

# שרשרת הדורות

## SHARSHERET HADOROT

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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to participants in the 4th International Seminar on Jewish Genealogy in Jerusalem! Our members are glad to receive you, and to cooperate with you in genealogical research. We wish you success in your endeavours.

The story related by our member Mazal Linnenberg in this bulletin will surely spur every genealogist to link up with other genealogists and to read "Avotaynu". You too may be rewarded by new discoveries about your ancestors.

A new member from the USA, Anna Olswanger, an experienced genealogist, writes to us as follows: "I just finished reading the two back issues of Sharsheret Hadorot. It seems to me that Israelis are interested in their ancestors as people, not documents, and I think Diaspora Jews could learn something from you about that."

Our newsletter appears this time in an enlarged format; it contains an extensive article by our member Dr. Paul Jacobi on the Genesis of the Rapaport Family and an article by Daniel Ophir, member of the Board of the Horowitz Family Association about the Halevi Horowitz family. You can also enjoy the story by Jacob Vazdias about his family. They were originally Marranos in the Iberian peninsula and later developed into a big Jewish family in Amsterdam.

We wish our guests and our members success in their research.

Look for our logo on page 2.

With greetings

**Esther Ramon Ruth Rigbi**

**We mourn the death of Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern, whose pioneering work in Jewish genealogy will always be remembered.**

Sharsheret Hadorot is published three times a year by the Israel Genealogical Society, Harav Uziel 50, 96424 Jerusalem, Tel: 02-424147.

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### **Our other publications:**

Three booklets:	Annals and Deeds	10 NIS	\$5
	Their Father's House 3-4	20 NIS	\$10
	Their Father's House 5-6	30 NIS	

**Annual Membership** 90 NIS or \$36 (please pay immediately)

### **FORTHCOMING LECTURES**

Wednesday	25.5.94	Our member <b>Moshe Heinemann</b> - "Fathers and Sons": The Heinemann Family from Bavaria.
Wednesday	22.6.94	<b>Yuval Elizur</b> - Generations in Jerusalem. The Family of Reuben Silberstein.
Wednesday	20.7.94	Progress Report by members on their research (those who want to participate please contact the editors).

The lectures begin at 19.30 and the library is open from 18.00 at "Mevakshei Derech", 22 Sderot Shai Agnon, San Simon, Jerusalem.

## RECENT LECTURES

### SEPHARDIM, MARRANOS AND "PORTUGUESE" IN AMSTERDAM

Jacob J. Vaz Dias

The first of the Vaz Dias family of Portugal arrived in Amsterdam in 1755. I found much material in the community archive of Amsterdam, which goes back to 1614 and is preserved almost complete. There is a microfilm copy in the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People at Givat Ram in Jerusalem. The Amsterdam municipal archives are also helpful, as they give the civil side, outside the Jewish community. The ancient cemetery of the Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam is another source of information. There is additional interesting material in the Torre do Tombo national archives in Lisbon, but there one needs the help of an expert.

500 years ago the Jews were expelled from Spain, but that did not put an end to their thousand-year-old culture. In their new places of residence they lived as a group apart, keeping their own customs and communal organization. They kept their Spanish and Ladino language, their tunes and songs, their style of illuminating manuscripts and their style of synagogue architecture.

Expelled from Spain in 1492, about 100,000 Jews found refuge in neighbouring Portugal. The Catholic king of Portugal realized the potential advantage to his country of the Jewish merchants, scholars and craftsmen from Spain. The King however died in 1495, 3 years after the expulsion, and three years later the new King Manuel married the Spanish Princess Isabella (daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella) who demanded that no "unbelievers" (i.e. Jews) should be allowed to remain on the soil of Portugal. The king did not wish to lose the benefits that the Jews had brought to his country, and therefore arranged a fictitious expulsion: he commanded all the Jews to come to Lisbon and board ships that would take them away to other countries. There were no ships, the borders were closed, and the Jews remained in Portugal "against the law". Thereupon all the Jews were taken to the city squares, where they were subjected to "standing baptism". A document from the end of the 15th century mentions that one of those baptized "standing" in 1497 by order of King Manuel was Duarte Dias - perhaps an ancestor of mine. We may assume that the name **Vaz Dias** was created when two children of Duarte Dias married members of the Vaz family and, as was customary, joined the two names.

These New Christians of 1497 (**Cristaos Novos**: the official term almost to the present day) were allowed an adaptation period of 20 years, without strict supervision, and many lived as Jews in secret. In 1536 the Inquisition was introduced into Portugal.

The faithfulness of some of the New Christians to Judaism stemmed both from a deep faith in the God of Israel and from the restrictions and discrimination against them. A New Christian was forbidden to marry the daughter of an Old Christian family, was excluded from certain select faculties at the university, was barred from the highest ranks in the army and the judiciary, and so on. The letters XN (**Cristaos Novos**) were inscribed after his name in all official documents.

What fields of advancement were open to the New Christians? They were able to advance in accordance with their talents and abilities in science and in commerce, and to achieve great influence and wealth. Their representatives indeed went far geographically - to Venice, to Constantinople and to Antwerp.

After two or three generations of crypto-Judaism, the customs and rituals practised by New Christian Marranos were hardly recognizable as Jewish, and they no longer understood their meaning. Prayers were composed from memory, always and only in Portuguese. For fear of the Inquisition they denied that they were Jews, and for fear of informers they did not disclose even to their own families their secret religious thoughts and held no group or public prayer. There were no rabbis, and by degrees the women became the repositories of knowledge and the authorities on all that pertained to the secret religion. The children of the Marranos were baptized and received a Christian religious education; only when they grew up did their parents disclose to them that they were really Jews.

In the 17th century, four or five generations after the Expulsion, some Marranos managed despite inquiries and arrests to cross the frontier to Bordeaux or Toulouse, for example. Once outside Portugal, they avoided contact with Jews and at first continued to live as Catholics, for fear of the Inquisition and of what might happen to the families they had left behind.

Contact with local Jewish communities was made only gradually, sometimes after years. In time the Marranos journeyed further - to Leghorn, Venice, Salonika and Belgrade.

The first Marranos reached Amsterdam at the end of the 16th century, knowing really nothing about Judaism. But when in the middle of the 17th century their brethren arrived in great numbers, the newcomers found in Amsterdam a traditional, established community led by Sephardic rabbis from Italy and the Balkans, deeply attached to the Sephardic past. Until the end of the 18th century those who came from Portugal spoke Portuguese, held poetry and literature groups, and staged plays of Jewish or secular content in Spanish, Portuguese and even Hebrew.

In the cemetery at Oudekerk outside Amsterdam there are tombstones whose shape, carvings and Portuguese inscriptions bear witness to the Iberian culture and Christian traditions the Marranos brought with them, presented in Jewish format.

Inside Spain and Portugal, New Christians were tortured and jailed for years because they "denied Christianity". Those who reached Amsterdam were forced to adapt themselves to an almost unknown Judaism which did not always meet their expectations or harmonize with their philosophical views. Certain individuals clashed with the rabbis on account of these views. Three of the most famous were **Uriel da Costa**, **Dr. Juan de Pardo** and **Baruch de Spinoza**.

In the fifties of the 18th century, a young Marrano man managed to leave Portugal and reach Amsterdam. His name was **Aaron Vaz Dias** and he was the founder of our dynasty. His Marrano past and the way of life of his descendants typify many other families in the community. The archives enabled me to reconstruct his life and the lives of his children and their children, down to our times.

Aaron Vaz Dias was apparently one of the last Marranos to join the Portuguese community of Amsterdam. For at the end of the 18th century the influence of the Roman Catholic Church on the civil authority was greatly weakened in Portugal, and as a result the stream of freedom-seekers dwindled. Aaron's ancestors lived for 250 years - i.e. for six or seven

generations - as Christians, and yet continued to believe in the God of Israel. What Judaism meant for those people, what they believed, I was able to learn from the protocols of an Inquisitional trial of 1729. The accused was a young man named Antonio Vaz Dias, whose file I found in the national archives in Lisbon. I emphasize that the case dates from 1729. Until the end of the 18th century "heretics" were judged by the Inquisition, whose operations in the Iberian peninsula ceased only with the conquests of Napoleon.

The trial of Antonio is published in full in my book "Khut Hashani 1492B1945" and it gives us a glimpse into the life and fears of the Marrano, and his attitude to the Church, with the vividness of a first-hand report.

I was unable to prove the exact relationship between Antonio who was born in 1707 and Aaron who was born in 1724. But on the basis of the personal names of Antonio's family and the names that Aaron gave his children in Amsterdam, the relationship is almost certain. I am also sure that the name Aaron's parents gave him at his baptism was Antonio; only in Amsterdam, after circumcision, was he called Aaron.

In 1760 Aaron married Sara a-Kattan, daughter of one of the rabbis of the community. This is noteworthy indeed: one of the important rabbis of the great and already celebrated Portuguese community, head of the famous "Etz Haim" rabbinical school, did not mind giving his daughter in marriage to a newcomer from "the land of idols" (as Spain and Portugal were then called by the Jews), a former Christian whose ancestors were forcibly baptized 250 years earlier. So strong, in 1760, were the feelings of solidarity, of mutual belonging, between the Amsterdam rabbi and the son of Marranos from Lisbon.

A Dutch historian has described the psychological difficulties of former Marranos as "split personality". Aaron's immediate absorption problem was more in the realm of day-to-day survival. Despite the ample dowry received from his father-in-law, he was unable to support his family properly, as we learn from the monthly allowance or dole he received from "Zedaka", the community association for the relief of the poor. From 1772 until his death in 1784 Aaron received every month from 4.50 to 5.50 gulden in support from this charitable institution. In winter it distributed peat for heating, at Passover it distributed matzoth. All these details are the reward of searching the archives.

The next generation, Aaron's sons and daughters, had slightly better luck or success, and little by little went up in the social scale. But some of them still suffered from absorption and identity problems.

Here is one example, an unexpected and instructive story that I gleaned and put together from scattered references in the archives.

Jacob, the youngest son of Aaron, was only four years old when his father died. He learned from the rabbi to read and write in Hebrew and Portuguese - perhaps also in Dutch. He subsequently learned tailoring and in future his descendants were to be tailors for many years. We know that Jacob was a member of the community and regularly attended synagogue. But Jacob, son of the former New Christian, led another, probably more tempestuous life. The baptismal registers of the Catholic church of St. Anthony of Padua in Amsterdam record that on October 4th, 1804, Jacob Vaz Dias and Johanna Kamper appeared before the priest and asked him to baptize their infant son.

Next to the names of the parents is a written note that they are not members of the Church. Nor were they married. For fuller understanding of subsequent events, we need to recall some of that Church's history. In the 16th century, as is well known, Holland fought against the Spanish conquerors and against their oppression of the Protestant church. After the Spaniards were driven out of Holland, the Protestant religion was proclaimed the one official religion in Amsterdam. Although Catholics remained in the city, they were not allowed to pray in churches or public places. For years the Catholics had to hold their services in improvised prayer cells, in attics and secret rooms. This religious discrimination against them weakened as the years passed, but it was long before Catholics were permitted to build Catholic churches in Amsterdam. Until that time came, they built semi-secret churches away from the public eye, in inner courtyards. A secret church of this kind stood among the houses in the heart of the Jewish Quarter, a few paces from the synagogue of the Portuguese community. The facts could not be more ironical; the son of the former Marrano from Portugal went with his Dutch Catholic beloved to have their son baptized in the secret Catholic church in the Jewish Quarter of Amsterdam. Two years later the couple, still unmarried, went to the church again, this time to have their new baby daughter baptized: There is evidence that Jacob did not turn his back on his own community. He paid his dues and took part in some communal activities. We shall never know all the details of Jacob's romance with Johanna, but the two loved each other very much, had two children and lived together for eight years. Jacob gave in to Johanna's demands and went with her to church to have their children baptized. He could not take the step of converting to Catholicism himself and marrying her in church. Four and a half years after the birth of their daughter, Johanna finally gave in to Jacob's demands and converted to Judaism. In the month of Sivan (June) 1812, Jacob son of Aaron Vaz Dias and Hannah Israel daughter of our father Abraham (according to the *ketubah*) stood beneath the wedding canopy.

The existence of the first two children of the couple was made known to me through baptismal registers. From the *mohel's* ledger of one of the community *mohalim* I learned that the couple had two sons after their marriage. The sons received the names Aaron and Moses. In future Aaron would grow up to be one of the rabbis of the Portuguese community in Amsterdam and head of the rabbinical seminary. Moshe would grow up to be a tailor. He was my great-grandfather.

## THE GENESIS OF THE RAPAPORT FAMILY

Paul J. Jacobi\*

Let us start with the folklore that began to flourish around the strange name of "Rapaport" rather early - a few generations after the 1450s when the family had moved from Germany to Italy and when its memory of the true origin of the family and of its name had begun fading away. For example, it was suggested that Rapaport was merely a slight misspelling of the progenitor's position in society, i.e. of "**Rav Oporto**" though rightly noone has ever attempted to identify that "Rav" (not even "Hacham") in Portuguese Oporto. Others who correctly remembered that their family's cradle had stood in Germany in general and in Bavaria in particular,

contended that its components "Rafa" (or Rapa) and Port (or Forth) were distortions of the names of two separate Jewish Bavarian families that eventually intermarried. The **Raffa (Rapa) family** was alleged to have taken its name from the black bird called in German "Rabe" ("raven" in English and רָבֵּיב in Hebrew) - because of the predominantly rather dark complexion of its members, or because of the progenitor having lived in a house called "Zum Raben" showing on its signboard a raven. A variation of this was the story of the miracle that had saved the progenitor from a blood-libel charge, when on Passover-night there was thrown into his (well closed) house, through its chimney, a murdered Christian child's corpse which, "at midnight", was miraculously transformed into a **Rebhuhn** (pronounced "rephuhn"; partridge in English and רֶבְהוּן in Hebrew), - probably because the "p" in the "rephuhn" conforms to "Rapa" better than the "b" in the "Rabe". - As to the second, the **Port (Fort) family** (- the initial "P" corresponds to the Hebrew פ" which stands also for "f" -), it was asserted to have taken its name from its place of provenance alleged to have been one of the two Bavarian towns of "Forth" (of "ASHPa" fame, comprising the kehillot of Ottensoo, Schnaittach, Forth and Huettenbach), or of "Fuert" (the sister-city of Nuernberg, though its established Hebrew name was פֶּוּרְט). And this German "Forth" was further asserted to have later undergone a process of Italianization changing it to "Porto". - True, folklore forms part and parcel of the human experience and, thus, also of history:- but as it thrives richly on popular etymology identifying different words merely because of their phonetic similarity, in disregard of the established rules of linguistic mutations, the **contents** of folklore **cannot** aspire to be taken for historic reality.

As to the **real history** of the **family** and of its **name** we can now profit with advantage not only from the early researches of Carmoly, Brann, L. Lewin, and A. Freimann, but also from the more recent publications of M. Benayahu, Y.Y. Yuval and P. Tishby and especially from the scientific editions recently published, mostly in Jerusalem, of the Responsa of late medieval scholar-rabbis like R. Moshe Minz, R. Joseph Colon, R. Jehuda Minz and others. This explains the novelty of some of the matters hereinafter set out, even for the informed layman. Anyway, we are here concerned with **one and the same Ashkenazi kohanite family** that had emerged from anonymity in the "**plain of Raffa**" (near Regensburg in Bavaria. cf. the Heller and the Ries families that took their names from the "Heil" and the "Ries" plains respectively). - Apparently, in the wake of the expulsion of the Jews from Bavaria in 1420/22 the family left for **Mainz** but, when the Jews were about to be expelled therefrom as well, it moved, roughly in the 1450s of the 15th century to Italy, settling primarily in Padua and partly in Mestre (near Venice). As, however, the family's two first generations, which had spent their time mostly in Germany, are still rather "prehistoric" in that no pertinent individual documentation is as yet available on them, it was the third generation (the one that settled in Italy), which is nowadays usually presented as the "first historic generation" of the Rapaports; and its prime scion who settled in Padua is commonly held out as its "progenitor". True, this progenitor in Padua had a cousin in Mestre, i.e., R. Vits (or Vitse) **Raffa** (- "Vits" being possibly a derivative from Veit(?) or Visch (from Fischel)(?) or Vici (Vico)(?) -), but his family-branch died out with the death of his son R. Michael (- Jehiel) ben Vits Raffa (to whom we shall return). Going back to the **progenitor** in Padua, he was known by a substantial number of **names** such as Jekutiel ben Jacob, Meshulam ben Jacob Moshe, Meshulam Cohen, Meshulam Kusi, Kusi Raffa etc. etc. And he was referred to as "rabbi", as "very wealthy", as communal worker ("parnes") of

Padua and even of Italy, and also as printer. Hitherto, however, no-one has been aware of all these names and descriptions referring to one and the same person whose full name was **R. Meshulam-Jekutiel-Kusi ben Jacob Raffa** (in short - "R. Kusi") (Raffa ca 1405 - 1475 Padua(?); one should note that his name was still "Raffa" (or Rafa), not yet "Rapa", let alone "Rapaport(o)").

Now it turns out that this **first of the Rapaports** was also **the first of the Hebrew printers in the world**: It was roughly in 1471/72 that R. Kusi, together with his sons Shlomo and Moshe, set up a printing press in the little town of **Piove (not Pieve) di Sacco** (near Padua), with his wife Devora serving initially as the only, and later as the principal, printer. Possibly, when still in Mainz, Devora had succeeded in moving the printing inventor Johannes Gutenberg to disregard his general inclination to teach his art to **men only** who, moreover, were observing Christians and of legitimate birth, and to introduce her to printing and even permit her to purchase Hebrew matrices, - all this apparently in view of her imminent departure abroad and her intention there to print primarily (if not exclusively) in Hebrew. (On the alternative version of R. Kusi having purchased those matrices from earlier Roman printers, see further below.)

As his first printing-product R. Kusi chose the then most popular Code regulating Jewish life, i.e. the "**Arba'a Turim**" (Four Columns) by the Ashkenazi R. Jacob ben Asher-haRosh (died 1330 in Spain), - a work due to serve, eighty years after its said print, as infrastructure for the "**Beth Joseph**" and its condensation, the "**Shulchan Aruch**" by the Sefardic R. Joseph Karo. Whilst R. Kusi started printing this work in or about 1471/72, it came from the press in July 1475, i.e. shortly after his death. True, half a year earlier, in February 1475, there had been published the "**Rashi Commentary**" printed by somebody else in **Southern Italy**, but in view of the number of its leaves having been **117 only**, as against the **482 leaves** of the Arba'a Turim, the printing of the latter must obviously have started long before the printing of the South Italian "**Rashi-Commentary**".

Moreover, in the same year (1475) R. Kusi's printing-shop turned out a further book containing the "**Selichot**" (penitential prayers) of the Ashkenazi Jews: - but there was something special about this little book: it **abstained from revealing its place and year of publication. This concealment was shared by nine further publications**, all of which seem to have been printed in Rome (?), with letters identical with, or similar to, R. Kusi's type of letters. This concealment was explained as a cautionary measure taken in view of the persecution of Jews and Judaism following the horrible blood- libel case in nearby **Triento (Trent) in 1475-6**. Thus, it stands to reason that these nine "Roman" printers acquired the matrices from R. Kusi's printing press upon its winding up following his death in 1475. In contradistinction hereto it was occasionally assumed that those "Roman" printers had produced their books already between 1469 and 1475 and that, accordingly, it was they who had sold their matrices to R. Kusi, and not vice versa. This assumption, however, has little to commend itself, if only because those matrices were used for the printing of the Arba'a Turim between 1471/1472 and 1475. Accordingly, **the Crown of Seniority in Hebrew- printing** can hardly be withheld from R. Kusi's printing-press.

What prompted R. Kusi to make his wife's hobby his own business? For his primary reason one should probably look to the **disappointments** that it had been his lot to suffer from three of his five children. True, he must have been pleased by the success of his son Dr. Moshe(-Eliezer) Raffa (ca 1426- 1489)



as a practising physician in Venice where he was relieved from local Jewry's duty to wear the Jewish badge of shame. Again, his daughter(?) "**Vreida**" (Verida) seems to have been happily married to R. (Israel-) **Chaim "Raffa"-Satan** known for his activities as collector of manuscripts, commissioner of copies thereof, host of scribes and as fine scribe himself. He seems to have adopted his wife's maiden-name (Raffa) probably so as to get rid of his own ugly family-name "Satan" (שׂטן). That name was not a corruption of "Schotten" nor of "Stein", but indeed the Hebrew translation of "Dufel" or "Teufel" ("Satan" in Hebrew and "devil" in English), "Satan" having become one of the first true Jewish surnames (in contradistinction to mere "provenance names"), - probably due to a little devil painted on the signboard of the family's house of residence. Of its many other known scions, the best known is the scholar R. Zalman Satan, of Mainz. - With his **three other children**, however, R. Kusi fared worse. One of his sons, R. (Michael-) Jechiel Raffa seems to have stayed behind in Germany and to have lived in **Ulm** whilst on his son R. Eliezer ben Jechiel Rafa nothing is known other than that he lived in **Guenzburg**. As to his other daughter, **Esther**, she married her cousin, the aforementioned R. Michael ben Vits Raffa, of Mestre. The latter, however, **divorced** her and, moreover married (in the second part of the 1460s) none other than "Treinlin" (daughter of one R. Sussman of Mestre) notwithstanding her still being betrothed to (and having also agreed on marriage-conditions with) his first wife's brother R. **Shlomo** Raffa who, as indicated, was another of R. Kusi's sons. All this gave rise to a **notorious "affair"** developing into a fight between two rabbinical camps, led by the Paduan rabbinate and the Mestre-Venetian rabbinate, each camp being supported by a great number of rabbinical celebrities from Italy and Central Europe, excommunications flowing to an fro. In addition, he felt embittered by a prolonged Court-action instigated against him by none other than one of the said Paduan rabbis, concerning monies of orphans administered by him. No wonder that R. Kusi decided to leave behind him all these vanities and absent himself from Padua so as to "return to the sources" and see to their propagation amongst the masses by printing first the Arba'a Turim.

The **continued existence of the family** was ensured via R. Kusi's great-grandson (his son Moshe's grandson) whose name happened to be again "**Moshe ben Meshulam-Jekutiel-Kusi Raffa**", who was the **first to settle in "Porto"** identified with **Porto(-Legnano)**, on the river Adige (south of Verona) and who, thus, supplied to the family the second component (Porto) of its eventual name "**Rapaport**". (This Italian "Porto" (= haven) had, of course nothing to do with aforementioned German "Forth" or Fuerth"). His descendants came to be called Porto-mi-Raffa or Porto-Raffa (or Rapa), or Porto only, or Rafa-Porto, or Rapa-Porto or Rapaport. Of the latter name no less than 15 spelling variations are known. - The said descendants included a great many rabbinical luminaries that served in the Ashkenazi (or United) Kehillot of Padua, Mantua, (Venice)-Mestre, Verona, Cremona, Rovigo, Trieste etc. One of their relatives was the scribe R. Jitzhak ben Jechiel(-Michael) Porto-(Rapa) (born 1522): He was the first to call himself "**haOrvi**" (the "raven's"), thus propagating the popular etymology deriving Raffa or (Rapa) from "Rabe". This line was followed by a cousin's son of his, a famous rabbi of Rovigo and Verona, R. Abraham-Menachem ben Yaakov (Rapa) Porto-Cohen ("**AMPaCH**") (1510-1594) who published in his work "**Minchat Belula**" (Verona 1594) his personal emblem (? ex libris) showing, in addition to his name, a blessing-Cohen's-hands and a raven, which occasionally came to serve also as a printer's mark or as emblem of the family itself.

Thus we have traced the family, from its first historic generation in Padua, through a few scions only, down to the sixth generation. In that generation some of its scions proceeded to spread out to, and settle in, Vienna, Prague, Moravia and Cracow, - eventually dispersing amongst most (if not all) of the Kehillot in the world. To deal, however, with this exciting development, would exceed the limits of our subject matter.

- \* On this subject-matter the author gave a lecture in our Society. Our member, Prof. Zvi Rapaport, was good enough to prepare a precis which was of most valuable help in the preparation of the present essay. For this both the author and the editors acknowledge their deep gratitude to him. - The author hopes to be able, in a year's time or so, with the active help of our member, Dr. Hanan Rapaport, to finish his comprehensive work on the Rapaport family down to our day, without aspiring at exhaustiveness to comprise all the myriads of Rapaports that ever lived or still live all over the world. Pertinent information will be appreciated.

## **THE HOROWITZ FAMILY STORY**

Daniel Ophir

### **Part I - History of the Family**

The history of the family may be divided into four periods:

#### **A. The Spanish Period**

According to family tradition based on old books, the Halevi family stems from Catalonia, from the city of Gerona there and from certain cities in Provence (1). R. Zarhia Halevi of Gerona, author of "Baal Hamaor" is particularly well known (2). Twelve generations of this family are known to us before the Expulsion from Spain in 1492. However, Dr. Paul Jacobi takes a different view: according to him the family is of Ashkenazi origin.

#### **B. The Bohemian Period**

The "Nassi" (prince) Isaiah ben Asher Zalman Halevi Ish-Horowitz (Horowitz 1460 - Prague 1515) was regarded in Prague as a leader of the community; he was a man of wealth and a moneylender. Dr. Jacobi traces three Halevi-Horowitz generations before this Isaiah in Bohemia. It is not known whether the family first settled in Horowitz (Horovice) (a village and fortress of that name existed about 40 kilometres west of Prague. Today it is a township of about 500 inhabitants), or whether the permanent home of the family was in Prague, from which they would move to Horowitz temporarily during expulsions of the Jews. In the days when Prague was the capital of the Holy Roman Empire there lived in Horowitz a German family named "de Horowitz". The Halevi family, which apparently had economic links with the German lords of the estate, was later known in Prague by the name "Ish-Horowitz".

In the Jewish Quarter of Prague there still stands the Pinkas Schul - (called after Pinchas Horowitz) - a synagogue which today forms part of the Jewish Museum of Prague. It began as a prayer-room in the home of the Halevi-Horowitz family, is mentioned in written sources from 1492, and was later extended to become a family-community synagogue. Recently a 15th century mikveh (ritual pool) was discovered in the floor. Next to the synagogue is the private burying-ground of the Horowitz family, at the edge of the famous Jewish cemetery of Prague.

### C. The Family scattered through Europe and America

Expulsions of the Jews scattered the family through eastern, central and western Europe. Rabbi Nathan Zvi Friedman traces more than 300 rabbis bearing the name Horowitz or Hurwitz (3). In Frankfurt-am-Main alone, there were four rabbis and community heads named Horowitz. Rabbis and ghetto conditions preserved the Jewish people until the modern return to Zion and the founding of the State of Israel. A branch of the family emigrated to America, where they established the Horowitz-Margareten matzah factory, and more than 60 years ago founded an active family association which published a family book and a family newspaper. The world famous pianist Vladimir Horowitz, who emigrated from Russia to the United States (and married Toscanini's daughter) is perhaps the best known member of the family.

### D. Horowitz in Zionism

The first of the family to settle in the Land of Israel was R. Isaiah Halevi Ish-Horowitz (known as the SHLAH from the Hebrew initials of his book *Shnei Luchot Habrith*) who came to Jerusalem from Prague in 1621. He was arrested by the Ottoman Governor of Jerusalem in order to extort taxes from him and the Jewish community. After his release he moved to Safed, died in Tiberias and was buried there in the tomb-plot of Maimonides. Descendants of R. Isaiah who came to the country after him contributed to the continuity of Jewish settlement in Galilee for about 10 generations.

In the 19th century there was immigration to Jerusalem by members of the family. Among these "Old Yishuv" people we may mention Shimshon Horowitz of Meah Shearim, researcher of the Ten Tribes in the East (4), and Arie Leib Hurwitz, one of the founders of Nahalat Shiv'a and Petach Tikvah. There were also Horowitz-Hurwitz pioneers in the First Aliyah and Bilu, among them founders of Rishon-le-Zion, Mazkeret Batya and Gedera, and the ancestors of Yigal Hurwitz who was to become Israel's Minister of Finance.

At the beginning of the 20th century the Second Aliyah pioneers arrived in the Land of Israel, among them Nahum Horowitz, one of the founders of the Shomer and Kfar Giladi, to be followed by the Third Aliyah (David Horowitz, later Governor of the Bank of Israel, was a Third Aliyah pioneer). Members of the Horowitz-Hurwitz family took part both in the settlement of the country and in the struggle to establish the Jewish State: Zerubbavel Hurwitz, who led the convey to Gush Etzion and fell in the battle of NebiSDaniel (March 1949) was one of the 12 heroes of Israel in the War of Independence (1948-49).

## Part II - The Association for Horowitz Family Research

Many Horowitz family members have compiled or inherited family trees and pedigree scrolls from the Prague period down to the present day. Awareness of family history existed, but no means of connection existed between the various branches of the family. (The number of Horowitzes throughout the world is estimated by some to be more than 50,000.) We therefore founded in November 1991 the Association for Horowitz Family Research, which would both encourage research into the family history and link the various branches of the family.

**We defined the aims of the Association as follows:**

1. Research into the part played by the Horowitz families in the history of Israel and the Jewish people.

2. Organization of study days and conventions (national and international) on the Association's subjects of study.
3. Publications of material on the history of the Horowitz families.
4. Initiation of outings, and social activities for members of the Association and their children, in order to develop a sense of belonging to the family and the Jewish people, and to pass on the family heritage to the younger generation.

**The Association has been active so far in the following spheres:**

- \* Registering members of the Horowitz families in Israel  
(1,100 families are registered today in our address-book)
- \* Sending an information leaflet (three have been sent so far) on the Association's planned activities.
- \* Holding family gatherings and study-days. The fourth family gathering was held during Chanukah 1993.
- \* Organizing study-tours in Israel and abroad to learn family history. We have held two tours in Israel and one tour to Prague and Horovice.
- \* Awarding scholarships to encourage research in Horowitz family history.
- \* Entering Horowitz family genealogical tables at Beth Hatefutsot.

#### **Association Headship**

The Association, which works alongside and in cooperation with Beth Hatefutsot, Tel Aviv, is headed by an elected executive committee of 23 members. The executive committee is dynamic and persevering, and has held 25 meetings so far.

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## OUR MEMBERS AT WORK

### FATE AND GENEALOGY

Mazal Linnenberg-Navon

One item in "Avotaynu" triggered off a series of reactions and actions on the part of two members of the Israel Genealogical Society.

On the way home after one of our meetings, my friend Mathilde Tagger told me that a report from Brazil in "Avotaynu" had aroused her interest. She said it was about the Jewish community in Manaus (and Belem), Amazonas, Brazil, a community formed by Jews from Morocco who emigrated to Brazil in the 19th century. to seek their fortune. This reminded her of her grandfather's brother who likewise left Morocco for Brazil in the middle of the last century, and she decided to do some research on the subject. She would investigate the Jews' reasons for leaving Morocco, their wanderings and settlement in small towns in Amazonas, their integration with the local inhabitants etc.

As I listened to her, something clicked in my mind and I asked her: "What was the name of your grandfather's brother?" "Cohen" she replied. "Massoud Cohen? Fortunato?" I asked, "Yes! How do you know?!" Mathilde stopped the car and we stared at each other. Then I told her about my grandfather, Rabbi Yaaqov Benattar. In 1890 he was sent from Jerusalem to Morocco, Lisbon and Gibraltar as an emissary of the "Beth Midrash Hassidim Beth El", the Yeshiva of the Mekubalim (Kabbalists) of which he was a member. In 1891, whilst in Lisbon, he met a rich Moroccan who lived in Bahia, Brazil. R.Yaaqov persuaded him to establish a Yeshiva in Jerusalem for ten old and needy Moroccan Talmidei Hachamim (Jewish scholars), where they could sit and study and receive a small allowance once or twice a year. The man agreed and the Yeshiva was established headed by our grandfather Rabbi Yaaqov Benattar.

As a child, I used to visit my grandfather almost daily at his Yeshiva, which was on the ground floor of the house, where we lived together with our grandparents, but I never knew how and when it was founded or even its name. For us it was "Papu's Yeshiva"\*. Only in recent years, when I became interested in my parents' roots (the Navon and Benattar families) did I discover all the details in a book of Responsa called "Rahamim Peshutim" written by the great Rabbi Rafael Haim Moshe Na'im ("Harahman" אֲהָרָהִי), Chief Rabbi of Gibraltar at the time. From that book I learned about the meeting in 1891 between Rabbi Y. Benattar and Massoud Cohen, who changed his name in Brazil to Fortunato. This benefactor left a will bequeathing a certain sum for the maintenance of a Yeshiva called "Fortunato Cohen". Since the Yeshiva was actually called "Mishmeret Kehuna", there was a doubt as to the intention of the donor. The problem was brought before Rabbi Na'im, who finally decided in favour of the existing Yeshiva "Mishmeret Kehuna".

And now over a hundred years after that meeting in Lisbon between two Moroccan Jews, one from **Jerusalem** and one from **Brazil**, we, the grandchildren, learned more about them. I know now that the generous benefactor Massoud Cohen, who established my grandfather's Yeshiva was Mathilde's great-uncle and Mathilde learnt of his kindness and generosity and that he himself could not read or write in any language - except to sign his name in Spanish, but he enabled many needy persons to study both during his lifetime and long after his death in 1907\8. The Yeshiva was active for 33 years 1892-1924. With the demise of my grandfather in 1924 it was closed.

As to myself, I had another surprise. At our next meeting of the I.G.S. I took out the box of "Avotaynu magazines" and selected the last issue there, in order to read the item from Brazil of which Mathilde spoke. It was the issue of Winter 1992\*\*. To my utter surprise (Mathilde had not told me) most of the article by Mrs. Wolff, the correspondent from Brazil, was about a person called Benjamin Benatar; his life, his wanderings, his death and burial.

According to Mrs. Wolff, it all started some years ago when a Dr. Robert Benatar visited Mr. and Mrs. Wolff and drew their attention to a history book about VASSOURAS - a small town in the State of Rio de Janeiro. From that book and from their research in newspapers from the last century they gathered many details about Benjamin Benatar (Dr. Robert Benatar thought he might be a descendant of Benjamin Benatar).

In 1825 Benjamin travelled from Rio de Janeiro to Bahia. After a while he returned to Rio, then in 1837 he travelled south again and, according to that history book, he came to VASSOURAS in 1838 and settled there.

Mrs. Wolff writes: "He had opened a small restaurant, installing a snooker [hall], the first one in town, and later a ballroom, so that the people would have a place for Saturday night dances - a place where men could go with their wives and daughters, a family place to have fun... Benjamin Benatar, a Jew in highly conservative VASSOURAS, was well liked by all. He brought "joie de vivre" to strait-laced families... When he died in 1859, he could not be buried in the local cemetery, which belonged to a Catholic order, so the local Charity Hospital for Indigent People (Santa Casa de Misericordia), laid him to rest in their garden". A few years later another Jew, called Michael (Mujilof) Levy, who came to Brazil in 1878, was buried at Benatar's side.

After Dr. Benatar's visit, Mr. and Mrs. Wolff went to Vassouras to see those graves. They visited the garden with the director of the House for Indigent Old People, but they could not find the tombs, which had probably sunk deep into the ground. However they found the tombstone of Mr. Levy lying on its side, in the garden. The tombstone of Benatar was not found\*\*\*. They decided to do something about those graves. Due to the unfortunate illness demise of Mr. Egon Wolff the matter was postponed. A few years later Mrs. Wolff did a wonderful and admirable deed - as she had promised her husband she would. She, together with "Luis", the director of the Observatory in Vassouras, started things moving. They obtained permission from the director of the Home to use part of the garden. They invited the help of the mayor, of the treasurer of the Jewish Cemetery Society, who paid for all the material, of the president of the local internationally known landscape engineer - a friend of Luis - who donated the plan for the Jewish memorial.

To quote Mrs. Wolff: "On September 13, 1992, after a year and a half of planning and trips to Vassouras, we had the pleasure and honour to inaugurate, as part of the Old Peoples' Home, our Jewish Memorial of Vassouras\*\*\*\*. Revived, thus, were not only the memory of two Jews, who lived and died in the interior of the State of Rio de Janeiro, but also the memory of the tolerance of a Catholic Brotherhood, owners of the Charity Hospital for Indigent People, who, in the last century, offered their garden as a last repose for the remains of two Jewish immigrants who had chosen this little township, as their home."

Moreover as a kind of "thank you", Mrs. Wolff and her "partners" arranged for donations to this Charity Home for old Indigent People, which is terribly poor.

And now, after reading the whole story, it occurs to me that maybe the three meetings in Lisbon between grandfather Benattar and Massoud Cohen were not only about the Yeshiva. Could it be that our grandfather, born in Morocco in 1845, had heard in his youth about a member of the family who had emigrated to Brazil, roamed in the Amazonas and stayed in **Bahia** and that he knew that Massoud Cohen travelled in the same surroundings and lived in **Bahia** and might have had some knowledge about that Benatar?

### Epilogue

Before handing over this article I showed it to Mathilde for her comments. When she read the part about Benjamin Benatar she looked at me in surprise and said that she had never read that in "Avotaynu". Her conversation with me in the car referred to an article by Jacques Cukierkorn - Brazil - in "Avotaynu" of spring 1993, about Jewish communities formed last century by Moroccan Jews who emigrated to Brazil. By chance, that issue of "Avotaynu" was not in its place in the box and I picked up the one about **Benatar!**

### A MATTER OF LUCK

Massoud Cohen, when in Brazil, translated his name into Spanish and was called Fortunato.	MASSUOD FORTUNATO
Mathilde's father was named Massoud after him, but in his town Meknes his name was translated into French and he was called Prosper	PROSPER
Mathilde was also named Mazaltov (after her grandmother).	MATHILDE MAZALTOV
Most women of Spanish origin called Mathilda are also named Mazaltov or Mazal.	MATHILDA MAZAL
My name among my family and old friends is Fortunee or Fortune, but since entering school I am officially called Mazal.	FORTUNEE FORTUNE

\* Papu- grandfather in Judeo-spaniol (Ladino)

\*\* "Avotaynu" Vol. 8 No.4 Winter 1992 pp.53-55

\*\*\* Similarly, the tombstone of our grandfather Rabbi

Benattar on the Mount of Olives was desecrated and

uprooted during the period of the Jordanian Rule after the war of 1948 and not found later.

\*\*\*\* "Avotaynu" Vol. 9 No. 1 Spring pp.35-36

### ALTENKUNSTADT'S SYNAGOGUE IS REOPENED

Dr. Noah Ginot-Grunfelder

In 1980, in connection with a professional conference in Germany, I travelled through Altenkunstadt, the ancestral home of my family, and met the mayor of the township, Fred Hermannsdorfer, who impressed me very much. He showed me the cemetery, with 2000 tombstones, the Jewish ghetto, the house where my ancestors lived for 250 years, and the Jewish synagogue. (See Sharsheret Hadorot Vol. 3 no. 2).

We talked about the future of the synagogue, and agreed that if the building were to be repaired and restored, it could be used in future both as a synagogue and as a community centre for the local people. The population of Altenkunstadt today numbers 5000. There are no Jews.

I was told about a theology student named Joseph Mutschmann who took an interest in the fate of the Jews. I began to correspond with him. He has pursued his interest and has published several booklets and newspaper articles on the fate of the Jews who once lived in Altenkunstadt. He has also drawn other people to the subject; today he takes them to the cemetery and once a year, on Rosh Hashanah, he prays there. Joseph Mutschmann has induced the municipality of Altenkunstadt to repair and restore the synagogue building, and persuaded the Catholic priest and the Protestant pastor to contribute funds to buy a **menorah** to stand in the synagogue.

Last October the synagogue was officially opened to the public. Important people from Munich were invited to the ceremony. Among the invited guests who came to the opening were the Putzel family (Jewish in origin) whose home today houses the municipality of Altenkunstadt; my two sisters and myself; and others - in all about 100 persons.

I contributed to the musical part of the ceremony by playing a number of pieces on the French horn, accompanied by a young German soldier who had received special leave for the occasion. My sister, with others, read a united prayer for the peace of this house, which will never again be a gathering-place for the people taken out of it to be sent to their deaths.

## INDEX TO "SHARSHERET HADOROT"

Robin H. Naftalin

Several years have passed since I published the first subject index to our newsletter. I am now happy to inform readers that I have finished preparing the second Issue index and Subject index of Sharsheret Hadorot. The current index covers the first seven volumes or the total of 21 issues which appeared between September 1986 and September 1993.

Instructions regarding the format of the subject index were submitted by the Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (AJGS). As the index is part of an international data base it is published at this stage in English only. If there is a demand for a Hebrew index it will be published in the future.

The main indexing is by a **main subject**. Most articles appear at least twice. For example under a country researched and a subject such as Holocaust, immigration, archives etc. From the subject index, the reader may find research sources in many countries. I have counted twenty nine countries mentioned in the various issues of Sharsheret Hadorot. The country with the highest number of appearances is Israel\Eretz Israel. The next one is Germany. But there are also data on small countries such as on Gibraltar or Surinam (each mentioned once). Under general subjects the research regarding the Holocaust comes out first, names and their sources is second.

A copy of the subject index will be in the library. Members who wish to order a copy should notify me as soon as possible and preferably before the conference. Address: Yaarot 5, Haifa 34787



## GENERAL INDEX TO MATERIAL IN THE LIBRARY

Robin H. Naftalin

As mentioned in my article "Contents and Subject index to material in the library" (Volume 7, No. 2, April 1993) I announced that I prepared a "General index to material in the library". While doing so I decided to reorganize some of the material from the "Genealogical Article collection" and the "Periodical article collection". The new system is sorted by countries and by subjects.

There are files for "Sources of Jewish....Genealogy" of the following countries: Ireland, Britain, Holland, Hungary, New Zealand, Poland, Czechoslovakia (including Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and the Czech Republic), France and Canada. Members who visit these countries or are in contact with other institutes abroad are requested to make a copy of forms or regulations in research institutes and submit them or any other material to the library.

In the general subject files, there are files for Research places such as The Hagana archives or The Labor and Hehalutz archives etc. In future, there will be files for subjects as Names or any other Genealogical research subject which will accumulate a large quantity of material in the library. I hope that the new system will facilitate the use of material in the library by members and others.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### THE LABOUR ARCHIVES

Daniel Ophir, Director of the Lavon Institute

The Labour Archives, founded in 1933, are today part of the Lavon Institute for Labour Movement Research. The Archives contain:

#### **7 Million Documents**

Institutional material from the Histadrut (General Federation of Labour) on various organizations, from the Histadrut's foundation in 1920 until the present day; documents of the workers' movement in Palestine from the period of the First Aliyah until the foundation of the Histadrut; archival material on workers' organizations, movements and parties in Israel and the Diaspora.

#### **1800 Personal Archives and Collections**

Documents of outstanding figures in the Labour Movement in Israel and abroad, who deposited their archives in their lifetime or willed them to be deposited after their death. Among the important personal archives are those of Berl Katznelson, Haim Arlosoroff, Yoseph Sprinzak, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, Ber Borochoy, A.D. Gordon, Dov Hos, Zalman Shazar, David Remez and many others. There are also questionnaires filled in by members of the Second Aliyah and others.

#### **Pictures and films**

About 40,000 pictures from the beginning of the Yishuv until today, and scores of cinema films.

## **Posters**

A varied collection of posters of the Histadrut and its institutions, labour parties in Israel and abroad, Zionist youth movements from all over the world, aliyah organizations, sport associations etc. Special collectinos include posters for the First of May, "Hapoel" events and posters to encourage local production and consumption of Israeli produce and goods.

## **Recorded sound-tracks**

Voices and words of hundreds of leaders of the Yishuv and the labour movement, including an exclusive recording of "the Last of the First" - delegates to the founding convention of the Histadrut.

## **Manuscripts of Public Figures, Writers and Poets**

The archive houses thousands of original MSS of heads of the Yishuv and the labour movement in the present century and also many MSS of writers and poets. The archive preserves unique MSS of Haim Nahman Bialik and the copybook in which the poetess Rachel wrote her poems.

## **Help For the User**

The material is entered on a computer, which supplies information on the person - both from the Lavon Institute Library and from the Labour Archive - according to name, place, period etc.

Advisory staff in the Library and in the Archive give information and provide printed lists of material available there. The Institute is open, Sunday through Thursday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Written requests may be sent in for computer lists. For a printout of more than 10 pages, there is a small charge of half a shekel per page.

## **FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN RESEARCH IN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE**

My name is Valery Ladyzhensky. I am a recent immigrant (1993) from St. Petersburg, I speak Hebrew, Russian and English. I am planning to go to Russia and Ukraine in August, 1994 to research my family who lived in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Petrozavodsk, Novgorod, Kiev, Odessa, Kharkov, Uman and Belaya Tserkov. I am going to the archives (especially St. Petersburg, Moscow and in the Ukraine: Odessa and Kharkov). I am a member of the Israel Genealogical Society and, also, the Moscow Jewish Genealogical Society. I am ready to help members of our Society in their research in the places mentioned above.

Please contact me: Tel: 03-7518835, Halapid 6, Ramat Gan 52573.

## **A NEW BOOK IN OUR LIBRARY**

### **A DICTIONARY OF JEWISH SURNAMES FROM THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE**

by Alexander Beider  
Avotaynue, Inc., Teaneck, NJ, U.S.A. (1993)

This book by Alexander Beider is a major new educational and research tool for genealogists seeking the origins, meanings, and old geographical distributions of Jewish surnames which existed in the Pale of Settlement. The book is divided into two main parts: (I) an excellent, academic treatise

on Jewish surnames of all types, and (II) a listing of over 50,000 surnames from the Pale of Settlement.

Part I is divided into several main parts: how to use the dictionary; a description of the Hebrew, Yiddish, and Cyrillic alphabets; a map of the Pale of Settlement plus Livonia and Courland as of the beginning of the 20th century, including all gubernias and the districts within them (covering all or parts of the modern countries of Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Russia, and Ukraine); a history of Jewish surnames in the Pale; types of surnames (religious, rabbinical, toponym-derived, patronymic, metronymic, occupational, personal-characteristics, artificial, and acronymic); relationships to surnames of other European peoples; and linguistic aspects. The gubernias covered are: Courland, Livonia, Kovno, Vitebsk, Vilna, Mogilev, Grodno, Minsk, Chernigov, Volhynia, Poltava, Kiev, Podolia, Kherson, and Bessarabia, with occasional data for surrounding gubernias outside of the Pale.

Part II of the book lists the surnames alphabetically according to the transliteration of their Russian spelling. Each entry includes the surname, location(s) for it, type of surname, etymology (origins), and a listing of related surnames. The locations are those in which references to the surname were found by a statistical analysis of each city in the Pale, yielding each surname's frequency of occurrence at the beginning of the 20th century (i.e., about one hundred years after Jews started adopting surnames – the source documents for these locations are lists of voters for the Russian parliament published in 1906, 1907, and 1912); related surnames are referenced to one another. For example, my own surname has the following listing: Esterzon (Poltava gub.) FS (derived from a feminine name, "son of Ester"); see Ester; and the listing for the rootname "Ester" contains a 357Bword listing of all of those surnames related to the rootname Ester, including my own name Esterzon.

The strength of the book is its excellent treatise on Jewish surnames in the Pale and family locations as of about 1910. This presentation is well written (despite some repetitiveness) and is well worth the price of the book. The weaknesses of the book are twofold: (1) the amount of information on each surname is small, but valuable, and does not include any discussion, and (2) the book does not include any statistics for either 1880 (before mass emigrations) or current geographic distributions of surnames in countries which overlay the old Pale. The second weakness, perhaps due to inavailability of basic data for the purpose, makes the book much less useful for the genealogist wanting a first filter for hunting for people with a given surname.

In summary, the book should be read by genealogists for background information on Jewish surnames in the Pale, and for brief information on any given surname, but genealogists researching specific eastern-European ancestors in the old Pale or modern relatives will still have to look elsewhere.

Cost: \$75 + \$4.5 shipping/handling

Send check or money to Avotaynu, P.O. Box 1134, Teaneck, NJ 07666. The book will be available at the International Seminar.

Reviewed by Professor G.L. Esterson

**SAD INFORMATION ABOUT THE SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE CEMETERY  
IN LONDON FROM BRENTWOOD & ONGAR GAZETTE,  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1992**

**by Josie Stephenson**

An exiled Hungarian aristocrat's search for an ancestral grave has led him to a Brentwood cemetery with three mass burial mounds holding an estimated 9,000 bodies.

Baron Dombovar-Trevenburg and his mother arrived in London as refugees after fleeing Budapest in the face of the 1956 uprising. London was the natural haven to which they should turn. Jewish in origin, they were drawn by Britain's history of tolerance of ethnic minorities and, more especially, because they were related to Queen Victoria's favourite prime minister, Benjamin Disraeli.

"I was always proud of my connection with the great man," said the Baron. "his mother was Maria Basevi, my paternal great great great aunt. Disraeli had no children and I am his last blood relative. As I never married I am afraid that the line stops with me," he said.

It was Baron Dombovar's search for family graves, including that of Naphtali Basevi, Disraeli's maternal grandfather, that ended in the unlikely Coxtie Green Road on land once belonging to Dytchleys owned by Queen Mary College.

Turned over to grazing horses, the field, close to Wheeler's Lane and firmly padlocked against trespassers, is the last resting place of the remains of about 9,000 Jews. They shared three communal graves, their names inscribed on oxidising aluminium plates tacked to surrounding fences.

An outraged Baron Dombovar said: "I think this is terrible. It appears there are 9,000 people in communal graves. They had individual and properly paid for graves at the Nuevo Cemetery at Mile End when their remains were dug up without some surviving relatives' knowledge and reinterred here in 1974.

"Both of Benjamin Disraeli's grandfathers lie here. I have found their names along with half a dozen other of my relatives, people who served Britain well in commerce, in the arts, in politics. They cannot just exterminate the memory of so many people who gave so much. In my opinion what has happened is a disgraceful desecration.

"My family have ancestral graves in Prague which are still maintained. I am going to demand that something is done to further their memory befitting their names," he said.

"At the very least I shall fight for the raising of a decent, inscribed granite memorial in Mile End and pray that those people now at rest in Brentwood are left at peace."

A Brentwood Council spokesman said: "The Baron appealed for our help but I am afraid that we could do nothing but advise that he contact the elders of the Mile End cemetery." He confirmed that a 1972-3 Private Member's Bill gave statutory authorisation for the removal of human remains from a disused burial ground adjoining Queen Mary College, Mile End Road and re-interment in the Brentwood site.

A spokesman for the Spanish and Portugese Jewish Synagogue at Maida Vale, administrators of the cemetery, said: "In the early 1970s Queen Mary College, which is part of the University of London, needed to expand and there was a threat of a compulsory purchase order on part of the Mile End cemetery.

"The college gave us a parcel of land, which it owned in Brentwood and exhumed remains were reinterred there in a very moving ceremony conducted by a rabbi. A yearly pilgrimage is made to Brentwood when we say prayers at the communal graves. They are maintained on a regular basis. We have just received a 300 repair bill," he said.

Submitted by our member Rina Ayalon

## **SELECTIONS FROM JGS JOURNALS**

**Compiled by Harold Lewin**

Readers should regard this selection only as a guide to some of the literature published in English, and should read the articles in their original form. The Editors invite comments on the subject-orientated format. Regrets are expressed for errors and missing credits and also, for reviewing in this issue, one journal only, an unfortunate lapse due to other work pressures.

### **BALTIC STATES**

#### **A Visit to Latvian and Lithuanian Archives: Howard Margol**

The article describes searches for documents in the Central State Historical Archives of Kaunas, Vilnius and Riga. (1)

### **BELARUS**

#### **What We Know about Genealogical Records in Belarus: Harry D.Boonin**

Preliminary inventories of Jewish records in the Central State Historical Archives of Minsk, Belarus, prepared by AROS archivists and given to Avotaynu in Septemember 1993, are summarized. The article also describes the results obtained by several researchers of Belarus Jewish genealogical records. (1)

### **CONFEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT STATES (FORMERLY U.S.S.R.)**

#### **Why It Takes So Long To Get Answers from RAGAS: Patricia Eames**

Reasons are given for the long delays being experienced by family researchers who have applied to RAGAS for archival information. (1)

### **FRANCE**

#### **From Our Contributing Editors: Philip Abensur**

This letter provides much useful information on French archival records relevant to Jewish genealogy. (1)

## **GERMANY**

### **The Vagaries of War: Carol Davidson Baird**

In addition to a personal family history, this article contains useful references for researchers of German military records. (1)

## **GREAT BRITAIN**

### **From Our Contributing Editors: Anthony Joseph**

Dr Joseph reports that English naturalizations for the period 1902-1906 have been alphabetized and cross-referenced by Ian Melville of 58 Strensall Park, Strensall, York YO3 5SH. He also reports that Bevis Marks Records, Part V (The birth register from 1767-1881 of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews) may be ordered from 2 Ashworth Road, London W9 1JY. (1)

## **HOLLAND**

### **Hungary Cemetery Data Available: Joel Berries**

Mr Berries reports that data concerning about 100 cemetery sites has been received and entered into a computer database. More is expected to arrive soon. (1)

## **ISRAEL**

### **Three Important Archives in Israel: Sallyann A.Sack**

The archives described are:

The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (Givat Ram Hebrew University Campus. Tel: 02-584261)

The Israel State Archives (35 Makor Haim Street, Jerusalem. Tel: 02-793371)

The Diaspora Research Institute (Tel Aviv University campus) (Source reference 1.)

## **POLAND**

### **Head of the Polish State Archives Clarifies Policies: Sallyann A. Sack**

The Editor of Avotaynu describes her attempts to clarify the current attitude of the Polish State Archives towards those seeking genealogical information and towards Mormon attempts to copy records of genealogical value. (1)

## **ROMANIA**

### **Revisiting Our Romanian Roots: Rick Bercuvitz**

The article describes some of the problems encountered while researching archival material during a visit to Codaesti, Iasi and other cities in Romania. Some tips are offered for Romanian travel.

## **SLOVAKIA**

### **Slovakian Jewish Research: Jordan Auslander**

The article contains a useful bibliography for Slovakian research plus addresses of Slovakian archives. The author's own experiences in requesting information from the archives are described and he suggests methods of expediting future research. (1)

## **UKRAINE**

### **Canadian Archivists Visit Ukrainian Archives: G.Bolotenko & L.Tapper**

The authors describe a visit in November 1993 to five archival institutions in the cities of Chernivtsi, Kamianets-Podil'sk and Lviv (Lwow) in the western Ukraine. (1)

### **My Trip to Usciesku, Ukraine, 1992: Pearl Atkin**

The article compares visits to the Ukraine in 1982 and 1992 in search of archival records and ancestral dwellings. (1)

## **U.S.A.**

### **Database of Names at Holocaust Museum: Peter Lande**

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington has decided to collect copies of all available documentation listing victims and survivors, with the ultimate aim of creating a single database. Volunteer help for the task of manual data entry will be welcomed by the museum. (1)

## **PERSONAL FAMILY RESEARCHES**

### **A Genealogical Adventure: Leonard Yodaiken**

The following names are mentioned in an account of a search for the author's roots: Elion, Elyan, Illion, Jackson, Judeikin, Kadishov, Loans, Luntz, Yodaiken. (1)

### **The Vagaries of War: Carol Davidson Baird**

This interesting excerpt of a personal family history in Germany mentions the names: Baird, Davidsohn. (1)

### **Years of Perseverance Pay Off: Harold Rhode**

The article, describing a search for roots, contains the following family names: Ben-Eliahu, Lipshitz, Miller, Perelman, Rhode, Rode, Shalom, Shochen, Shohen, Weintraub. (1)

### **Revisiting Our Romanian Roots: Rick Bercuvitz**

See summary under Romania. One family name researched during this visit was Seigler. (1)

### **Is My Name Teitelbaum, Farkas, Wolf or What?: Steven G. Teitelbaum**

The family names researched in this article are: Farkas, Grunwald, Kohn, Schwarcz, Teitelbaum, Wolf. (1)

## **KEY TO JOURNAL REFERENCE**

### **Ref.No.**

1. AVOTAYNU (International) Winter 1993. Vol. IX, No.4.