesting to note that one of the scientists who won two Nobel Prizes was his

student, Fred Sanger, who always declared that he learned invaluable lessons from Neuberger about research.

In London he joined a team led by Prof. Harrington who had telling influence on his student in the field of biochemistry research and, in particular, glycolization (one of the basic processes in living metabolism), and also engaged in research into the metabolism of protein and inherited the position once filled by penicillin discoverer Alexander Fleming. His final paper, on the breakdown of sugar and lactic acid, received an honors grade.

In 1944 he was appointed to the position of medical and nutrition consultant to the British General Staff in New Delhi, in the Indian subcontinent, and was promoted from corporal (res.) to the rank of brigadier. In India he took on intellectually and emotionally active role and was invited to advise the Central Indian Medical Council on research and nutrition problems.

When Albert turned 80 he wrote a rich autobiography about the world of science and the researchers with whom he worked. The autobiography is called *An Octogenarian Looks Back*.

The warm eulogy delivered by Prof. Natan Sharon, one his students and a lecturer and researcher at the Weizmann Institute, was published in British daily newspaper, *The Independent*, on August 19 1996.

In 1950 Albert formed strong ties with Israel and with Prof. Ephraim Katzir, the president of the Weizmann Institute, and later the country's fourth president, and with Avraham Harman, the president of the Hebrew University and its various institutions. With his strong roots in Jewish heritage, he adhered to the values of his culture and helped the Hebrew University, using his expertise, experience and devotion to help it develop. As one of the leaders of the Board of Trustees of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem he dedicated himself to the university and the academic community. It was in recognition of this work that, in March 1968, the university senate decided to award him an honorary

doctorate. The award gave him a sense of great pride and allowed him and his wife to devote themselves to the advancement of the Hebrew University.

His ties with the university led to his appointment as chairman of the Board of Trustees in Jerusalem and London. The university considered him a distinguished researcher and one of the pioneers of modern biochemistry research, and a leader in the development and advancement of the field. Prof. Neuberger's research work covers a wide spectrum of problems and topics in significant areas of biology and biochemistry. He cemented his leadership position through his contribution to the development of methodical ways to research the metabolism and in determining the changes that take place in the human body in relation to the way in which the components of the living body function, and the development of techniques and the placement of the enzyme and biosynthesis of amino acids and the other compounds of the cell. Our knowledge of the chemical structure of the protein is the result of independent development and the opinions and experience of Albert Neuberger, and he generated the formulation of the basic principles of the research and development of the life span of objects. He was a gifted teacher whose disciples remember as a leading teacher, alert and quick-witted who developed new ideas and who changed scientific thinking. He trained professional academies in England and other countries, and was a member of the Royal Society.

In 1943 Albert married Lilian Ida Dreyfus, who was born on October 15 1912 and died on May 2 2007, her parents were Edmond (1888/1981) and Margaret In her youth she studied art, painting and sculpture at the Slade School of Fine Art in London. Her works were exhibited at St. Mary's Hospital in London. Her talent and artistic abilities later resurfaced in travel magazines which she wrote on her return from her trips around the world. These magazines and accounts were illustrated with spectacular pictures produced by a highly gifted artist.

She devoted her life to raising her family and to voluntary activities on behalf of groups that had suffered in World War Two. She worked tirelessly as a social worker in the East End of London, doing her best to provide for the needs of the local population. She devotedly supported her husband and her family while he continued his work in the scientific and social fields. She also developed friendly ties with supporters of the Hebrew University in Britain, and supported efforts to promote the university's institute of chemistry. Her work was rewarded when she was accepted as an honorary member of the Hebrew University in May 2007.

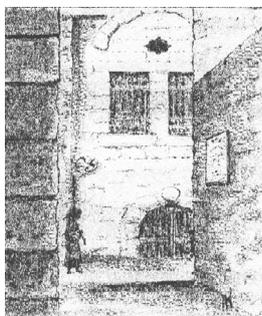
Lilian Ida Dreyfus was the sister of Charles, who was born in 09/10/1911 and died in 2007. Charles was survived by his daughter Margaret, the wife of Geoffrey Ben Nathan who was born in 1949. There other sibling, John, was born on April 14 1918 and died on December 29 2002 married to Irene Thurnamer. John was survived by his daughter Angela, who was born on September 21 1950. She married Michael Pavlov and had a daughter, Paticia, who was born on October 4 1953 and married Victor Redigold.



Lilian was a broad minded conversationalist and adventurous woman, full of curiosity and with a well developed sense of humor. She enjoyed traveling around the world, particularly, to the Far East. At the age of 93 she took part in a trip to Cambodia. When the group arrived at the bottom of a hill, at the top of which was a Bawathanshi

Buddhist temple, with 291 steps leading up to it, she was determined not to miss out on the experience and made it to the temple on the back of a motorbike.

On her numerous visits to Jerusalem she would walk through the alleyways of the Old City and visit the Western Wall. She also took the opportunity to paint there, and she produced a work of the Barukh Mizrahi house on the corner of Malakh (Angel) Street and HaNevel (Harp) Street. She was a painter and sculpture and her works were divided among the members of her family.



Albert and Lilian had five children who received their early education at home from private tutors. When the children reached the age of 9 they continued their education at school and thereafter at university. The couple's children grew up in a cultural incubator and later became leaders in the worlds of the natural sciences and Hassidism.

Albert and Lilian's children:

1. **David Edmond** – born January 10 1948. David received independent education at Westminster School and studied chemistry at Christchurch College, Oxford. After studying economics and gaining professional experience in the field he opted for a legal career and, in 1974, he took silk and became a barrister. He gained a reputation for his extraordinary courtroom delivery, which was liberally spiced with humor and quotations from various writers, such as Kafka.

In 1987 he qualified to offer legal counsel in the high courts as Queen's Counsel (QC), in 1990 he was appointed court registrar and in 1996 he was appointed to the position of chancery judge. In 2001 he was appointed President of the Court, and in 2004 he

became Lord Justice of the Appeals Courts and Privy Councillor. In 2007 he became Baron Neuberger of Abbotsbury, Dorset and took his place in the House of Lords, between Lord Bingham and his sister-in-law Baroness Neuberger.

In 2009 he was appointed Master of the Rolls, the highest position in the civil law system, and the second highest judge in the entire English legal system. This was after he became the youngest Law Lord.

Between 2006 and 2007 he led an investigation for the Bar Council into widening access to the Bar to different strata of the legal system.

Since 2000 he has served as dean of the University of Arts London. He has been Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Spoliation of Art during the Holocaust since 1999, and of the Schizophrenia Trust since 2003.



Lord Neuberger's rulings have extensive social impact in England and Europe. In December 2009, for example, Lord Neuberger examined the issue of whether a marriage registrar, based on her Christian beliefs, may refuse to register single sex couple as married. At this time the laws in England changed, after the start of her employment, which on the one hand allowed registration of single sex marriages and, on the other hand, prevented regular couples and single sex couples from being treated differently.

Lord Neuberger ruled that while freedom of religion allows every person to act in accordance with his or her personal beliefs, within his or her private domain, in the public domain, and in particular with regard to a civil servant, the state may instruct that person to act in accordance with its laws, and that the employee could not refuse to register a marriage of single sex couples.<sup>1</sup>

1. Lilian Ladele V. London Borough of Islington [2009] EWCA CIV 1357.  
2. Krasner V. Memath 2005 EWCA 1072 10 Aug 2005.

In 2004 Lord Neuberger made a minority ruling in which he determined that evidence obtained by means of torture is not acceptable. In 2009 he made another ruling, in the matter of Debbie Purdie, in which a terminal patient with muscular dystrophy succeeded in determining that her husband could not be made to stand trial for assisting her suicide unless clear and explicit criteria are laid down.

Another important case, which Lord Neuberger handled in 2005, examined the issue of whether, after an active liquidator has been appointed to a company, if the liquidator can give preference for payment of early notice, and other workers' rights to, to an employee over the active liquidator. Lord Neuberger ruled against this.<sup>2</sup>

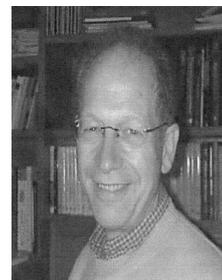
Recently, in February 2010, Lord Neuberger delivered a ruling which forced the British Foreign Ministry to release information about the case of Mohamed Binyam. Essentially, this was an investigation into the seizing of Binyam by the British and American intelligence services, and the torture he endured during this time. The ruling, the most contentious part of which has been kept secret, spawned discussion in the British Parliament and a media storm.

In 1976 David married TV producer and writer Angela Holdsworth born 06/12/1947, at a ceremony held at the synagogue of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and the couple have three children who have all qualified as solicitors:

1. Jessica – born November 13 1977, married to Neil Brown.
  2. Nicholas – born April 22 1979
  3. Max – born May 25 1981
2. **James Max** – born November 4 1949, married to Belinda Keugh. James studied at Westminster School and graduated from Oxford University. He is a professor of medicine at Birmingham University. He is one of the editors of the journal *Transplantation* and is Associate Medical Director (Organ Donation and Transplantation) of NHS Blood and Transplant. He was a medical consultant at the Queen Elizabeth

Hospital in Birmingham, one of the Birmingham's university hospitals.

Prof. James Neuberger has published over 92 papers in leading medical publications around the world and, in recent years, he has concentrated on liver transplant research.



James and Belinda have four children – Oliver (born November 23, 1980), Francesca (July 15, 1982), Edmond (August 25, 1984) and Octavia (May 15, 1988)

In his most recent papers Prof. Neuberger attempted to characterize the criteria for a successful liver transplant, and led to the appointment of an international committee which laid down uniform criteria for determining transplants from dead donors, and criteria for uniform reporting of the state of growths and their progress, for the purpose of carrying out the transplants. The committee's findings were released in March 2010 and they may lead to social and medical reforms in this field.

3. **Anthony John** – born November 30 1951, married to Julia Schwab. Anthony is a professor of economics and finance in London, and is a consultant to investment banks, commercial markets, government ministries and commercial companies. He is married to Julia, who is a baroness and a rabbi, and was born on February 27 1950. She is an active socialist and a member of the House of Lords, as a representative of the Liberal Democrat party.

Anthony Neuberger is a professor of investment finance and has published numerous important articles in the world's economic press. His articles laid down new



rules for supervision of pensions, which take into consideration the pension crisis and the risks entailed in the sector.

Additional articles examined the role of options in a market with a random and impermanent (stochastic) breakdown, including one entitled Option Prices, Implied Price Processes and Stochastic Volatility which appeared in Journal of finance Vol. 55. No. 5, 2000, pp. 839-866.

The current models determine equality between the options based on a known breakdown (for oscillations in share prices), following a process of arbitrage (i.e., normally involving buying/selling bonds and selling/buying shares), as the breakdown of share prices is often unknown to the public, or is learned during the lifetime of the option. The revolutionary model devised by Prof. Neuberger seeks to determine rules for the value of the option whereby the behavior of the share prices is not foreseeable.

Prof. Anthony Neuberger's wife is a baroness and rabbi called Julia Schwab Neuberger. Rabbi Neuberger is the second woman to be ordained as a rabbi in British history, and the first to lead a community. The rabbi is well known for her liberal ideas. She studied for her rabbinic diploma at the Leo Baeck College in London, and she served as Chancellor of the University of Ulster from 1994 to 2000. She was installed in the House of Lords in 2004 and today she is Chief whip of the Liberal Democrat party. She was Chief Executive of the King's Fund (which engages in medical research) from 1997 to 2004, and has been active in numerous areas of voluntary activity. In 2007 she was appointed by Prime Minister Gordon Brown as head of voluntary activities in Britain.



The couple have two children: Harriet (born June 16, 1979) and Matthew (born July 2, 1981).

4. **Michael Samuel** – born November 2, 1953, married in 1991 to Gillian Pyman, born 1957. He is a biochemist and immunologist. He was educated at Westminster School, and subsequently read Natural Sciences at Trinity College, Cambridge. He obtained a PhD at Imperial College, London and has been a member of the studies management team of Trinity College since 1985, and a professor of cell immunology since 2002. He is supervisor of students of life sciences and biology, and is joint head of the Protein and Nucleic Acid Chemistry division at the Medical Research Council's Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1993 and was awarded their GlaxoSmithKline Prize in 2003. He also received the Novartis Medal in 2002. His election to the Royal Society is one of the rare occasions on which father and son have been elected to the same society.

Prof. Michael Neuberger has published over 135 articles in the world's leading medical journals. In recent years he has focused on research into the biochemistry of antibodies. He has concentrated, in particular, on mutations in proteins by means of genetic changes.



Michael and Julianne Neuberger have four children – Anna Saskia (born September 5, 1992), Sara Lydia (May 11, 1994), Thomas James (March 26, 1997) and Benjamin Zacharay (February 20, 2002)

5. **Janette** – born August 27, 1957, died in February 1985.

#### **Albert Neuberger's siblings:**

A. His sister **Gerthel (Atara)**, 1912-1988, completed her high school studies in Würzburg and started medical studies. However, after two semesters she was forced to give up her studies due to the Nazi decrees. She was a member of Ezra (a Zionist religious youth movement in Germany at that time) and, together with her future husband Willy Pfeufer – Ze'ev

Tzofar – immigrated to Palestine in 1934. They married in 1935 and settled at Sdeh Yaakov, the first religious moshav (cooperative village) located to the west of the Jezreel Valley, at the foot of the Sheikh Abrak hills. In addition to her daily work in the animal corner and her domestic duties Atara (Gerthel) worked at the Aliyat HaNoar (Youth Immigration) children's institution as a house mother and nurse. The couple had the following children:

1. **Miriam (Tzofar) Rubinfeld**, born 1936 – she trained as a nurse and served as a district nurse for the valley region and as head nurse of Afula Hospital. Her late husband, Yitzhak, was one of the top managers of the Israel Electric Corporation in Afula. She now lives in Modiin.

Miriam and Yitzhak's children:

Shmuel (Rubinfeld) Saddeh – engineer, has 2 children and lives at Yuvalim.

Yoram Rubinfeld – educationalist, has 3 children and lives at Kadima.

Doron (Rubinfeld) Saddeh – engineer, has 4 children, lives in Modiin.

2. **Naomi (Tzofar) Nahir**, born 1942 – she trained as a nurse and for thirty years was head of nursing care at the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Institute at Rambam Hospital in Haifa. She is married to Menahem Nahir, a doctor with a PhD in biochemistry. He headed the hematological department of Rambam Hospital from 1997 to 2006. He is a professor at the medical faculty associated with the Technion. They live in Haifa.



Naomi and Menahem's children:

Zvi Nahir – accountant, has 1 child, lives in Ramat Gan.

Rahel (Nahir) Mondstein – high school teacher, has 7 children, lives in Jerusalem.

Yoav Nahir – lawyer, has 4 children, lives in Givat Shmuel.

3. **Ali Tzofar**, twin brother of Naomi, born 1942 – markets agricultural equipment, married to Rivka who holds a senior position at Bank Leumi in Tivon. They live at Ramat Yishai.

They have a daughter:

Ronit (Tzofar) Levy, an accountant, has 4 children, lives in Shimshit.

**B. Hermann Naftali** left Germany in 26/06/1938 after receiving a Torah education at Mire Yeshiva in Poland. He emigrated to the United States. He settled in Baltimore and immediately made his mark there. The head of the local yeshiva, Rabbi Yaakov Yitzhak Rudman, accepted him to the teaching staff. In 1942 he married Judith Kramer, Rabbi Rudman's sister-in-law. After arriving in the United States he was accepted to Tiferet Yisrael Yeshiva, in 1940, and worked in the yeshiva headed by his brother-in-law Rabbi Rudman.



Three weeks before Herman Naphtali's wedding Rabbi Rudman passed away and his widow moved in with the young couple and lived with them for 24 years, until she passed away in 1968. Naphtali and his wife also invited his mother, Bertha, to live with them, which she did until 1974.

After Hermann Naftali was ordained as a rabbi by Rabbi Rudman he took an active role in managing the yeshiva and subsequently became its head. In 1950 he was

responsible for fundraising for the maintenance and expansion of the yeshiva. He built a campus for the yeshiva and study center, as well as accommodation for the yeshiva students. The campus grew to 90 acres (around 360 dunams).

After the revolution in Iran Herman Naphtali did everything within his power to help the Jews of Iran and he brought over about 1,000 students who were admitted to the Ner Yisrael yeshiva. During his work as head of the yeshiva he gained the respect of the leaders of the Jewish community in Baltimore and of politicians, and statesmen and members of Congress came to him to ask for advice and guidance.

When he died in 2005, Herman Naphtali left five children:

1. Rabbi Scheiftel – head of Ner Yisrael yeshiva in Baltimore.
2. Rabbi Shraga – head of Ner Yisrael yeshiva in Baltimore.
3. Rabbi Ezra – dean and secretary of Ner Yisrael yeshiva in Baltimore.

4. Rabbi Isaak – a well known attorney in Baltimore.
5. Rabbi Yaakov – a well known attorney in Baltimore.

*Shmuel Shamir (Mizrachi), 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, and has published in numerous newspapers and journals including Haaretz, The Jerusalem Post, Davar, Haboker, Yediot Aharonot, Et-Mol, Bama'arakha, Karka, Le-beit Avotam and others. For the past four years he has his own permanent column in "HaLishka", the publication of the Bar Association. He has researched and traced his family's roots in Jerusalem from 1643 to the present day. Married to Martha, is the father of Irit, Yael and Zvi.*

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## Six Hundred Years of Exile

### The History of the Cavalier Family from Palast to Israel

*Tony Ornesanez Palast*

Translated from Spanish – Published in the La Vanguardia newspaper, Tarragon, 28.8.2009

On paper, this is just the history of one family from 1427 until now. However, even if this had not been the intention this review is also the history of the Jewish people: the history of Jews who led their lives in Hispania (the legendary Spain) and their expulsion by royal edict of the Catholic

Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand. It became the shot that announced the start of the race and the voyage that lasted for several hundred years, and, in this specific case, concluded in the State of Israel, with intermediate stops in Greece, Turkey, Argentina, Uruguay, USA, and Auschwitz – with a

tragic echo. This is the history of the Caballer family that was reconstructed and documented, step by step, as a thesis for the receipt of a PhD degree by Marcus Caballer (Mordechai Ben-Abir in Hebrew), a resident of the city of Beer Sheva, Israel.

The long journey of the Caballer family starts in the 15<sup>th</sup> century in Palast – nowadays the Priorato district – and concludes in our times with reliable DNA tests, the icing on the cake.

Samuel Ostroch Caballer is the first Caballer in this saga. He was a resident of Palast in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a town in which the memories of the Jewish quarter (Guaderia) have been preserved until now, a town where there was a particularly high percentage of Jews (30-40% of the entire population). Samuel Ostroch Caballer set off from there for Serbera, where, in 1427, he took Gozo de Lonel as his wife, as noted in the writ of engagement included in the thesis by Mordechai Ben-Abir.

In due time, the couple had children and grandchildren. In the year 1492 the Catholic kings decided to expel all those who did not convert to Catholicism from their kingdom. Most of the Caballer family remained in Catalonia, more or less coming to terms with their fate, but one of Samuel Ostroch Caballer's grandchildren embarked thus on a boat for the Diaspora. His name was Solomon and he preferred to leave his country of birth.

Solomon Caballer is one of the key figures in this story. Marcus Caballer (Mordechai Ben-Abir) has the documents that prove the place and the date of his death, and his burial in the Salonika cemetery (now Greece) in 1530. One hundred years after his grandfather from Palast settled there, he settled in Serbera. "Why is Salomon Caballer a key figure in this saga? For one main reason: the entire Caballer family descended from this one person who was buried in Salonika in 1530. From his bloodline come some thirty families – descendants scattered around the world, who, until Marcus Caballer started his research, knew nothing of the existence of the others, and now all know that we are related."

The reconstruction of the family history, this saga, is so reliable, that from that tombstone in Salonika one can track the Caballer family over the centuries that have passed. This is a doctoral dissertation, researched and submitted in the framework of the Department of Semitic Philology (Hebrew-Aramaic) of the University of Barcelona, of tremendous proportions that was awarded the grade doctor cum laude. Last June he received the certificate that proves its worthiness in a ceremony held there.

The family history was documented without overlooking a single link in the family chain. Step by step, all according to documents and certificates; everything existing on paper and with all the data: how members of the Caballer family survived in the Ottoman Empire (now Greece and Turkey) for hundreds of years. How did the racial hatred keep them often in its sight? How did the 20<sup>th</sup> century with its waves of immigration, scatter them around the world – to the USA, Uruguay, Alexandria, or as in the case of Marcus Caballer's father, to Argentina? Throughout this long journey the Nazi death camp of Auschwitz did not forget them – there were several descendants of Samuel Ostroch Caballer of Palast of the Middle Ages, who found their death there.

**The dissertation for the receipt of the title 'Doctor' by Marcus Caballer was awarded the grade 'cum laude' and the highest mark possible by the University of Barcelona Genetics. DNA tests enabled finding members of the family and confirm the historical documents.**

The author of the dissertation closed a circle of almost 600 years of history. The documents helped him to conduct this research over the course of decades, but it lacked a small part of the puzzle: the DNA tests.

Five branches of the Caballer family exist today – none of them knew of the existence of the others until this study and they decided to undergo genetic testing in order to confirm whether there is complete identity. Five people were selected for testing: three of them from Israel, one from the USA and one

from France, and were not disappointed. The DNA was compatible: the science of genetics confirms what the documents and social sciences state. The history of the Caballer family closes today – how could it be otherwise? The family saga continues in Israel, where Marcus Caballer has lived since 1955 and where his children, grandchildren and several great-grandchildren also live.

### **A chronicle of 600 years**

1. **Information about persecutions:** Almost 600 years of documented family history afford a source for much work, even if the historian is an avid chronicler, as from the previous generation. This is the case of Bechor Elia Caballer, born in 1855 in Izmir, in the ancient Ottoman Empire, and at the age of 18 began to keep a very valuable daily journal of the events while living there. This manuscript is written in ancient Hebrew script – now copied into the language of the Jews of Spain as it was spoken by them at that time. He was motivated to start writing by an event that occurred when he was very young: “When the Greeks rose up and came to the Guederia quarter in order to harm the Jews” In fact, the manuscript serves as proof of the extent to which the Jews were persecuted everywhere. The writer, in that period, mentions “Murder in a pogrom of the Jews of Russia” and explains, “In the city of Odessa a very large number of Jews were killed, both young and old, girls and old women, mercilessly. There were only two doctors to treat 300 wounded people hurt when hit on the heads and shoulders by swords.”

### **Members of the Caballer family in Auschwitz**

The history of the members of the Caballer family in Auschwitz during the darkest chapter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Eight members of the family, all descendents of Solomon Caballer, buried in Salonika in 1530, were deported and perished in the Nazi death camp. An entire family, whose name, appears as Kavayero in the documents, included the

72-year old grandmother, the couple (aged 43 and 45) and their five children (the oldest aged 20 and the youngest aged 7). No one survived. This family, relatives, of the writer of the chronicle from Izmir of the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, migrated from Izmir to France during the 1820s. In 1943 they were expelled from Drancy to Auschwitz. In the words of Marcus Caballer: “This story seems to me especially tragic since this family was originally expelled from Catalonia in 1492 for simply being Jewish and 400 years later, after being scattered throughout the world, they again suffered racial persecution and were finally exterminated for their faith.

2. From Catalonia to Salonika: This is the inscription on the headstone on Salomon Caballer’s tombstone, born in Serbera and died in Salonika on 20.6.1530. Salomon Caballer was the only one of four brothers who, with the publication of the edict expelling Jews from Spain, refused to be baptized and chose to leave for the Diaspora. Starting from the discovery of this inscription, Marcus Caballer started to explore his family’s genealogy. The writing on the tombstone became an important finding, due to its importance in noting: “Our teacher and rabbi, the honorable Rabbi Solomon, son of the honorable Rabbi Samuel Caballer, may his soul rest in peace.” The information is thorough, but the tombstone, as a grave marker, was destroyed in 1942, during the period of the German occupation of Greece. The Nazis completely destroyed the Jewish cemetery of Salonika, but while endangering their lives, a number of people managed to register and document the texts on the most ancient tombstones. Without the text on Solomon’s tombstone, the link to the members of the Caballer family living today would have been ruptured.

3. Caballer of 1427: This branch of the Caballer family originated in Palast. Samuel Ostroch Caballer married Gozo de Lonel in Serbera in 1427. The document that was preserved is their writ of engagement. The name Caballer

in both its forms – Cavallero and Caballero – became the family surname as of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. However, until now there are Jewish Spanish families who preserve the Catalonian form of the name. Mordechai Ben-Abir is proud of his work and proud to note the importance of the character of Samuel Ostroch Caballer, since “Although it is true that there are Jewish families who know about their Spanish origins, what I did is unique, as I managed to scientifically document each of my forefathers, their occupations, where they lived...” According to the author of this exceptional dissertation, “What I did in my research and in documenting the character of Samuel Ostroch Caballer was a type of closure, for me, with mystical connotations.”

4. Information in Oxford: Another key document in the research of this family is to be found in the Bodleian library, Oxford University, England. This famous university has preserved a book of philosophy dated 1391, in which are listed all its owners. The name Solomon Caballer is prominent amongst them, the young man who in 1492 left Catalonia and eventually died in Salonika. “The books were so expensive and so appreciated, that the names were noted as a type of ownership,” explains the researcher. Solomon Caballer sold the book in the Turkish town of Adrianapolis. “There is a review of generations prior to the expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula, which has become a key document for examining the veracity of the data,” adds the researcher. This is not the only book in which members of the Caballer family are mentioned; the books are in libraries of good repute, such as Poblet Haggada in the Poblet monastery.

### **Izmir, America, Israel**

During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries Izmir (Turkey) was the country where the Caballer family settled. Yitzhak Sabag, Mordechai Ben-Abir’s (Marcus Caballer) the maternal grandfather, who was born in Izmir and died

in Tucumán (Argentina). Since the 20<sup>th</sup> century a considerable part of the Caballer family emigrated to America (Uruguay, USA and Argentina). Yitzhak is Marcus Caballer’s father, who settled in Tucumán, where there was a large, important Spanish Jewish community between 1910-1914, and eventually the entire family united there, including the grandparents. Marcus Caballer was born Argentina and is still addressed in the ancient Jewish-Spanish language. In the 1950s he realized the family’s dream: to return to the promised land, to Israel.

### **A live memory of Spain**

Toni Oriensanez Palast

Marcus Caballer – the main character that concludes this survey spanning hundreds of years – was born in 1926 in Tucumán, Argentina. His parents emigrated to America at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century from Turkey; his forefathers were from Catalonia whence they emigrated in 1492. But despite the centuries that passed, despite everything, Marcus Caballer’s family is one of the only families that always preserved the memories that were passed from parents to their descendents who lived in, and were expelled from, Spain.

They were Jews very conscious of their origin; at home they spoke ancient Spanish, the same Spanish they used to write to their relatives in Turkey in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the same language that was often used by the researcher to conduct meetings with his relatives around the world, relatives of whose existence he knew not.

“I grew up in Argentina, in the heart of the cinema world that screened Spanish films, the cinema to which went all the Spanish Jews; and the songs we sang were in ancient Jewish Spanish spoken for several hundred years; we spoke as in Cervantes’ language,” concludes Caballer. “Those were the 1920s and 1930s, almost 500 years after the expulsion.”

Nevertheless, he only started working on his research in recent years as he was involved in his field of electrical engineering in which he

has worked all his life. In fact, he was the key person in the migration of Jewish students and engineers from America to Israel in the 1950s and 1960s, at the unique moment when the new state was just born and was in need of skilled, qualified personnel, of technicians at all levels. Marcus Caballer and his family have lived in Israel since 1955.

The research into the family thus affords the peak of Marcus' work in his later years. "The day my foot trod on the soil of Palast was amongst the happiest in my life," he notes. He came accompanied by his wife, Fanny Rinland, who accompanies him everywhere. "Without her none of this would have happened," he says. "When I walked the streets and alleys in the Jewish quarter in Palast it was as if there was a connection between this small village and myself, as if my ancestors pushed me to come here," he adds. In fact, none of his relatives have been in the Iberian Peninsula since Salomon Caballer, the founding father, left in 1492.

**Sent to His Excellency, the mayor to Elyashar, Mr. Anton Maria Slavator Leordor by Mordechai Ben-Abir, 13.9.2009**

Dear Mr. Anton Maria,

I would like to thank you for sending the newspaper 'le Vanguardia', that includes the emotional article about our family.

I would be grateful if your daughter would translate it into Spanish, without any time limitation.

Thanking you and your daughter in advance,

Mordechai Ben-Abir

**E-mail from the mayor to Elyashar from Anton Maria Salvatt Leordor Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup> 2009, timed 19:13:45**

To: Mordechai Ben-Abir  
Attached files: Marcus Caballer, Le Vanguardia, 28.8.2009

Dear Mordechai,

The attached file contains the full translation by my daughter, Maritchel, just gave me. I hope you and your family will be able to enjoy this exciting text. Every time I read of your history I become excited, despite not being a family member, and despite the few days we could spend together. It is a long and exciting history, that you should be able to distribute, as well as the work you have written.

If you need help in any other subject you know we are here for you.

Warm wishes

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## Sources for the Genealogical Research of Jews in the Ottoman Empire

*Yaron Ben Naeh*

The boundaries of the Ottoman state expanded rapidly in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. From the center of Anatolia they extended to the west, encompassed areas of the Balkans, and in the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine Constantinople also fell into their hands and became the capital of the Ottoman Empire. During the second decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Sultan Selim deposed his father and set out to conquer territories in the eastern front. All of eastern

Anatolia was in their hands as well as areas taken from the Safavid Persians. Immediately thereafter the Sultan started to fight the Mameluks; within two years he managed to cause the fall of the Mameluke sultanate, which formerly held areas of Syria, Eretz Israel and Egypt; the way was now open for additional conquests in North Africa. The Ottoman Sultan became the ruler of three continents, and gave himself

the title of ‘servant of the holy places’ for Islam in the Arabian Peninsula.

By the nature of things many and diverse Jewish communities were found in these extensive areas: local Jews, autochthonic residents – known in the Arab countries as *Musta’aravim*; Greek-speaking Jews called *Romanioths* or *Gregos* in former Byzantine areas. There were also Ashkenazi Jews who arrived at some point in time from another Diaspora, migrating south from the German states, and from the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century on, also migrants from the Iberian Peninsula. The most dramatic change occurred at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century with the series of expulsions from the Iberian Peninsula and southern Italy and the arrival of a group in the east, apparently numbering tens of thousands, known by the general term ‘*Sephardim*’. They settled in the large cities, in the commercial centers, and in the important port cities. The migration did not end suddenly, and in the following one hundred years the stream of migrants from the Iberian Peninsula would continue – of *Marranos* wishing to return to Judaism. Their number would gradually decrease, but in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries individuals were still fleeing east.

The self-consciousness, the confidence and pride of the *Sephardim*, their number and their growing economic power resulted in the entire Ottoman Empire becoming a Jewish “*Sephardi*” space, with the most prominent impact being the Spanish-Jewish (*Ladino*, *Judezmo*) language common to all – with slight local variations. Family connections, trade connections and the frequent movement of wayfarers existed between the various communities, strengthening the connections between them. These communities, some of which were huge, in fact comprised smaller units – congregations in which those of the same origin – town or area in Portugal, Spain, or Italy – that congregated around the synagogue. In the course of time, the primary differences would become blurred. The Ashkenazim generally concentrated in one congregation called the *Alaman* (i.e. Germany) but in some towns, such as Safed, smaller Ashkenazi

communities were also found – such as *Buda* or *Budon* (=Budapest, Hungary). From the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, the number of Jews from Eastern Europe would increase greatly, some were redeemed prisoners and refugees as a result of the riots of 1648 and 1649.

The sources for familiarizing oneself with the genealogy of the Ottoman Jews can be divided into several categories:

Written and material sources, i.e. objects; Hebrew and non-Hebrew sources; official and communal, versus personal and family sources etc. Most of them pertain to the economic and intellectual elite – those who wrote and created, those who did business and were memorialized after their death. The poor were almost always illiterate, banned from positions of power and influence, and there is hardly any documentation in their regard.

The material sources are primarily tombstones and the texts engraved on them. The state of documentation in the Ottoman Empire is very far from being perfect and does not approach that in other countries, but notes still exist of thousands of tombstones in various towns, starting with *Salonika* whose tombstones were documented by *Molcho* and *Emmanuel* prior to their total destruction by the Nazis. *Steve Bauman* published lists of tombstones from other Greek towns; there are lists from *Rhodes*, and partial entries from towns in *Eretz Israel*, notably *Zfat* and *Jerusalem*. A very selective list of tombstones of sages from *Izmir* was published in the distant past inside *Inyenei Shabbetai Zevi*. Recently *Mrs. M. Tagger* announced an on-line list of tombstones from *Beirut*. I published *Cairene* burial inscriptions from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century that were preserved in a *geniza* manuscript. *Prof. Mina Rozen* of *Haifa* holds a treasure of data which she gathered from graveyards throughout *Anatolia*; and the literature mentions isolated tombstones without any method or order.

Ritual objects frequently bear dedication inscriptions that include the names of the donors, whether on silver objects such as the

pointer for reading from the Sefer Torah, salvers, Torah ornaments, crowns etc., and embroidery on textiles, tablecloths and curtains of the Ark. These are likely to include not only the names of the donors, the synagogue or congregation, and also the circumstances for the dedication (marriage, in memory of someone dearly departed etc.) and the role or title of the donors (such as the manager of a benevolent association). I do not know of any concentration of these items in museums and private collections around the world.

Let us move to the written sources – printed books and manuscripts.

Ottoman material: These are primarily population censuses, official documents, Sultanic orders (firman) and writs of appointment (berat), of which there is a considerable number but they are hard to access. They are far from being registered in a manner that will facilitate any speedy search. Moreover, all the materials in Turkish and Arabic intentionally or unintentionally distort the Hebrew names as they were foreign to the scribe's ear, and are usually written as "So and so the son of so and so, the Jew," or "So and so the daughter of so and so, the Jewess." Family names are not common in these areas. In many cases one must guess at the Hebrew name intended by the scribe, and this cannot always be done with any certainty. The other source in this category are the Shari'a (Muslim) courts records. A kadi (Muslim religious judge) was located in every town, and in fact determined city matters, judged legal cases and acted as the notary. By the nature of things Jews came to the court whether as representatives of the community, whether as claimants, whether as litigators, or even as witnesses. Few volumes have been published till now, but I would like to mention some examples from Sofia, Ankara, Bursa, Izmir, and Istanbul. Jerusalem is an exception. Prof. Amnon Cohen and his pupils translated and printed all the material that pertains to Jews from the local Shari'a court (Sijil) between the 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries under the title, "*Jews in the Moslem Religious Court*". The volumes are well-indexed and include many names. The

increasing presence of the Ashkenazim in the Holy City in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is evident.

European material: The European sources include travel documents with random mention of Jewish names that the clerics, pilgrims, ambassadors, consuls and merchants encountered on their journeys, and felt it correct to mention by name. (It is perhaps important in this context to note the compilation titled "*Journeys of the Christians to the Holy Land*" by Ish Shalom.) A totally different category is the consular notes that pertain mainly to the commercial activity of European countries in the Levant (for example, in the London Public Record Office). Another example of this is the extensive correspondence of the various Levant associations, such as that in Marseilles, and the archives of similar associations in Holland, England etc. Eliezer Bashan published a book (on the Tarragano family of the Dardanelles) based on this very source.

Hebrew material: I have mentioned the division into official, institutional and private sources. Unfortunately we do not know of complete community archives (and there is nothing similar to the famous Cairo Geniza, most of which is dated to earlier periods). One can only hypothesize on the reasons for this. Remains of community notes survived as introductions in books of responsa, and in later copies as, for example, those of Molcho and Amarillio of the Salonika's communal notebooks (*pinkasim*), that predate the fire of 1917, or the copy of the Edirne community book. The existing books or booklets date from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and particularly from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and this too in a quantity which is far from being satisfactory. The photocopies of the community notebooks, of the courts, and of the benevolent and charity associations are now to be found mainly in The Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the Hebrew University and the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People. Notes of the Sephardi institutions of Jewish learning in Jerusalem belong to the Committee of the Sephardi Community and are preserved together with

many important documents in the archives of the Jerusalem Municipality. A variety of sources from the Salonika community from the years preceding the Holocaust were looted by the Nazis, confiscated by the Russians and their photocopies are now in Israel.

Of special note in the Eretz Israel context are the notebooks of the clerks of the Eretz Israel committee in Constantinople and of the Committee of Clerks and Administrators in Amsterdam, who, from the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in fact managed the monies received from the appeals for Eretz Israel. Some of the material was published (by Y.Y. and B. Rivlin) but most of the volumes are still in handwriting – kept in the Ben-Zvi library. These contain a tremendous amount of material and hundreds of names of people who were connected through a mechanism of money collection, its transfer and distribution.

Semi-official archives are those of chief rabbis (the Chacham Bashi, also known as the Rishon LeZion) of Jerusalem, such as Rabbi Abraham Gagin, and Rabbi Ya'acov Shaul Elyashar, that are preserved in the National Library. Of special mention are the missives, exchange of letters between communities or role holders that include diverse information. Amongst the noteworthy examples are the Archive of the Chacham Bashi in Istanbul, on which Prof. Yaron Harel is working. Thousands of letters are found in the documents from the Cairo Geniza that are being catalogued, and it seems that indexed and accessible material will be available in a few years, at least those sections that have already been published.

Torah sources: The two most important categories are books of responsa that include much material from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, together with the halachic and historical material. They contain thousands of names of people, both male and female, who were witnesses, litigants and judges in Jewish courts, the writers of wills and so on. Another literary category is the books of sermons, that include many eulogies, and by the nature of things mainly eulogies for Torah figures or members of their families delivered on the day of rising from Shiv'a,

after a month and a year after the person's death. Some of the books have valuable lists termed divorce notations, i.e. lists of all the divorces performed by a particular scholar. These lists include the names of couples, the date of divorce, and of course their location.

Personal, private material: Notes, letters, and, starting from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, postcards and family photographs. I would like to note the missives of the Levi family from Salonika, that Prof. Yosef Hacker plans to publish, and the research project in which I am involved, that catalogues more than 6,000 missives of the Sasson family, with the names of many Jews from the Baghdadi Diaspora in the Far East in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Of special note are the ketubbot: the Jewish and National University Library allows access to an enormous collection of Jewish ketubbot from around the world that were scanned and put on the Internet, as well as handwritten notebooks of dowries, that are also a source of genealogical, and almost unique material cultural, information. Occasional isolated documents from Eretz Israel and mainly from Ottoman Jerusalem were collected by researchers such as A. M. Lunz and P. Grayevsky and M. D. Gaon and are included in their publications.

A fascinating source of the history of the Jews in Eretz Israel are the reports by Jewish travelers – some of which were collected by Avraham Yaari in his books “Memories of Eretz Israel”, “Travels in Eretz Israel” and so on. A fascinating travel book in this context is “To Jerusalem” by Ludwig August Frenkel, that describes the journey from Vienna to Jerusalem, via Izmir and Istanbul and includes information about Bursa and Salonika. Similar to this is Shimon Berman's, “*A Journey to the Holy Land – 1870*”. In a separate category within the sources of the history of the Jews of Eretz Israel are Moses Montefiore's censuses conducted since 1839 onwards, that not only count the Jews of Eretz Israel but also note the places of origin, their occupations, economic situation, number of children, ages and so on. (One compilation was already published by Hadassah Assulin.) Some of the material

was placed on the Internet and can be read on the site of the Israel Genealogical Society.

I would like to mention two important sources pertaining to the whole Islamic domain:

One is the archive of the Alliance Israélite Universelle known also as the Alliance, established in Paris in 1860. This society was active from the 1860s and ran a network of Jewish schools in almost all the Islamic countries. Its archive contains thousands of documents that were sent from the center to school principals and teachers, as well as reports sent from the field with details on the lives of communities, and detailed notes on pupils in these schools. Currently, no systematic use has been made of them (see, for example, Aron Rodrigue's book).

Another interesting source is the published books and newspapers. These include a tremendous amount of information, including the names of people. One study mentions the names of the authors, the printers and their assistants (see for example, the studies by Avraham Yaari on the Hebrew press in Constantinople, in Izmir, in countries of the east or in Ladino;

or by Shoshana Halevi on printing press in Jerusalem). Many of the books have been scanned, and there is also an information bank pertaining to the bibliography of the Hebrew books (and see the book by Yeshayahu Vinograd). The Jewish press has only been scanned very partially (on the initiative of Prof. Yaron Zur). Many manuscripts in Hebrew, Ladino and Judaeo-Arabic are on microfilm at the Jewish and National University Library, and the library of the Ben Zvi Institute in Jerusalem.

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*The computer/website committee invites you to visit the website [www.isragen.org.il](http://www.isragen.org.il) and see some changes we believe make our website even better.*

1. New front page now lets you choose between seeing the website in English or Hebrew.
2. News roll on the second page
3. Link to our twitter to get updates on genealogy databases and archives around the world.
4. You can now switch back and forth between English and Hebrew on the same page
5. Additional archives have been add to our website. Thanks to Yael Hollander who helps us with the Hebrew. Now we need a volunteer to help with the translation of these pages into English.

*The next two improvements have to deal with our virtual library for members.*

6. Revamping of the Sharsheret Hadorot page making it easier for the administrators to upload the new issues. It also looks nicer.
7. Revamping of the page of newsletters and some quarterlies from various genealogical societies around the world.

*Enjoy !*

Rose Feldman, Webmistress of the Israel Genealogical Society <http://www.isragen.org.il>

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## Sepharadim in the Baltic Areas –

### Fact or Fiction

*Rose Lerer Cohen*

#### Introduction

My interest in Sephardim in the Baltic Areas began a number of years ago when researching names of Lithuanian Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust in Lithuania for the Lithuanian Names Project for which I am the coordinator.<sup>1</sup> I had the opportunity to talk to many Holocaust survivors. One with whom I spoke, was Uri CHANOCH, who called himself a “Litvishe Frenk”. I was a bit taken aback as the word “Frenk” is a usually derogatory way of referring to Sephardim and in particular to those of Moroccan origin living in Israel. This person looks upon himself as a “Sephardic Litvak”, claiming to be a descendent of DON YICHVE, one of the early founders of Mizrahi and other renowned East Latvian rabbis.

My interest continued when I was hired to do professional family research for the name ABIR. I was convinced that this family had its roots in Spain as Abir is a recognized Hebrew name translation change in Israel for the name DE CAVELLORO, knight in Spanish. One person, whom I called, told me that he was Abir of Sephardic descent from Lithuania. I asked him if he was sure and he assured me in no uncertain terms that he was a Litvak.

I then started to speak to other Litvaks who seemed to have Sephardic roots. A friend told me that her father-in-law, Gershon KOLUMBUS, who immigrated to Israel from Lithuania, spelled the name in English, with the letter K. “Everyone with the family name Kolumbus in Israel [with a K] is of one family.” She also said that one relative in the United States spells his name with a C, which could be pronounced TZ in Russia/Poland and thus be TZOLUMBUS

The Spanish name of Christopher Columbus is Cristobal COLON, “colon” meaning dove. “It is my own personal theory,” she added,

“that perhaps people with names such as YONA or YANAI may also be of Sephardic descent. I have been told that the family name GOLOMB, has been Hebraicized to Yanai, or Yona meaning dove.

“At any rate,” she said, “one of my husband’s relatives traced the family history back 200 years to Holland to a Jewish merchant by the name of Natan Kolumbus. We therefore surmise that the family Kolumbus (or Columbus, as some of the Israelis now spell it) went from Spain or Portugal to Holland to Lithuania to Israel.”

Several years ago, my friend continued, she met two women from Turkey. “We struck up a conversation and exchanged telephone numbers. When one of the women said her name is Kolumbus, she said: ‘Oh, you’re Cohanim.’ ‘Not that I’m aware of,’ I replied. She told me that in Ladino the word ‘bus’ (the last syllable of Columbus or Kolumbus) means ‘you’, and that the name Columbus means ‘Cohen Ata’ in Hebrew, translated as ‘You are a Cohen.’ She claimed that it was a secret way for a Jew to express himself as a Cohen, since it was too dangerous in those days to be called outright a Cohen. “I don’t know if there is any substance to this story or not. No one in my husband’s family had ever heard about it, but then, they all grew up as Ashkenazi Litvaks, even though they assumed that the name must have come from Sephardic origins.”

Schelly DARDASHDI, the renowned genealogist, who, with Judy Simon, recently launched the Iberian Ashkenazi DNA project, has a great deal of information on Mogilev, Belarus and has identified families of Sephardic origin, including her own, in Mogilev with names such as TALALAY, ABARBANEL, DON YAKHIA (Don Yichye), ABOAF/ABUGOF, PINES and

1. Lerer Cohen, R and Issroff, S., (2002), *The Holocaust in Lithuania: A Book of Remembrance 1941-1945*, Gefen Publishers: Jerusalem.

others with a family tradition of Sephardic origin.

I have been told that the cemetery in Berdichev (Ukraine) has gravestones with a Sephardic influence.

There are also a number of families from Hamburg, who say Grace After Meals, *Birkat Hamazon*, with a Sephardic nusach. The origin of these families is from Portugal or Spain who moved to Emden (northwest Germany) where there is also large Sephardic community, and thence to Hamburg.

I recently looked at the family tree of the Vilna Gaon on the rootsweb site:<sup>2</sup> and saw there a number of names of Sephardic descent such as DOMYACH, DOHIM, DONCHIN, DOCHIN and Don Yichye.

### **Migration and Historical Patterns**

History and Genealogy go hand in hand. Therefore, in order to shed light on the question of Sephardim in areas such as Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Belarus and Poland, one should focus on migration and historical factors. I would like to bring some examples which I found.

According to Greenbaum (1995), Jewish sources shed little light on the origins of Lithuanian Jewry. There are records showing that a small number of Jews lived in Lithuania prior to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The 14<sup>th</sup> century served as a turning point in Jewish migratory patterns to Lithuania as in 1388 Vytautas the Great granted to the Jews of Brest the privilege of being subjects of the Grand Duke. This privilege was later extended to other communities and as a result, during the reign of Vytautas, Jewish migrants made their way to Lithuania from Bohemia, Germany, France Spain, Italy and the Crimea.

At this time, life was falling apart for the Jews in Germany and France. The Crusades, Blood Libels, periodic expulsions, frequent riots, massacres following the Black Death in

1348, and subsequent expulsions in the 15<sup>th</sup> century induced many Jews to head for Poland-Lithuania. As Moses b. Israel Isserles put it in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, “It is preferable to live on dry bread and in peace in Poland” [than to remain in better conditions in lands more dangerous for Jews]. The influx of Jews from Western Europe affected Poland-Lithuanian Jewry. Meeting Jews who didn’t speak one another’s language, the Jews created a new common language. It was a combination of Middle German, Hebrew, Polish, and German-Hebrew. It was called Yiddish, and it became the Ashkenazic national Jewish language.

Besides creating a new language, the results of the German Jewish immigrations were evident almost immediately. The Jewish population spread to most major cities and towns. By the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century more than 60 Jewish communities were known of in united Poland-Lithuania. They were dispersed from Breslau and Gdansk in the west to Kiev and Kamenets Podolski in the east. By the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, there were between 20,000 and 30,000 Jews in Poland-Lithuania.

Prof. Israel Bartal (2006) of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem writes also of the influx of Jews to the areas of Greater Poland as coming from Spain, Portugal and Turkey. We should note that in 1290 the Jews were expelled from England, and in 1394 the Jews were expelled from France. During the 1300’s and 1400’s Jews were not welcome in Germany and in 1492 came the final expulsion when Jews were expelled from Spain.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, the Kings of Poland were particularly welcoming to the Jews and so the Jews migrated eastward. There was probably a move into Germany or the Rhineland between 1350 and 1500 and then a move to Galicia – Poland around 1500 or later, from

2. <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~prohel/names/bach/gaonvilna.html>

3. For information on the history of the Iberian Jewish communities, the author recommends: Lindo, Elisa Hiam, (1970), *The History of the Jews of Spain and Portugal: from the Earliest Times to their Final Expulsion and their Subsequent Dispersion*, B. Franklin: New York.

there to Belarus and to Lithuania in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and finally to the Crimea in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

According to the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1971), Zamosc, in the Lublin Province of East Poland, the first Jews to settle were Sephardim who were encouraged by the founder of the city, Count Jan Zamojski, to make their home there in 1588. After a single generation, however, that community ceased to exist. Beginning in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Ashkenazic Jews came to settle there, some taking Sephardic names. For example, the famous author Y. L. PERETZ who has a Sephardic sounding name is an Ashkenazi from Zamosc.

Maps drawn up by Haim Beinart (1992) historian at the Hebrew University, show the emigration of Sephardim from Spain and Portugal after the expulsion of 1492.

From the above sample of literature, we may conclude that Sephardim did indeed arrive in the area of Greater Poland and Lithuania definitely after and perhaps before the expulsion from Spain in 1492.

### **Sephardic Influences in Eastern Europe**

Returning to *onomastics* (the study of proper names), a sampling of what I found:

#### *Given (first) names*

Spanish exiles brought with them names that developed into SHNEOR and SHPRINTZE.

#### *Surnames*

According to onomastics expert, Alexander Beider (1993), the surname, is used only in the sense of a hereditary family name that is transmitted from generation to generation. He continues, the surnames of non Ashkenazic origin included in his book lived in Ashkenazic communities. These families were typical Ashkenazic families

who differed from other Jews of the community only in that there had been a paternal Sephardic ancestor. An assumption based on the place of origin of the surname.

\* BLOCH – common in Vilna, OSYMANÝÚ ROSSIENY and TELSIAI from the Polish WOLCH. Italian BOLOK, BLIOKH, BLOK BLOKHAM BULCH BLOCH (BLOCK – German spelling 17<sup>th</sup> century)

\* DON YACHYE DOMYACH DOHIM DONCHIN – surname taken in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by descendants of the Sephardi family – IBN YACH YA (Yachi Ya in Russian). I spoke to a DON YECHYE who said the name originally is from Spain and Portugal.

Beider (2004) refers to Sephardic families in Krakow and Ruthenia. He cites names of Sephardic origins that made their appearance in records of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Isaac HISPANUSH (Spain)

Salamon KALHORA (Italy)

Solomon WOLCHOWICZ – SZAFARADI

FORTIS de Lima = Chazak – Hebrew Fortis = strong in Latin

Zvi Hirsh ben Issachar Berush ROSANES from Constantinople

Beider continues, that bearers of the surname KHAKJAM in Bessarabia may have had ancestors from the Ottoman Empire.

*Sefer HaPrenumerantn* – Hebrew Subscription Lists by Beryl Kagan (1975) written in Yiddish has an index of thousands of names of contributors from 8,767 Jewish Communities in Europe and North Africa.<sup>4</sup>

4. 4. It was the custom among Jewish writers of the past few hundred years, especially among writers on rabbinic subjects to obtain assistance in publishing their works and soliciting advance funds from potential customers. As there was no hope that the author would be able to collect enough money in his own town to cover printing expenses and something left over as income as well, he would canvas outlying areas, often traveling to outlying areas and distant communities to accomplish his purpose.

According to Kagan, this custom began in the late 1800's. The common procedure was for the author to approach the rabbi of the city in which he found himself and where he expected to find subscribers for his work and show his manuscript. If the author had already received written approval for his manuscript from

*Sephardim be Eretz Lita* (Sephardim in Lithuania) by Shlomo Katzav (1992) is a monograph compiled in Petach Tikvah (Hebrew). He writes in his introduction that it was accepted to think that the Jews who were expelled from Spain in 1492 found their way to the South and Western Europe.

Basing his research on the *Sefer Prenumerantn*, he concluded that the Jews of Spain migrated also to Eastern Europe, i.e. there was migration from Spain through Italy, Turkey, and Bulgaria via Romania and Hungary to Czechoslovakia, Poland and Lithuania.

Katzav used the Prenumerantn lists created by Beryl Kagan's book as a basis for creating a list of names of those who pre-contributed

for the publication of Jewish books. Beryl Kagan listed communities, Shlomo Katzav expanded on the names.

Herewith are a number of examples, of names which appear in both Katzav's monograph and in Beider's book

\* MAIMON — MAJMON MAJIM MAJMUN

MAYMON Yiddish of Arabic Origin – (did we say Turkey)

\* FRANK Vilna Grodno Bialystok

FRANKE German once from Francona a Province in Germany – FRANKO

\* FRENKEL – common in Troki Techista Berdichev – diminutive of Frank

other rabbis or if the rabbi himself perceived that the work was in the spirit of Jewish tradition and worthy of appearing in print, he would appoint two upstanding Jews to accompany the author as he collected his subscriptions for his as yet unpublished volume.

The names of those who paid in advance or who at the very least put down a deposit were carefully noted down by the author as well as the cities in which they lived and sometimes even their status in the community. When the work was printed the names of the pre-subscribers were noted down, usually grouped according to the cities in which they lived and placed at the end of the book. The lists of names cited in books this way are known as prenumerantn lists. These lists of names are important as supplementary sources of the cultural history of the Jews of Europe and are a genealogical resource.

When dealing with prenumerantn lists, the concern is solely with printed lists. Patrons and donors who assisted the author with substantially larger sums can be found in rabbinic books of a much earlier date, as can those whose books were subscribed to page by page. Amsterdam seems to have been the city where pre-subscription by the page originated. When larger works were involved such as Tanach, Talmud and Talmudic commentaries, then the page by page subscription was adopted in other countries.

The system of pre-subscription increased and enriched the volume of literature. As a matter of interest, Haskalah books made up fewer than one percent of published materials compared to rabbinic books.

Why was the financing of rabbinic literature by pre-subscription overwhelmingly successful? To buy a rabbinic book meant to participate in the dissemination of Torah and was therefore a great mitzvah with which even the simplest Jew wanted to be identified. Thousands of subscribers could not have made use of all the books they subscribed for, but they were not so much paying for the actual sefer, as they were for the mitzvah of having bought the book.

For many religious Jews, the appearance of their names in a holy book was utilized as a memorial for relatives or as thanksgiving for loved ones cured of disease.

A word of warning when using the names taken from Prenumerantn lists as a genealogical tool, there are a number of problems: a) Names and place names were usually printed in Hebrew without vocal signs so, with the change of a dot, the name and the place name can be different. Names and place names are occasionally written in Yiddish. b) Names may have been distorted by the authors or by the printers. c) The geographic locations of towns bearing the same names are rarely indicated. d) The Jewish place names were often quite different from the official place name. This problem is more prevalent in the towns of Eastern Europe who were steeped in Yiddish and where Yiddish personal names and town names were used. Therefore, as an example, German prenumerantn lists would be more accurate as the names were borrowed directly from the German culture.

- \* EPSTEIN ESPSTEJN – Grondo Vilna Lida Osmany Rosieny, Pinsk Slutsk, Minsk, Bobrusk – from Eppenstein Germany. Hessen Nassau and Bavaria
- \* TREVIS Treves from the town of Trier – German Troyes France  
TRIVOSH in Yiddish
- \* LURI, LURIE – LURE – Rovno Mogilev
- \* LURIA known since 14<sup>th</sup> century Founder of the Eastern Europe branch of the family Jehiel Luria who moved from Germany to Eastern Europ in about 1490
- \* BENDET – Blessed related to the German name Benedict – Baruch – blessed
- \* PADVA is an Ashkenazic name – Brest (Brisk) Dvinsk. Not from Padova in Italy. First bearer of this name Chaim lived in Brest in 1837
- \* SCHNEER – SHNEERSON – Lazdiai from the Latin Senior – Yiddish SHNEYER

A number of surnames Beider mentions, do not appear in Sholomo Katzav's monograph:

ARBARANELI, ABUGOV, KARO KURIEL also ALFES (ALFAS) ANINEXER PASSI and MONTEFIORE

### Synagogues

Katzav also lists Sephardic Synagogues in Lithuania:

- Briz – Minyan Sephardim
- Dolyhiniv – Beit Knesset of Sephardim
- Heidochishok – Small Minyan of Sephardim
- Kupishok (Kupiskis) – Minyan Sephardim
- Tavrig (Taurage) – Lida
- Utian – Chevrat Sefarim of Sephardim
- Wilkomir – Minyan Sephardim

Batei Knesset Alsheich, named after the great 15<sup>th</sup> century darshan Rabbi Moshe Alsheich of S'fat

Horonda – Beit Knesset Alsheich

Horonda – Yeshivat Alsheich

Shavel (Saiuliai) Beit Knesset Alsheich

### Chevrat Alfás

Chevrat Alfás – is a group of people who study the Alfás which is in the back of the classic editions of the Talmud. You would have a Hevre Shas who would study Gemara (Talmud) and then there would be a group of very advanced people who would study the commentary of Yitzhak Alfasi, (The Rif) – who was a preeminent 10<sup>th</sup> century halachist from North Africa and Spain – which is found in the back of the full tractate and is set up in type that looks like the Talmud. The Rif's work is basically an abridgement of the Talmud, omitting the legendary (aggadic) sections and material not directly related to halachic decisions. It should be noted, however, that the study of the Rif was by no means limited to Sephardic Jews.

### Etymology

There are some surnames that are found within the Ashkenazic community that can be traced by etymology to Sephardic origins. Etymology is the science or investigation of the derivation and original meaning of words.

For example S'FARD, PORTUGEJS, DON HAKHIYA/Don Yechye and also possibly SHPANIER.

### Rites and Ritual Prayer

According to Rabbi Shalom Bronstein,<sup>5</sup> until the invention of the printing press, the prayer ritual or Nusach in the various Jewish communities varied a great deal. There were certain general traditions, for example, Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Italian, Yemenite, but nearly every town had its own uniqueness. Since printing had already been invented by the time the Jewish communities in Lithuania developed, however, there was little variation

5. A Jerusalem professional genealogist and an expert on Lithuania.

in the order of the tefillah or prayer services among the towns. As most of the Lithuanian Jews had migrated from the West where the Ashkenazic ritual was used, that was the prayer book ritual used in the vast majority of the communities.

By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Eastern Europe, however, three different versions of the prayerbook had come into general use:

1) Ashkenazi – This rite was used in almost all of Lithuania, White Russia, and all the other areas that were not under Hasidic influence.

2) Nusah Ari – This ritual based on the practices of Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534-1572), the famous mystic of Safed, was generally only used by Chabad (Lubavitch) Hasidim.

3) Nusah Sepharad: This sometimes causes confusion, as one tends to think, if you use the Nusach Sepharad you are Sephardic. This is an incorrect assumption. Nusach Sepharad was one of the Hasidic innovations that took place in the first generations following the Baal Shem Tov (1700-1760). It combined elements of the Spanish (Sephardic) ritual with that of the Ashkenazic prayer book. All the various Hasidic groups (except Chabad) used this prayer book in their synagogue services.

With regard to spoken and prayer Hebrew, all of the communities in Eastern Europe used the Ashkenazi pronunciation, although within the Ashkenazic community there was a great variation in the way Hebrew was pronounced. Thus one's country of origin could easily be identified by one's accent. The Sephardic pronunciation of Hebrew – not to be confused with the Sephardic ritual in prayer – became widespread only after the creation of the State of Israel.

### Conclusion

At the Union of Lublin in 1569, when the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland joined to form a Commonwealth whose territory included contemporary Belarus, Lithuania, Ukraine and parts of Poland there were Sephardim in those areas. Historically we are able to follow migrations

there from the Iberian Peninsula, Turkey, Amsterdam, Germany and other centers of Sephardic Jewry.

What happened to the East European Sephardic communities?

It would seem that the Sephardic communities were absorbed into the Ashkenazi communities. Perhaps a few Sephardic traditions were also absorbed, and some of the names remained.

Today, there is a renewed interest in the subject, with the launching of the Iberian Ashkenazi project two years ago, whose goal is to determine Ashkenazi-Sephardi matches through DNA. At the LitvakSIG meeting held at the IAJGS conference in Philadelphia this past July, I met two Litvak participants, who claimed they too were of Sephardic decent. When one meets a fellow genealogist who says, I am a true pure Litvak, is this really so? Is it fact or is it fiction?

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## **MISSING PERSONS BUREAU:**

### **SEARCHING FOR RELATIVES IN ISRAEL**

#### **“I was you” – A True Story**

*Peter W. Landé*

One day back in the 1950s, Irving Spierer, the sole survivor of his Hungarian family, was walking down a street in Brooklyn when a complete stranger, let's call him Saul Rabinowitz (not his real name), another Hungarian Jew, came up to him and said “I was you.” Rabinowitz explained that, while he had never met Spierer before, he had used false El Salvador citizenship papers originally made out to Spierer, which never reached Spierer before he was deported to Auschwitz. The documents had fallen into Rabinowitz's hands and permitted him to avoid deportation to Auschwitz, and to survive. This is a true and remarkable story, but what does it have to do with genealogy? To answer this question one must explain both the past and the present.

Colonel José Arturo Castellanos, a Salvadoran diplomat on a purchasing mission in Europe prior to WWII, briefly met a Hungarian Jewish businessman, Gyorgy Mandl. Years later Castellanos was appointed Salvadoran Consul in London, Hamburg and, ultimately in late 1941, as Consul General in Geneva. At that point he renewed his contacts with Mandl. Castellanos issued a certificate of citizenship to Gyorgy Mandl under the more Spanish sounding name of George Mantello. Mandl/Mantello came from Hungary to Geneva, later to be followed by his son. Castellanos

appointed Mandl/Mantello as First Secretary in the Consulate General.

Mandl/Mantello was concerned with the plight of Jews in Nazi occupied Europe. In response to a flood of requests, he, without any notification to the Government of El Salvador, was allowed by Castellanos to issue certificates of citizenship to Jews in Lithuania, Germany, Hungary, France and elsewhere at no charge. It is not known how many certificates were issued, perhaps three to five thousand, though some estimates are much higher, many with several family members on a single certificate. Copies of the papers were sent in various ways to the “applicants”, sometimes through a diplomatic pouch, through open mail or with the assistance of the Swiss Red Cross. In 1944 Mantello even sent blank notarized forms to Budapest with names to be added there.

It is impossible to establish how many of their documents actually reached their intended recipients and/or whether the German authorities honored the certificates. Some documents were even mailed to Auschwitz, at a time when they had no idea of the nature of that camp. Others, such as those sent to Lithuania, probably arrived too late to be of any use. However, International Tracing Service records show that German officials believed that it might be worthwhile

holding these “El Salvadoreans” in the hope that they could be traded for the repatriation of German citizens held in various parts of Latin America. Accordingly, they honored a significant percentage of these certificates and, while sometimes holding these Jews in camps such as Bergen Belsen, did not send their holders to death camps. Mandl/Mantello’s actions have been known for many years and were the subject of a book, David Kranzler’s *The Man Who Stopped the Trains to Auschwitz*. They were even the subject of a 2007 movie, “Glass House”, which, unfortunately, never received wide circulation. Mandl/Mantello died in 1992 and is buried outside Jerusalem.

There is, however, a new dimension to this remarkable saga. When Mandl/Mantello died, his lawyer’s widow found an old suitcase containing the originals of many of the certificates which he had created. Last year, George’s son, Enrico, donated these 1,100 certificates, with 2,161 names, to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. This list of names is now available on the USHMM website ([ushmm.org](http://ushmm.org)) and a copy has been provided to the Israeli Genealogy Society. Copies of individual documents will

be provided by the USHMM to family members in response to requests. For genealogists this is much more than just one more list, however interesting. Each certificate includes a photo of the person/family for which it was issued, perhaps the only photo of persons who perished or survived the Holocaust.

Finally, the USHMM is trying to establish how many of the recipients of these documents actually survived. If any reader has information on the fate of their relatives, please notify Judith Cohen at [jcohen@ushmm.org](mailto:jcohen@ushmm.org).

*Peter Landé was born in Germany of German parents but came to the United States as a young child. He was a Foreign Service Officer at the Department of State. Since retirement, he has been active in genealogy research, writing and lecturing, with special emphasis on Holocaust records. In July 2001 he received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies for work in identifying sources of information on Holocaust victims and survivors.*

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## NEWS FROM ISRAEL ARCHIVES, MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

### Private Memory: Collective Remembrance

*Zvi Bernhardt*

In 2007 Yad Vashem launched a special undertaking to gather information about Shoah victims’ names by systematically photographing personal memorials in synagogues, cemeteries and religious sources throughout Israel. Staff were recruited and specially trained to meet the complex photographic demands of the project.

These commemorations vary in form; they range from names engraved on memorial plaques and tombstones of survivors or on Jewish ritual artifacts in synagogues to

dedication pages in books, commonly found in seforim (Torah literature).

Photographing names from memorials requires a different skill set than photographing people or objects of art. Frequently, photographers need to take multiple pictures of a given object; an initial photograph to give the context of the object and then additional photographs to ‘zoom in’ and ensure that the information is readable. Each type of memorial presents unique challenges to the photographer.

Sara Berkowitz, who coordinates the project to recover the names of Shoah Victims' from religious sources, says that both project staff and volunteers are very proud of their efforts and hold the project close to their hearts. "It is more than just a job. Our staff has to show a lot of personal initiative and also a tremendous sensitivity to the holiness of the sites they are photographing. They sometimes have to travel great distances, position themselves awkwardly and work irregular hours to get the job done." he states. "But they all believe in the importance of the project and feel that they are on a holy mission."

To photograph tombstones while ensuring proper decorum is upheld is a particularly challenging task and Berkowitz has had to consult with Halachic authorities on how to guide her staff. "Is it permissible to remove stones placed by mourners in order to read the name? Rabbis permit us to rearrange the stones, but not to remove them," she explains.

In addition, to effectively photograph names in synagogues project staff need to figure out how to best photograph a dedication on a florescent light fixture, two inches below a tall ceiling or names of Shoah victims listed on a *parochet* (an ornamental curtain covering the front of the holy ark in the synagogue) with many folds in the material.

To date over 300,000 names have been photographed in 834 synagogues, 4,235 religious books and 25,347 gravestones. Over 90,000 religious books were checked in order to identify the names of Holocaust victims in 4,235 books. That is, less than five percent of the books yielded results. Forty percent of the synagogues checked in this period had memorials for Holocaust victims.

Data entry of victims' names recorded in this manner is particularly complicated. The names and information are usually written in Hebrew or Yiddish and Orthodox terminology or codes appear frequently. In addition, multiple acronyms are often used on synagogue plaques where each additional letter adds cost. Many of the sources record information related to Shoah victims together with people who died before or

after the Shoah. Thus, sorting out the names of Shoah victims is labor intensive.

Recently the first batch of names from these sources – around 10,000 – have been entered into our online database. For technical reasons, the images of the originals are not yet available on the online database, but this will be added in the future.

In many cases the names of victims appearing in these sources are not recorded in Yad Vashem's database; in many other cases the names have been recorded, but the listings photographed by project staff serve to supplement the database by adding context related to family ties and other important information.

Examples of names recorded by project staff:

This plaque mentions Zvi son of Yehoshua; his family name is not completely clear. Searching for Zvi Heller in the names database retrieves too many results to be useful. Since project staff were instructed to photograph the synagogue itself, the following information was also recorded, inscribed at the synagogue entrance:

A search in the database for Zvi Heller from Drohobitz, yielded a Page of Testimony:

The same individual who put up the plaque – Meir Heller, submitted a very confusing Page of Testimony. The plaque adds the information that Zvi's father's name was Yehoshua and that at some point; some of the relatives changed their family name to Hel-Or.

The name of Rabbi Hirsch Zvi Fridlaender, the Admor of Lisko, was not recorded in the names database. Thanks to the culling of names from religious books, the following record was added:

The book also includes this photo of the Rabbi, which in the future will be added to the record.

The project, being implemented throughout Israel, can be best maximized by joining forces with other organizations that can provide information and pictures of commemorations and help to record as many names as possible. The mutual cooperation with Rose Feldman of The

Israeli Genealogical Society (IGS) is one such example. In the past months the IGS has provided pictures and information of names of people commemorated on monuments in Israel and abroad, including a list of names based on a monument commemorating the Jews of Split, Croatia submitted through efforts researching Sephardic Genealogy.

One example is this monument for the Jews of Novoselitz, found in Ramat Hasharon.

Yad Vashem plans to continue to expand its efforts in collecting names from religious sources both in Israel and abroad and several pilot projects have already begun, with a focus on meticulous and professional work to ensure the successful recording of the information being photographed. Berkowitz asks community leaders worldwide to join the project.

It is important to mention that we continue to enter thousands of new Pages of Testimony (including Pages we have collected in cooperation with various institutions in the Haredi community) and thousands of names from Yad Vashem archival sources every month. These various project reflect Yad Vashem's obligation to seek out the names of those who perished in the Holocaust from any source possible.

For more information please contact Sarah Berkowitz, Shoah Victims' Names Recovery Project: Tel: 02-644-3239  
E-mail: [names.memory@yadvashem.org.il](mailto:names.memory@yadvashem.org.il)

*Zvi Bernhardt is assistant to the director of the Hall of Names and deputy director of the Reference and Information unit at Yad Vashem.*

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## An Additional Root to Study Your Family Genealogy

*Michael Laks*

*“There is a vague story in our family about my great-grand-father, serving in the ranks of the Jewish Legions, during World War I. As a matter of fact, we don't know anything about his personal history, nor its context. Could you help us?”*

These and other genealogical/historical questions arrive at the desk of the **“Jewish Soldiers in the Armed Forces Worldwide Collection”** within the **IDF & Defense Establishment Archives** almost on a daily basis. Yes, we can assist you!

The special collection, dealing with the contribution of Jewish soldiers and fighters in the various armed forces and in underground freedom movements was initiated by the first Prime Minister of the State of Israel, David Ben-Gurion in December 1948.

Through an intensive gathering effort over dozens of years, we have succeeded in establishing a unique collection, both in

quantity and quality, witnessing the special historical role Jews worldwide have played within different armies, during different armed conflicts, including major world wars, in underground freedom movements and in the military research and development effort.

The collection comprises more than 5,000 files accessed by a computerized system, a rich theme library with thousands of books and articles in Hebrew, English, Russian, Polish and other languages, hundreds of photographs, video recordings and CD recordings. We have original documents, or copies of documents, photographs, exhibits, medals and other decorations, statistics, historical materials, research papers, memoirs, maps, newspaper clippings, books, etc. from more than 40 countries. We possess original documents from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, as well as documents presenting the significant role of

Jewish fighters within the Allied forces fighting the Nazis during WWII.

All of this unique collection of historical files, materials and documents is open to public access within the IDF & Defense Establishment Archives in Tel HaShomer, near Tel Aviv. This provides a wonderful opportunity for genealogical research of family roots if your family members served in the armed forces. Needless to say, privacy laws are being strictly obeyed.

Moreover, I would like to use this opportunity for making “the last call” to the participants in armed forces and armed conflicts as well as the second generation to deposit historical and personal documents in order to safeguard this documentary material within such a prestigious institution as the IDF & Defense Establishment Archives.

Please contact me personally at the IDF & Defense Establishment Archives, Ministry of Defense, Hakiryia, 61909 Tel Aviv, attention Michael Lax  
Tel.: (03) 7380556 Fax: (03) 7380534

*Michael Lax (61). Born in Czechoslovakia, immigrated to Israel in 1968. He received his MSc at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. He was an IDF officer and served for a long period in various research domains. Since then he was engaged in business strategy and planning for a renewable energy company Ormat Industries Ltd. and prepared energy research publications for the World Energy Council – WEC. Since 2003, ML is responsible for the “Jewish Soldier in Armed Forces Worldwide Collection” in the framework of the IDF & Defense Establishment Archives. ML is divorced with 3 children.*

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## The Dor LeDor Museum Center

The Dor LeDor Museum Center is located in Beit Katz (the Katz House), the first house built in the Zebulun Valley in 1924 by Ephraim and Sabina Katz, the first Jewish settlers there, and donated by Ephraim Katz to Kiryat Bialik. The wood-built house was burned down during the riots of 1929 and rebuilt after Ephraim recovered from that event, from the destruction of the farm adjacent to it and of an additional farm in the Haifa Bay area.

The Dor LeDor Museum Center combines the story of the Fifth Aliya with that of immigrants to Kiryat Bialik, serving as a microcosm of that wave of immigration.

The main building is divided into several rooms:

- \* Founders' room – presenting the story of 100 founding families of Kiryat Bialik
- \* Atmosphere room – where one can experience the lifestyle of the settlers and members of the Fifth Aliya

- \* Screening room – for films and presentations representing the 1930s-1950s lifestyle as it was filmed on an 8mm. camera
- \* Fifth Aliya room – depicting the fifth wave of immigration on a map of the settlements existing then, with items from daily life, letters, photographs, pictures, appliances, etc.
- \* The story of Ephraim Katz, the first settler in the Zebulun Valley (of his children living without their parents and of a most determined couple) and of settlers of the Fifth Aliya, interwoven in context.
- \* The active archive – where the staff is working on gathering and documenting life/family stories, personal and sentimental items that were donated to the Center in custody for the next generations.

Work is also being carried out gathering information connected to such topics as the “illegal” immigrants, schools, the army, the Hagana and so on.

A conference of Friends of the Dor LeDor Museum Center is held annually where emotional, tearful experiences and memories are recalled.

We would be happy to welcome you at the Center, entrance to which costs 15 NIS. Visits should be coordinated in advance.

Furthermore, a visit to the Afek nature reserve can be combined with one to the Museum Center.

Dor LeDor Museum Center Staff,  
2, Singer St.  
(corner of 2 Keren HaYesod St.),  
Kiryat Bialik

Shashash8@gmail.com  
<http://dorledor.fav.co.il>

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## ASK THE EXPERTS

*Jordan Auslander: Researcher in the United States of America*

**Question:** I recently discovered that a number of my relatives immigrated to the USA from Eastern Europe over different periods of time. How do I embark on this research?

About 82 percent of all US arrivals came through the port of New York. Many that arrived during 1882-1924 the peak years of what is termed the Third Wave of Immigration can be found at the Ellis Island arrival Database which starts in 1892. But don't go to that site, start at Stephen Morse's <http://stevemorse.org/ellis2/ellisgold.html>. This page will allow you to search the free database using more search parameters, such as country and even town of origin. Of course you will still have to negotiate many misspellings and transcription irregularities. It's worth it because starting with very little information you can potentially discover a lot, especially if family members continued to arrive after 1907 when more data was asked on two pages of columns on the arrival manifests Questions such as place of birth, who they were coming to see and how were they related as well as where did they come from. These questions may yield a street address in the US and the in “old Country”

as well as the names of other family members.

The person's final destination may not have been the port city and new family enclaves could be discovered. All the major US ports used the same manifests, the others from Maine to Key West, the West Coast, Canadian and Mexican border crossings from the 1800s to the 1950s are indexed on Ancestry.com's subscription site. Many major libraries and archives have computer terminals where visitors can access these resources without paying a fee. In addition to the indexed data, scanned images of the manifest pages can be transcribed, printed or downloaded. Be sure to look at both pages of post 1907 arrivals, these may not be in sequence on the websites.

Immigrants arrived under their original names, most name changes occurred when they naturalized, that documentation will include a reference to the name under which the new citizen arrived. Some changes may have occurred as the family traveled to the US if they spent some time in England for instance. With Russian Jewish immigrants you may be dealing with three different alphabets as well as three different calendars, many thus approximated dates of

birth to the first or 15<sup>th</sup> of a given month. One thing is certain: no names were officially changed at Ellis Island. Arrivals were merely checked off the manifests that were prepared by native speakers at the port of origin. The reason for this was that immigrants were the steamship company's profit centers. If an immigrant was deemed unfit their deportation was at the carrier's expense. Fortunately over 95 percent of the arrivals were not detained much less returned. Those who were merely detained, perhaps awaiting a relative to claim them would generate another manifest entry to that effect. Ancestry also indexed the manifests for arriving US citizens, which had not been previously done since the government was only interested in verifying naturalization applicants and tracking aliens. Many arrivals went back home for visits. Upon

their return the naturalized citizens were listed on the US Citizen manifest pages referencing their US birthplace or date and Court of naturalization as well as their current address.

Working backwards, it's generally easier to find an arrival date and name from a naturalization document, but that's another topic.

*Jordan Auslander – a New York based professional genealogist, lecturer and expert witness. Since 1982 pursued real estate histories, title search in addition to genealogy, across the United States, Europe and Israel. Jordan translated, created and published an index to vital records in the Slovak State Archive system, and completed an alphabetized translation of "Magyarország Helsegneutara," a gazetteer of 1877 Hungary.*



## Looted or Stolen Art and Judaica

*Karen S. Franklin*

At IAJGS conferences for the past several years I have given an annual update on international policies with regard to looted art and Judaica, and more specifically various related cases I have worked on. The cases illustrate different principles and the kinds of varied research required to trace the history of the artifacts or find heirs.

Most of the cases involve works of little monetary value, particularly Judaica, but the stories themselves are important, and, of course, the objects are significant to the families who lost them.

Two cases covered in this year's lecture will be highlighted here.

- \* A Shabbat Lamp
- \* A stolen *Chevra Kadisha* register from Hungary

Two important international conferences in 2009 addressed issues of looted Judaica, a significant development for Jewish museums.

An entire day of the annual Council of American Jewish Museums conference in New York in January focused on the topic of looted art. The Holocaust Looted Assets Conference in Prague in June included a full-day session sponsored by the Judaica and Jewish Cultural Property Working Group. The principles developed by the working group were integrated into the Terezin Declaration, ratified by 46 countries.

At the Holocaust Looted Assets Conference session on looted Judaica, scholars expressed frustration that little progress had been made in tracing Judaica. Among the many reasons cited for this is that so many items look similar and are not of great value.

Thus I was particularly intrigued this past year when I was contacted by a lawyer from Minneapolis who wanted to find the "proper institution" to donate a Shabbat lamp he believed from the story told to him had belonged to a Cologne synagogue. The lamp had some credible provenance history; it had

been entrusted to the lawyer by a client, the son of a former Nazi now living in the US. The client wanted to return this item to the Jewish community. The donor provided names of those who owned it after it had been stolen, and a chain of ownership.

Research to identify the original owners of this object would require a strategy quite different from that for other looted items – to trace its ownership through the Nazi officers.

The first requirement would thus be funds to hire a researcher familiar with this type of German records in Germany. Since the object was not of great value and not already in a German institution (where funding might be sought), and no benefactor or funding source could be found in the US, financial backing for research would not likely be found. Another hindrance would be that the identity of the Nazi who donated it would need to be made public, and while not a stipulation when the gift was made, this put us in an uncomfortable situation.

The original task was to find a suitable institution to accept the lamp, and the lawyer has yet to select one. The opportunity still exists for further research. But the specific conditions with regard to this case illustrate the complexity each case brings to bear, and offers the possibility for future research to identify this item.

The second case concerns a stolen Hungarian *Chevra Kadisha* (burial society) register. This past spring I was perusing a Judaica auction catalog, an activity I do often as a genealogist, because I frequently find items that belong to families I recognize. Since the economy has soured, many items have come onto the market that were donations from organizations by and to individuals, and these are particularly interesting.

In this catalog, produced by Jonathan Greenstein, I found a *Chevra Kadisha* register from the Hungarian community of

Nitra. I placed an inquiry on the Hungarian Special Interest Group (SIG) of JewishGen, with the hope that some individual would purchase the volume and index it. Much to my surprise, the notice produced a response from the president of the Jewish community in Nitra. Apparently there had been a theft some years ago of numerous items from the community. While some had been returned, this book had never surfaced. In private emails the local leaders indicated that they would pursue a claim.

Though I was curious to know if there was progress on the case, I did not act further prior to the sale. In some cases, sellers of stolen items have been known to withdraw the objects of questionable provenance prior to sale and auctioneers refuse to give further information about the seller. However, following the sale I did contact Jonathan Greenstein. Even though the Hungarians had not yet been in touch, he handled the situation quite honorably. He nullified the transaction, took the loss without a question, and returned the book to the community within a matter of weeks.

Not all cases end so amicably, and with the rightful owner reunited with property. Many cases are mired in extensive litigation, though adjudication out of court or private solutions such as this one are certainly the most effective.

*Karen Franklin is a guest curator at the Museum of Jewish Heritage. A co-chair of the Board of Governors of JewishGen, she is a past president of the IAJGS and a past chair of the Council of American Jewish Museums. Karen serves on the boards of ICOM-US (International Council of Museums) and the International Committee of Memorial Museums of ICOM. She is also a juror for the Obermayer German Jewish History Award.*

## ABSTRACTS OF ARTICLES FROM FOREIGN JOURNALS

*Esther Ramon*

**Maayan 90: Journal of the Genealogical Societies in Switzerland and Hamburg, June 2007**

### **Switzerland**

*Rabbis in Switzerland, by Raymund M. Jung*

Details of Rabbi Yosef Wertheimer, 1833-1908

*Father of Wormser family from Breisach and Winzenheim, by Guenter Boll*

Details and family tree for Heiman Wormser who died in 1661 in Breisach

*Dr. Wilhelm Kaliski, dentist, by Rene Loeb*

Ten documents about the person, born in 1902 in Breslau, that were sent to the Swiss Association by the Dutch Genealogical Association

### **Hamburg**

*Bar Karl Heine – “The divine boy to whom the world belonged”, by Sylvia Steckmest*

Karl (born in Hamburg in 1810) was a member of a rich Hamburg banking family. He was a cousin of Heinrich Heine, the poet, and supported him financially.

*Marriage listings in Hamburg, by Hannelore Goettling-Jakoby*

Continuation of 8. From 1842-1870

*Sources for the research of the Jewish family in the Hamburg Archives (24th part), by Juergen Sielmann*

