

# שרשרת הדורות

## חקר תולדות המשפחה היהודית



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# The Israel Genealogical Society

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The Israel Genealogical Society is a non-profit organization founded in 1983

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## From the Pen of the Editor

When I began my family research over two decades ago, the aim was to build a family tree. As the years have passed, I have embarked on a number of different projects that have stemmed from this research. This edition of Sharsheret Hadorot focuses on the many facets of genealogy and is in keeping with my view that genealogy is not only family research, but an interdisciplinary study drawing on history, sociology, anthropology psychology, onamasites and law.

The article, Tracing the Origin of First Names: Elkele by Jona Schellkens demonstrates the importance of names and tracing their origins in family research. The BUND in Vitebsk by Ester Rechtschafner introduces the reader to the Bund, and to the influence this movement had on the town of Vitebsk. The article, A Roots Search in an Ancient Will and the Expectation of the Coming of the Messiah and the Resurrection of the Dead discusses the importance the will as a source for the genealogical researcher.

The articles; How I discovered the synagogue of Coria in Spain by Jacques Cory and Passing on traditions in the Karlin Stolin-style Chassidut by Avraham Abish Shur deal the passing on of tradition, each in their own way.

In the regular columns: News from Israeli, Archives and Libraries, Harriet Kasow introduces us to the Russian Library in Jerusalem, Lea Haber Gedalia provides us with tools for family research in Bukovina and Saul Issroff has provided us with a book review of "Aliwal" by Adam Yamey.

I hope that through the column Missing Persons Bureau: Searching for Relatives in Israel, Joel Levy will find his family and enable him to enhance his research.

My sincerest thanks to my editorial committee for their assistance and support and to Esther Chipman Frame for the translation of the articles.

Share your genealogical discoveries and interesting methodologies and innovations you come across during your research with the readers of Sharsheret, we will be pleased to publish **your** articles.

## From the Desk of Garri Regev

*President, Israel Genealogical Society*

We have recently completed the celebration of Pesach and most of us had the opportunity of sharing the holiday with family and friends. Not only were we able to reflect on the story of the Exodus from Egypt but we also created new bonds and customs for ourselves. This meeting of families can provide an opportunity for genealogists unparalleled at other times of the year. We have the chance to catch up on family news, update our materials, and share our findings and information with other family members.

There are more and more methods to record our family history and stay in touch with relatives. Each person should choose wisely from among the wide variety of options. There is no one perfect solution. Some people are still depending on handwritten forms and drawings of charts and trees. Others have moved over to a software program (and should make frequent back-ups of their material) that keeps all of the information in a central location making record keeping much more efficient and allowing new information to be added with relative ease. Still others have ventured out to the possibilities offered now by the internet with so many options to choose from – sharing the family tree with relatives, allowing search engines to help find information in databases, cooperating with relatives on building the family tree, etc.

New vocabulary is popping up with increased frequency – blog, webinar, twitter, facebook – which for those who are “technically challenged” may seem daunting. Keeping up with the latest changes and advancements is practically a full time job.

The Israel Genealogical Society is planning to put all of these and more into perspective for you in our upcoming One Day Seminar. Please plan on being with us at Beit Hatfutsot on November 29, 2011. More information will be appearing in our monthly Newsletters.

### CONDOLENCES

*The Israel Genealogical Society expresses its sincerest condolences to our member Gilda Kurzman on the untimely passing of her husband **Bob Kurzman**.*

*The Israel Genealogical Society and the editorial committee of Sharsheret Hadorot express their sincerest condolences to our member Prof. Israel Zak and his family on the passing of his wife **Chana Zak nee Lipshitz**.*

## Tracing the Origin of First Names: Elkele

*Jona Schellekens*

Most genealogies trace the origin of a family name. In the past, however, first names were often also inherited, justifying a genealogy of first names. This article presents a mostly female lineage of nine generations that traces the origin of the first name of my maternal grandmother Elkele. It starts with Elkele the sister of the well-known memoirist Glikl HAMEL (גליקל האמיל). Before presenting the lineage, I will discuss two issues that are often neglected in Jewish genealogies. First, no Jewish genealogy is complete without both Jewish and non-Jewish names. Second, every genealogy that goes back in time before the civil registration of births, marriages and deaths, is only a more or less likely reconstruction of the past. For readers to be able to evaluate the quality of the reconstruction, genealogists need to present their evidence.

### Jewish and Non-Jewish Names

In the past Jews lived in two worlds, a Jewish and a non-Jewish one. In Europe, many Jews used different names for each. Some genealogies mention Jewish as well as non-Jewish names, but it is not always clear which name is Jewish and which one is not. Even when the Jewish names in a genealogy can be identified, the Hebrew spelling is sometimes difficult to reconstruct, especially in the case of family names. The advantage of a genealogical journal in Hebrew is the possibility of presenting Jewish names in the original Hebrew script. Of course, the opposite problem exists in a genealogy written in Hebrew. Hence, below in the English text, Jewish names will appear in parentheses in their original spelling in Hebrew letters, whereas in the Hebrew text, non-Jewish names will appear in parentheses in the original spelling in Latin letters.

In the past, Ashkenazi Jews could have as many as three different first names: a popular one in Yiddish, a ceremonial one in Hebrew

and a civil name in the vernacular. The popular name was used in communication with other Jews, the ceremonial one was used in religious ceremonies and on tombstones, whereas the civil one was used in contact with the outside world. Ceremonial names have survived until today, but popular names have disappeared. Thus, in the last four generations of this lineage, there are no more popular names, because in the beginning of the nineteenth century, Dutch Jews stopped speaking Yiddish. Sometimes the civil name simply was a translation of the ceremonial name. But this was not always the case. Thus, for example, someone who occurs as Levi in non-Jewish records, may be known as Leib among Jews and as Yehuda in the synagogue. Sometimes the ceremonial and popular names are combined, forming names that look like double names. Thus, Glikl calls her father Yehuda Leib.

Jews often had two family names, one in Yiddish and one in the local language for contact with the outside world. Thus, depending on the branch, the Jewish family names used by the Levite family of Goldschmidt in this article are STADTHAGEN (שטטהאגן), HAMEL (האמיל), KASSEL (קאסיל), and KRAMER (קראמיר). The latter is not really a family name in the strict sense, because none of the sons of Moshe Kramer is known to have used that name. Moreover, men could inherit a Jewish family name from their father-in-law. Thus, the second generation in the lineage, Moses Goldtsmidt, was also known as Moshe Kassel (משה קאסיל), because his father-in-law belonged to the Kassel branch of the family. German-Jewish women used their husband's family name. Thus, after marriage Glikl's Jewish family name was Hamel. Jewish and non-Jewish family names were never combined to form hyphenated family names, an anachronism often found in Jewish genealogies.

Beginning genealogists are often confused by the double and triple ceremonial names of German Jewish men in the seventeenth century. Double names given at birth were very rare in those days among German Jews. The second name was usually added at the time of a serious illness. The most common second name was Moses, because at a ritual a Bible would be opened at random and the first name that appeared was chosen (Kaganoff 1977, p. 102). Usually the second name is placed before the name given at birth, but not always. Thus, the ceremonial name of Elkele's father is Yehuda Yosef. In this case we know that his name at birth was Yehuda, because his popular name in Yiddish was Leib. At the time of a second serious illness a third name may sometimes be added. Thus, the ceremonial name of the grandfather of Elkele's husband was Baruch Daniel Shmuel. Several genealogies interpret the ceremonial name as Baruch ben Daniel ben Shmuel! Duckesz (1938) thought that the ceremonial name given at birth was Baruch instead of Shmuel and confused him with his relative Benedict Goldschmidt (משה ברוך בן משה) (יהודה סגל) from Kassel. We now know that the name given at birth was Shmuel, because in non-Jewish sources in Witzenhausen, Hessen, he is called Schmoll in 1618.

Jewish women often did not have a Hebrew name. In such cases, their Yiddish name was used in religious ceremonies. Thus, before the nineteenth century women called Elkele usually did not have a ceremonial name that differed from the popular one. Since, Elkele originally is a non-Jewish name, in Germany it was also used as a civil name. Elkele is a relatively rare Jewish name. Grunwald (1904) counted 4515 tombstones at the Jewish cemetery on the Königstrasse in Altona, only fourteen of which are of an Elkele. The rarity of the name provides part of the evidence for the reconstruction of the lineage.

## The Evidence

Starting with the fifth generation, the lineage is firmly based on the civil registration of births, marriages and deaths, which started in 1811 in the Netherlands and explicitly states the family relationship between parents and children. Before 1811 the identification of parents becomes much more difficult. The name of one parent may be mentioned in the sources, but without the name of the second parent, identification becomes much less certain. Of course, if both Jewish and non-Jewish names are known and these are different, identification becomes much more certain. Special attention will be given to the evidence on which the first four generations of the lineage are based.

This is a corrected and adapted version of an article that appeared in Dutch (Schellekens 2006a). Nineteenth-century birth, marriage and death dates were obtained from the civil registration, all of which will eventually be available at [www.genlias.nl](http://www.genlias.nl). Jewish names in the last three generations were obtained from a family prayer book, unless stated otherwise. Additional information was obtained from nineteenth-century court records and an interview with the author's grandmother. Before 1811, Jews in Amsterdam were required to register their marriage at the town hall. The registration of first marriages provides the age and place of birth of brides and grooms. These were published by Verdooner and Snel (1992). A valuable source for those searching for ancestors in Amsterdam is the database of Moshe Mossel (2011), who reconstructed the eighteenth-century Ashkenazi population of Amsterdam by combining the information from the registration of marriages with Jewish sources, such as marriage contracts in the rabbinical court rolls and burial registers.

## Lineage

1. **Elkele** (עלקלי בת יהודא יוסף), born in Hamburg, daughter of Bella Nathan (בילה בת נתן מעלריך), married Joost Goldschmidt (יוסף שטטהאגן), merchant, son of Moyses Goldschmidt (משה בן ברוך דניאל שמואל הלוי); and a daughter of Meyer WALLICH (גיטלה בת מאיר). Elkele is a sister of the memoirist Glikl Hamel. Elkele only features once in the memoirs when she and Glikl were lying ill in 1656 (Hamel 2006, p. 77). Elkele was not named after her maternal grandmother, who was called Mette (מטסה בת יעקב) and died in 1656 at the age of 74 (Hamel 2006, p. 77). Probably, Elkele did not inherit her name from her unknown paternal grandmother either, because the name occurs in her mother's family (Hamel 2006, p. 71). The ceremonial name of Elkele seems to have been lost, but we can reconstruct it with the help of the *Memorbuch* of Metz, which mentions her sister Glikl in 1724. Her father's Hebrew name (יהודא בן נתן) is known from an old photograph of his tombstone (Hüttenmeister 2009, p. 213). Her father's Yiddish name (ליב שטאדן) appears on the tombstone of his wife. Apparently, he came from the nearby town of Stade(n). Her mother's name is known from the memoirs. I did not find any non-Jewish sources that mention Elkele or her parents. Thus, their non-Jewish names are unknown. It is possible to reconstruct her mother's maiden name, however. Her uncle appears on a list of Jewish inhabitants of Hamburg in 1638 (Schellekens 2006b). His

name is MARX Nathan. In 1638 he, his wife and a child died during a plague epidemic (Hamel 2006, pp. 66–67). If her mother's non-Jewish first name is identical with her Jewish name, then we get Bella Nathan.

Elkele's husband and father-in-law occur in Jewish as well as non-Jewish sources. Glikl calls her brother-in-law Joseph Segal (יוסף סגל). Records of the Jewish community in Hamburg call him Joseph Stadthagen. Glikl mentions the Jewish family name Stadthagen once, when reporting on a visit to a brother of Joseph (אברהם מן שטאט האגין). Glikl once mentions Joseph's father, who was an uncle of Glikl's husband. In 1635, Elkele's father-in-law Moyses GOLTSCHMIED is mentioned for the first time in non-Jewish sources in Stadthagen. In 1637 he is mentioned there together with his brother Jost Goldtschmied, the father-in-law of Glikl. A document from 1644 mentions Moyses Goltschmidt of Stadthagen as the son-in-law of Meyer of Minden. The family name of his father-in-law appears in a document that mentions Moyses Goltschmidt with his brother-in-law Alexander Wallich, the son of Meyer (Lin-nemeier 2002, pp. 115–117). The ceremonial names Moyses Goltschmidt and his wife משה בן ברוך דניאל שמואל הלוי משטטהאגין) are known from the *Memorbuch* of Fulda (Kaufmann 1896, p. XXXIX).

In 1675–1679 and 1682–1700, Elkele's husband Joseph is regularly mentioned in the lists of Jewish visitors from Hamburg to the



Tombstone of Mette (died 1656) in Hamburg-Altona (copyright: Salomon Ludwig Steinheim-Institute for German-Jewish History, Duisburg, and photographer, Dr. Bert Sommer, Modica)

- Tombstone of Bella bat Nathan MEL-RICH (died 1704) in Hamburg-Altona (copyright: Salomon Ludwig Steinheim-Institute for German-Jewish History, Duisburg, and



Leipzig fair as Jobst Goldschmidt (Freudenthal 1928, p. 125). In 1687, Joseph Stadthagen and his wife Elkele each pledged to annually donate money to Jews in Jerusalem, while in the name of their sons Moses and Leib, they committed to donate money for a limited period of twenty years (Bennett 1988, pp. 136–137). Elkele did not survive her sister Glikl, who died in 1724. A granddaughter was named after Elkele in ca. 1711. By that time Elkele must have been dead.

**2. Moses Goldtsmidt (משה בן; משה קאסיל; יוסף שטטהאגן סגל)**, born in Hamburg ca. 1681, died in Amsterdam 1738 (drowning), merchant, married in Amsterdam 1698 Judith Goldsmid (גוטלא בת וואלף קאסיל), born in Amsterdam ca. 1681, died there in 1721, daughter of Wolf Goldsmid (יהודה בנימן) and Sara ARENTS (שרה בת אהרון). In 1722 Moses remarried (Verdooner and Snel 1992). The registration of Moses' first marriage in 1698 at the town hall of Amsterdam is missing from Verdooner and Snel (1992), but Prijs (1936) mentions it. Moses declared that he was seventeen years old and born in Hamburg. He was accompanied by a representative of his father Joost Goldsmid. The Dutch sources do not mention his mother's name, making identification of his parents more difficult. Fortunately, he had different Jewish and non-Jewish family names. If we add the fact that he had a daughter with the rare name of Elkel (see below), identification is almost certain. The Hebrew names of Moses, his wife and parents-in-law appear on their tombstones at Muiderberg. The Jewish burial register of Amsterdam mentions his name in Yiddish. From his tombstone we know his Jewish family name: Stadthagen. Of course, one might ask how we know all these names refer to the same person. One source that mentions both is his testament in Hebrew and Yiddish (Turniansky 1988). I only found one person in Hamburg called Jobst Goldschmidt in German sources as well as Joseph Stadthagen the Levite in



Tombstone of Moses Goldtsmidt in Muiderberg (photo: Jim Bennett, Haifa)

Jewish sources. Moreover, this Joseph in Hamburg had a son Moses and was married to a woman called Elkele. All this makes it highly likely that our Moses is a son of Elkele and Joseph Stadthagen.

After settling in Amsterdam, Moses remained a member of the Jewish community of Hamburg. The *pinkas* there calls him Moshe ben Joseph Stadthagen in 1704 and 1713. In 1718 the *pinkas* calls him Moshe Kassel from Amsterdam (Bennett 1988, p. 139). His testament mentions the seats he owned in the synagogue in Hamburg (Turniansky 1988). Like his father, he mostly traded in gold and precious stones. But the records of the Dutch East India Company show that he also traded in other merchandise, such as cotton cloth (Bennet 1988, pp. 138-139). Moses is one of the founders of the Jewish community of Groningen, in the north of the Netherlands. The opening of a pawnshop in 1731 eventually led to the foundation of the Jewish community there (Schut 1995, p. 147). According to the burial register of Amsterdam, Moses drowned in 1738.

**3. Elkel Moses Goldsmith (עלקלא בת משה; סגל)**, born Amsterdam ca. 1711, died in or (shortly) before 1750, married in Amsterdam 1729 Israel Abraham LAZARUS (ישראל בן אברהם), born Hamburg ca. 1710, merchant, died Groningen 1800, son of Abraham Lazarus (אברהם בן אליעזר) (Elema 1996; Schellekens 2004; and Schut 1995). Elkel is mentioned in the Hebrew testament of her father Moses Goldtsmidt (Turniansky 1988).



Of course, this does not definitely prove that the wife of Israel Abraham Lazarus is identical with the daughter of Moses and Judith Goldsmid. However, in 1750 Izaak Jozefs Cohen was appointed as guardian of Elkel's children (Schut 1995, pp. 103–104). Izaak (איצק כץ) was a son-in-law of Moses Goldsmid, who mentions him in his testament (Turniansky 1988). Moreover, in 1785 the rabbinical court rolls of Amsterdam mention the heirs of Moses, including a daughter called Elkele, who was married to Israel in Groningen (Mossel 2011).

When he was about fourteen years old, Israel visited the Leipzig fair for the first time (Freudenthal 1928, p. 127). In 1741 Israel became a citizen of Groningen and a member of the guild of merchants. After the death of Elkel, he remarried twice (Schut 1995, p. 156).

**4. Lazarus Israels (אליעזר בן ישראל)**, born Groningen ca. 1745, died in or before 1785, married Lea Levi (לאה בת ליב). In 1773 Lazarus, 28 years old, sued his guardian Izaak Cohen with his two brothers concerning their inheritance. Lazarus Israels and Lea Levi are mentioned in 1775 (Elema 2006, p. 487). The identity of his parents is clear from the rabbinical court rolls of Amsterdam which in 1785 mention Elkele, who was married to Israel in Groningen, and had died, leaving behind four sons, Leib, Abraham, Wolf and Leizer. Leizer had also died, leaving small children behind, born to him from his spouse Lea bat Leib (Mossel 2011). The records do not mention Leizer's family name, but a son of his older brother Leib is called Kiek (קיק) in 1804 (Elema 1996, p. 119). In 1811 all inhabitants of the Netherlands were required to adopt a family name. The only-known son of Lazarus and Lea, David, adopted his Jewish family name Kiek as his civil family name. All nineteenth-century Dutch Jews by the name of KIEK are his descendants (Elema 2006).

**5. Nanette Eliasar Kiek (עלקלה בת אליעזר)**, born in Groningen ca. 1780, died in Tilburg



Tombstone of Nanette Kiek in Oisterwijk (Collection M. Cahen, Municipal Archives 's-Hertogenbosch)

1824, married ca. 1806 Joseph Gabriël van Ham (יעקב יצחק בן גבריאל; זעקלה), born in Oisterwijk 1779 (census 1810), wool merchant, died in Tilburg 1840, son of Gabriël Meijer (גבריאל בן מאיר) and Helena Philip. Nanette's tombstone mentions her Jewish name. In her death certificate, her parents are called Eliasar David Kiek and Helena Karolina. Jewish women in those days did not have double names. So whoever reported her death seems to have invented the name for the Dutch authorities, although Jewish women called Lea sometimes used Helena as their civil name. There is only one Jewish family Kiek in the Netherlands (Elema 1996 and 2006). They are all descended from Lazarus Israels in Groningen. Moreover, his mother's name is Elkele. Elkele is quite a rare name. Finally, Nanette knew the family Kiek of Groningen very well, because a daughter of David Kiek married a son of Nanette. Thus, Nanette belongs to the same generation as David Kiek and is probably a daughter of Lazarus Israels and Lea Levi. In her death certificate, Nanette's father is called Eliasar *David* Kiek. Probably this is another mistake, and her father's name should be Israel, not David, although Lazarus did have a son called David.

Joseph is first mentioned in 1798 in the southern village of Oisterwijk. The *Pinkas Oisterwijk* mentions that he became a member of the Jewish community in 1806, indicating that he married around that time. In 1811 he adopts the family name "VAN

HAM,” perhaps because his family is originally from Hamm in Germany. Before 1812 Joseph and Nanette moved to the city of Tilburg. Joseph was a parnas in Tilburg.

**6. Carolina van Ham (גולדא בת גבריאל)**, born in Tilburg 1812, died in 's-Hertogenbosch 1840, married in Tilburg 1830 Arend or Aharon LEVINSON, born in Bergen op Zoom ca. 1805, merchant, shopkeeper, died in Woudrichem 1845, widower of Jetje (Jente) VAN GELDER and son of Alexander Levinson and Gonda Izak VANDER WIELEN. The Jewish name of Carolina is not known. Probably it is Golda, because a granddaughter



Carolina van Ham

ter was named after her. Carolina and Aron had three daughters. Probably the oldest pictures in the family album are photographs of drawings of a couple the family believes to be Aron and Carolina.

**7. Aaltje Levinson (עלקלא בת אהרון)**, born in 's-Hertogenbosch 1833, died in Tilburg 1920, married in Tilburg 1858 Levie ANDRIESSE (יהודה בן יצחק), born in Tilburg 1831, died there 1894, son of Isaac (מנחם בן מענקה) and Eva DE WINTER. Aaltje gave birth to twelve children. Nine were stillborn,



Aron Levinson

two died the next day and only one survived. In 1877, Levie and a companion started to trade in crystal, glass, porcelain, pottery, rags and plant waste (L. Andriesse & Co.). Although not in family hands, the company still exists. For his ancestors see Andriesse (1975).

**8. Carolina Andriesse (גולדא בת יהודה)**, born in Tilburg 1861, died there 1931, married there in 1890 Alexander Kooperberg (אפרים בן אריה צבי), born in Oosterhout 1851, son of Levi Simon KOOPERBERG (אריה תבי בן שמעון) and Judith TENCOORN (יטלא בת יהודה), wholesale textile, died in Tilburg 1933 (pneumonia). Carolina and Alexander had three daughters. Around 1897 they moved to Tilburg. Alexander was a parnas in Tilburg. Alexander invested in Russian railways. He lost most of his investments in the October Revolution. Carolina registered vital events in Hebrew and Dutch in her prayer book.



Four generations: Aaltje Levinson, Carolina Andriesse, Adèle Kooperberg and my aunt Froukje Carolina de Leeuw-Bernard

**9. Adèle Judith Kooperberg (אלקלא (!) בת)** (אפרים), born in Oosterhout 1891, died in Rotterdam 1983, married in Tilburg 1915 Eduard BERNARD (אפרים בן יהודה), born in Groningen 1887, salesman, died Utrecht 1957, son of Levi Bernard (יהודה בן משולם) and Froukje NIEWEG (פראדכא בת מרדכי) (הלוי), widower of Marie HORNEMANN. The Jewish names of Eduard and his parents were obtained from tombstones. Breaking with tradition, my grandmother was named after her grandmother when she was still alive. Two great-granddaughters were named after her.

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- Living in Israel since 1972, Jona Schellekens was born in Utrecht, the Netherlands, in 1954. He started his genealogical research while still in high school. For his Ph. D. dissertation in historical demography, he used unique data found in his search for ancestors. A professor of demography at the department of sociology and anthropology, the Hebrew University, he is married and has five children.*

## The BUND in Vitebsk

*Ester Rechtschafner*

### Introduction

I became interested in the **BUND** in Vitebsk, after writing my articles<sup>1</sup> about Vitebsk. It became clear to me that I didn't have enough information about the Bund in Vitebsk; for the BUND played an important part in the history of the Jews of Vitebsk. Their descendants understand and feel what the BUND did for their families. There is an abundance of information on the BUND, but barely any about the BUND in Vitebsk. I understand that there is probably more information than I was able to find.

After I wrote these last two sentences I was quite lucky in receiving an abundance of information about the BUND in Vitebsk, from YIVO<sup>2</sup>, now in NY, USA. I would like to thank Leo Greenbaum, the Archivist and his staff for their help. I would also like to thank Professor Dov Levin<sup>3</sup> for the information he gave me and for his advice and help. I still would be happy to receive whatever information you may have.

Note: The abbreviations in parenthesis and in the footnotes refer to the bibliography. A complete bibliography appears at the end of this article.

### History of the BUND (EJ, BNP, BS, HE, HEW1, HO)

BUND is an abbreviation of *Alegmeyner Yiddisher arbiter Bund in Lite, Poyln un Rusland* (General Jewish Workers' in Lithuania, Poland and Russia).

The Yiddish word BUND means treaty, alliance, covenant. It was founded in a secret meeting, in Vilna in 1897. The BUND was a worker's association and an active political party (as much as this was possible) from the 1890's through the 1930's. After a short time the organization became known as the BUND. Its' members were called "BUNDism" or "BUNDaim". Most of the members were from the Jewish working class, but there were also supporters from the Jewish intellectuals. All of the BUNDISTS were very loyal and attached to their organization<sup>4</sup>.

The original goal of the BUND was to organize and represent all Jewish workers in the Russian Empire (Russia, Lithuania<sup>5</sup>, Belarus, Ukraine, and most of Poland (where the majority of Jews was then located]) in one political party and to encourage their involvement in the Russian Socialist movement (the Social Democratic party). This was to help Russia become a socio-democratic state, which would consider the Jews a nation with minority legal status. It called for equal rights for Jews within a Socialist framework in which Jews would be given cultural freedom.

1 My <http://www.jewishgen.org/belarus/newsletter/MyVitebsk.htm>, Pictures of The Vitebsk That Was: [http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Vitsyebk/Pictures/MyVitebsk\\_2.html](http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Vitsyebk/Pictures/MyVitebsk_2.html). A list of my of the articles can be obtained by contacting me or by typing my name into google search.

2 YIVO was founded in Berlin in August 1925, by Jewish scholars and social scientists. Its' goals were:  
1. Jewish participation in scholarly research in their own language.  
2. The results of words scholarship be made available in Yiddish.

Vilna was selected as the center. (EJ, V. 16). It was founded there by members of the BUND. (DL)  
3 Professor Dov Levin (DL) is from the Institute of Contemporary Jewry of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. Further information about him can be obtained at :

[www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/dovlevin/levinbib.html](http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/dovlevin/levinbib.html)

4 DL

5 The Lithuanian BUND organized and joined in 1900. BS, p. 2.

At first Hebrew was the official language, but this was changed to Russian and then to Yiddish to make communication easier. Yiddish was considered the national language of Eastern European Jewry and thus the language of the BUND. The Bund was the Jewish Socialist secular party; however a few of the members were religious Jews<sup>6</sup>. The BUND completely opposed Zionism and Hebrew culture and language. Zionism was related to as *escapism* (Many BUND members became Zionist-Socialists and came on Aliyah. This was a big loss to the BUND). The BUND considered itself first and foremost Socialist, and then Jewish; but the program was for obtaining a cultural autonomy for the Jewish people in Eastern Europe. The BUND was not willing to change this goal. Therefore the BUND had many enemies both inside and outside of the Jewish people.

The BUND left the Russian Socialist movement party in 1903, after not receiving recognition as the only representative of the Jewish workers. Bundists were active in Russian socialist circles, and the party was an important participant in the Revolution of 1905. Then the BUND had 35,000 members, of which 4,500 were political prisoners in Russia and Siberia. The BUND joined forces with Po'eli Zion<sup>7</sup> and other groups in order to form and lead a united defense front against the pogroms and riots of 1905. The BUND led the defense front in

the Jewish villages, in the area that is now Belarus.

After this First Russian Revolution, the BUND became legal due to political reforms. Some members of the BUND sided with the Communists and this fact was destructive to the promotion of the BUND as a Jewish organization<sup>8</sup>.

After the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the BUND split with most of its members joining the Communist party. This became official in 1921. The others remained in the BUND. The BUND became illegal again in Russia. The Communists wanted to destroy the BUND, even more than they wanted to destroy Zionist organizations<sup>9</sup>. The BUND continued to operate in independent Poland and Lithuania, mostly in places that had a large Jewish population. The center shifted to Poland, where it built up a large following with its extensive network of social and cultural organizations. The Polish BUND flourished after World War I and became an important force among Poland's Jews. The Polish BUND's propaganda was that Jews should stay and fight for socialism and not seek refuge elsewhere.

Between the world wars, the BUND published more documents and propaganda than the Zionist organizations<sup>10</sup>. The BUND charged Jabotinsky (leader of the Revisionists<sup>11</sup>) as an Anti-Semite. Then small branches were also active in Lithuania,

6 Rivka Yaffe remembers what her Father, Shmuel Barb, related about the BUND. She told me about her Father. He was a religious Jew who came from a very religious family. It is possible that he did not always show that he was a religious Jew. He was very active in BUND activities. Many times his Father had to pay in order to keep him out of prison. He summed everything up very nicely saying: "Zionism was very nice but we had to eat". He lived through the Holocaust. Soon a book about his life is going to be published. Mr. Barb and family went to Australia after WWII. Later on they came on Aliyah to Israel and where he died RY.

7 This was a movement that aimed to base itself upon the Jewish proletariat, whose ideology consisted of a combination of Zionism and socialism. EJ, V.13, pps. 656–664.

8 DL

9 DL

10 DL

11 This was a Zionist movement with the aim of the establishment of a Jewish state, with a Jewish majority, in the entire territory of Palestine (on both sides of the Jordan River). EJ, V.14, pps. 128–132.

12 I thank all of my friends, members of Kibbutz Ein-Zurim and others, who gave of their time and

Romania, Belgium, France, and the United States (first in New York).

Before WWII the BUND fought Anti-Semitism in Poland, and even organized Jewish Self-defense units. BUND members also became members of Polish city councils. Then the BUND was one of the most popular organizations on the Jewish street. It included youth organizations, women's organizations, sports, and was the strongest force in the founding of the Yiddish school organization. It joined the Soviet International and was associated with other Polish socialist parties.

The BUND leaders fled when World War II broke out, for many members were then arrested, exiled, or murdered. At the beginning of WWII the BUND went underground. During the war the BUND was active in the underground and as partisans in ghettos and camps throughout Nazi-occupied Europe, and also sought to publicize the atrocities to the western world. It published the largest number of newspapers in Warsaw, which contained important information about the war, called for a revolt, and even cultural information. It was understood that this was very dangerous and many workers lost their lives doing so. The party elders of Warsaw refused to join the Zionists in order to form a united Jewish fighting alliance. They claimed they had ties with the underground outside the Ghetto. Younger leaders did support Jewish unity. All the Jews united after the major deportations from Warsaw in October 1942. There was a similar occurrence in Vilna, when the younger members joined the United Partisan Organization. Four BUND squads participated in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in April 1943.

The BUND leader Samuel ZYGELBOJM, who had fled to the US, was appointed to the Polish National Committee in London in 1942. After receiving reports of the mass murder of Polish Jewry, Zygelbojm desperately tried to enlist the help of international and Jewish organizations. He was shocked by

the way the rest of the world failed to react to the Jewish Holocaust. Zygelbojm committed suicide in 1943, after failing to receive support.

The BUND leaders who got to the USA founded a support group. The BUND leaders of this period worked very hard for our people and their organization.

The Holocaust caused an end to the greatness of the Polish BUND. The Communist government in Poland was responsible for the final liquidation of the BUND in 1948. At the end of the War, in 1945, the number of BUNDists in Europe dwindled greatly. The BUND became a small Jewish organization in a few major Jewish communities in the USA, Canada, and Australia.

The BUND did not return to its previous position; but did have a role in Jewish communities around the world. The World Coordinating Committee of the BUND Organizations was founded in 1947; and then the BUND became a transnational movement. The BUND Archives were transferred to YIVO, by the BUND, in 1992. Afterwards Yivo had an exhibition about the BUND.

### **Information on the BUND in Vitebsk (VT)**

The following information is according to official police records, in addition to other sources.

Here is information about a few members of the BUND in Vitebsk:

1. *AMSTERDAM, Volf Ber (Vladimer)*: 1882. He was the younger brother of Avraham Amsterdam who was one of the BUND leaders in Vitebsk. He was arrested in 1900 and released and arrested again a year later. He continued to work for the BUND.
2. *GINSBERG, Aaron*: 1878 – Moscow, 1927. His party names were: Alfa, Sergi, and Leonard. He was a student in the Kazan University (located in central European

Russia, 827 kilometers southeast of Moscow). In 1900 he was arrested in Vitebsk, and was freed in 1901 with bail of 15,000 rubles. In 1903 he was exiled to Eastern Siberia, and again freed with bail of 15,000 rubles. In April 1903 he was exiled to Liapotsk, Eastern Siberia. In 1904 he was sentenced to 12 years of hard labor, but was pardoned in 1905. When he was in jail he translated from the French a book about the French Revolution of 1848. In 1917 he joined the Russian Socialist Party.

3. *AIMOV, Yosef*: 1878–1920. He was arrested because of Russian propaganda. He was one of the main speakers from the Russian delegation in the Social Party Congress in London in 1907. He became a member of the Workers Committee in Moscow in 1917.
4. *KAMRMACHER, Mordechai*: 1882–NY, 1943. He was a printer. His party name was Kapali. He was arrested in 1900 because he was a BUND member. He was arrested in Minsk and sent to Eastern Siberia for 4 years. He escaped twice and was caught twice. In 1904 he was sentenced to 12 years of hard labor. He was pardoned in 1905 and became one of the leaders of the printing workers in Petersburg and editor of their news bulletin. He was arrested and escaped to Paris, where he lived until 1943. He then returned to Russia, but was arrested at the outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution. Afterwards he lived in Berlin, Paris, and New York. He was editor of the monthly.
5. *LURIA, Hirsh*: 1878. His party name was Albert. He was arrested in 1900. He was exiled to Liapotsk, Eastern Siberia. In

1904 he was sentenced to 12 years of hard labor. He was the secretary of the Jewish section of the Revolutionaries there. He was an active member of the BUND for many years, and on the central committee. He published a few books.

6. *BRESLAU, Boris*: 1882. He was a shoemaker. He joined the BUND in 1899. He was arrested in 1901, sent to Eastern Siberia and escaped. He joined the Bolshevik Party in 1904. He was in Paris in 1909 and worked with Lenin. He was the chief Bolshevik agent in Russia in 1911–2. Then he was arrested and imprisoned in Moscow. After the October Revolution he was the head of the Vitebsk workers. He was Zseka chairman in Moscow in 1918–9. In 1930 he was the vice Soviet representative in Paris.

As I wrote in the Introduction, I was lucky enough to receive information about the BUND in Vitebsk from YIVO, N.Y. I received many documents about the Vitebsk BUND: 20 in Yiddish<sup>12</sup> and 45 in Russian<sup>13</sup>. I numbered these documents to ease reference to them. They are currently in my possession, and after finishing this article I plan to give copies to the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (CAJHP)<sup>14</sup>. The Yiddish is very difficult to understand. Professor Levin explained that this was because the members of the BUND developed their own expressions.<sup>15</sup>

The dates on these documents are from the beginning of the twentieth century (1899–1907). These documents were distributed secretly so that the police wouldn't be aware of the BUND.

patience to help with the translation of these documents. They all remarked that these documents were written in very rich language.

13 I thank the Russian students on the Ofek program (2009) on Kibbutz Ein-Zurim; Svetlana Velechko (a participant in the program) and Michel Vatzman (one of the group leaders), for their time, patience and summaries.

14 <http://sites.huji.ac.il/archives>

15 DL

16 Russian Document 15; Yiddish Documents 7, 16.

Important information from these documents, which relates to the BUND in Russia, Poland and Lithuania (Russian Empire), and was also circulated in Vitebsk, is as follows:

### *1. Organization of The BUND*<sup>16</sup>

#### A. Goals

- I. An end to capitalism.<sup>17</sup> The cause of unemployment was the capitalistic system.<sup>18</sup>
- II. The hope for socialism, even to the extent of demonstrations to reach this goal.<sup>19</sup>
- III. Influencing the higher class Jews. The fact that all Jews should be united.<sup>20</sup>
- IV. The importance of being a united Organization, with many chapters in Eastern Europe.<sup>21</sup>
- V. Equality<sup>22</sup>
  - A. Equal rights for all citizens
    - i. Property
    - ii. Education
  - B. The aim of Pogroms
    - i. Using the Jews to educate society
    - ii. Knowledge that the pogroms are not a cause for pessimism; but a reason to strengthen goals and principles.<sup>23</sup>

#### B. Membership

- I. New members<sup>24</sup>

- II. Attending BUND meetings<sup>25</sup>
- III. Partaking in political demonstrations<sup>26</sup>
- IV. Elections<sup>27</sup>
  - A. National elections – a request to vote for Social-Democratic party
  - B. BUND elections.

#### C. Notices<sup>28</sup>

- I. Copies of notices that were sent out to all the BUND offices in Russia, Poland and Lithuania.
- II. They were reprinted in these places.
- III. They were addressed to BUND members and other people who sided with the BUND.

### *2. Social Aspects*

#### A. Workers rights:<sup>29</sup>

- I. Physical conditions
  - A. Proper equipment and tools
  - B. Hours
- II. Social conditions
  - A. Employer-employee relations: the same attitude to old and new workers.
  - B. Organization of the workers<sup>30</sup> and meetings
  - C. An immediate end to the battle against workers

17 Yiddish Documents 6a, 7

18 Russian Document 34

19 Yiddish Document 6a, 7, 9

20 Russian Document 5

21 Yiddish Document 9

22 Russian Document 51

23 Russian Document 5

24 Russian Documents 18; Yiddish Documents 1, 7

25 Seventy people were arrested at a meeting, where the topic was “The King”. Russian Document 60

26 Yiddish Document 2

27 Russian Document 19, 21; Yiddish Document 7

28 There are very influential expressions used in the final paragraphs and signatures. This is particularly felt in Yiddish Document 13

29 Russian Documents 14, 22, 49; Yiddish Document 6a, 13, 15, 22, 40

30 Yiddish Document 19

31 Russian Documents 14, 26; Yiddish Documents 7, 15, 19

32 Russian Document 36



- D. Allowing personal freedom and development: in language, religion, writing, etc.
    - E. Allowing refugees to return to their homes
    - F. Unemployment rights
  - III. Economic conditions
    - A. Proper wages
    - B. Overtime: 50-100%
  - IV. May 1 celebration<sup>31</sup>
    - A. Holiday and/or fast day, strike day
    - B. Symbol of the new world.
  - B. Prisoners rights<sup>32</sup>
    - I. Hunger strikes
      - A. Aim-contributions
      - B. Reason – The need to pay the debt of the Red Cross (16.24 Rubles-15/1/904, etc.)<sup>33</sup>.
        - ▼ 1. Money for food
        - ▼ 2. Meetings without bars
        - ▼ 3. Returning benches to the proper place
        - ▼ 4. Wrist watches
        - ▼ 5. Wake-up time
        - ▼ 6. Freeing prisoners
  - C. The psychological state of the Jews.<sup>34</sup>
    - I. Knowledge that the Jewish people are a strong intelligent people with the strength to stand against the Tsar.<sup>35</sup>
    - II. People are asked not to pay attention to gossip about the BUND.<sup>36</sup>
  - III. Honoring those who gave their life for this cause.<sup>37</sup>
3. *Financial aspects:*
- A. Contributions to the BUND.<sup>38</sup>
  - B. Warning about the unfair use of BUND funds.<sup>39</sup>
  - C. Financial reports (from June 15,1906 to March 15, 1907)<sup>40</sup> etc.
4. *Political aspects:*
- A. Internal
    - I. Accomplishments and goals in major cities such as Warsaw, Vilna, Lodz, Petersburg, Odessa, Brest-Litovsk, Karkov, Korlandia Rosov-Na-Dono<sup>41</sup> and other places.
      - A. Vilna
        - ▼ 1. The strike of 25,000 Jewish workers<sup>42</sup>
        - ▼ 2. The plight of the stocking-socks factory workers, the arresting of workers and the suing of the factory owners.<sup>43</sup>
      - B. The Petersburg uprising caused a call for uprisings in Warsaw, Moscow, Riga, Kovno, Dvinsk, etc.<sup>44</sup>
      - C. The Moscow uprising:<sup>45</sup>
        - ▼ I. Causes:
          - ◆ A. Shooting of women and children
          - ◆ B. Organization of the “Black Hundred” (Z’rnosotinski)
        - ▼ II. Actions

33 Russian Document 37

34 Russian Document 5

35 Russian Document 4, Yiddish Document 10

36 Yiddish Document 10

37 Russian Document 16 ; Yiddish Document 13

38 Russian Document 7, Yiddish Documents 1, 7, 16

39 Russian Document 15

40 Russian Document 41

41 Russian Document 48

42 Yiddish Document 16

43 Yiddish Document 14

44 Russian Document 40

45 Russian Document 48

- ♦ A. Controlling of the railway station
- ♦ B. Controlling of public buildings
- D. Kishinev Pogroms<sup>46</sup>
  - ▼ 1. Intellectuals: organization and participation.
  - ▼ 2. Guilt: notary, student, police investigator
  - ▼ 3. Reason: the King's rule
  - ▼ 4. Conclusion: The Jews should oppose the government

## B. External

- I. The Tsar
  - A. Criticism of the Tsar and important people in his government because of their personal economic goals and not at all taking the working class into consideration.<sup>47</sup>
  - B. Knowledge that the Tsar was behind the pogroms.<sup>48</sup>
  - C. Arresting the Tzar's aids
  - D. The importance of the coming revolution against the Tzar.<sup>49</sup>
- II. The Russian Constitution
  - A. Criticism of the "Russian Constitution"
  - B. Heart breaking promises made by the King.<sup>50</sup>
    - ▼ Freedom
    - ▼ Laws

- ▼ War
- ▼ Criticism of the Executive System
  - ♦ The rights of judges
  - ♦ Opposition to workers' rights.<sup>51</sup>
  - ♦ Police and spies.<sup>52</sup>
- ▼ The army<sup>53</sup>.
  - ♦ The demobilization of troops.
  - ♦ The end of the War with Japan (March, 1905).<sup>54</sup>
  - ♦ The cause of an industrial problem and unemployment.<sup>55</sup>

There is also information that applied mainly to Vitebsk and the area.<sup>56</sup> All the distribution of Bund information had to be done secretly<sup>57</sup>, so that the police or government officials wouldn't be aware of what was going on. This called for:

### 1. The organization of the Vitebsk BUND

#### A. Attending meetings.<sup>58</sup>

#### B. Elections

- The importance of voting in local elections.<sup>59</sup>
- People should take a day vacation and work for these elections.<sup>60</sup>

C. Acknowledging that the Vitebsk BUND was a branch of the International BUND organization and particularly part of the Lithuanian, Polish and Russian (Russian Empire) BUND.<sup>61</sup>

46 Russian Document 52

47 Russian Document 49 ; Yiddish Document 13

48 Russian Documents 1, 3, 12, 35

49 Russian Documents 5, 11, 12

50 Russian Document 18

51 Russian Document 61; Leon Goldman, who was guilty of printing the newspaper "Nitzuz" (The Spark, "Iskora" in Russian), stated the goal of the Social-Democratic Party. Russian Document 42

52 Russian Document 2

53 Russian Document 49

54 Yiddish Document 6a

55 Russian Documents 38, 39

56 Some were typed and some were written by hand, in a very nice handwriting

57 Russian Document 14

58 Yiddish Document 7

59 Yiddish Documents 6, 13

60 Yiddish Documents 6, 12

61 Russian Document 33

#### D. Notices

- I. National and international BUND notices were received, printed and circulated in Vitebsk. Approximately 4000 copies of each circular were printed. Each was signed by the BUND Committee of Vitebsk.<sup>62</sup>
- II. There were also notices that only concerned the Vitebsk BUND.

#### 2. Social aspects:

##### A. May 1<sup>63</sup>

- I. Noting its' importance by uniting all the Jewish workers with all the workers in Russia and the entire world.
- II. Celebrations: Holiday/ Fast-Day (1901, etc)<sup>64</sup>.

##### B. General help for the BUND.<sup>65</sup>

- I. Drafting youth to help the BUND
- II. Requesting help from Doctors.<sup>66</sup>
- III. The Jewish officials: PISROVSKY, BEZBOZSKY, MARKOWITZ, etc were thanked for their aid.<sup>67</sup>

##### C. Granting acceptance of Jews to Universities.

##### D. Canceling anti- Jewish propaganda in newspapers.

##### E. Workers rights:

- I. The importance of honoring strikes, boycotts<sup>68</sup> and pressure on the factory owners,<sup>69</sup> to thereby cause an improve-

ment in the conditions of the workers.<sup>70</sup>

##### □ A. The work day

- ▼ 1. The shortening of the work day to 10 hours<sup>71</sup>. Some people worked between 12 to 18 hours.
- ▼ 2. A two hour break: for breakfast and dinner

##### □ B. Wages.

- ▼ 1. An increase
- ▼ 2. Payment by the hour.
- ▼ 3. Full payment for Fridays
- ▼ 4. Receiving of wages every week

##### □ C. The improvement of the physical, social and technical conditions of the workers in the factories.<sup>72</sup>

- ▼ 1. Firing according to the law.
- ▼ 2. Distribution of needed materials by the owner.
- ▼ 3. Political freedom<sup>73</sup>
- ▼ 4. Demanding May 1, as free day with wages.<sup>74</sup>
- ▼ 5. Freedom to take part in BUND activities<sup>75</sup>

#### 3. Examples

A. Demands of the workers in box manufacturing were to work a 12 hour day with a half hour break for breakfast and a lunch break at exactly 14:00; and a rise in wages.<sup>76</sup>

62 There are very influential expressions used in the final paragraphs and signatures. This is particularly felt in Yiddish Document 13

63 Russian Documents 15, 46, 56

64 Russian Document 46; Yiddish Document 19,

65 Russian Document 37 ; Yiddish Documents 6, 7, 12

66 Russian Document 7

67 Russian Document 33

68 Yiddish Documents 6a, 12

69 Yiddish Document 8

70 These factors also represent Vitebsk. Yiddish Document 17; Russian Document 22

71 What seems to be an earlier request states 12 hours. Russian Document 57. What seems to be a later request states nine hours. Russian Document 22

72 Russian Documents 13, 14

73 Russian Document 57

74 Russian Document 24

75 Russian Document 22

76 Russian Document 23

77 Russian Document 25

- I. Similar demands of the carpenters.<sup>77</sup>
- II. Similar demands by the printers.<sup>78</sup>
- III. Suggestion to clerks and office workers to also demand such conditions.<sup>79</sup>
- IV. The hard conditions in the bakeries (especially the baking of matzoth).<sup>80</sup>
- V. The story of Aaron Lieb Bealkin<sup>81</sup>, who agreed to work for Moshke Deaktin, and was therefore considered a strike-breaker. Afterwards he changed his mind, asked for forgiveness and was forgiven. Sometimes the local police<sup>82</sup> had to be called to settle such an occurrence.<sup>83</sup>
- VI. The story of the tailor Israel Poliovsky, who fired one of his workers. The others went on strike. He called the Russian police to break the strike. There was a plea not to sell him materials or buy from him. Mr. Poliovsky also had political ties with Zernosotinski<sup>84</sup>. He brought Russian help in order to break the strike.<sup>85</sup>
- VII. Boycotting of the Bookkeeper Shevel Liborkin, owner of the pharmacy in Vitebsk, for he refused obey the BUND.<sup>86</sup>
- VIII. Boycotting the store owner Yaákov Sapir because of his political connections (Shtivracher).<sup>87</sup>
- IX. Boycotting the tailor Marmon for spying. During a strike, he gave the police a list of the names of his 5 workers.<sup>88</sup>
- X. Boycotting of Zlashufin, the owner of the bookstore<sup>89</sup>. His attitude to the workers who had participated in the strike changed for the worse (time for eating, free time). The committee that ran the store took new workers. The VPSPKB (brotherhood of clerks and bookkeepers) placed a boycott on Zlashufin, Shapira, Drizzer and Kunovlov because of their attitude to their Jewish workers<sup>90</sup>, and a demand to return the previous workers. Students also became part of this fight<sup>91</sup>:
  - I. Fourth year gymnasium students
  - II. First and second year vocational students
  - III. Girls' gymnasium students.

#### F. The Red Cross

- I. Aid from the "Red Cross"
- II. Knowledge that the "Red Cross"<sup>92</sup> had aided the BUND members who were in the local prison in Vitebsk,<sup>93</sup> and those who had been sent to Siberia.<sup>94</sup>
- III. Problems of the Red Cross
  - A. Monetary problem, many contributors left the city
  - B. Reduction of aid was due to terror
  - C. Difficulties in helping the prisoners
  - D. Need for food, clothing, shoes and books<sup>95</sup>

78 Russian Document 29, 30

79 Russian Documents 27, 28

80 Yiddish Document 17

81 He was nicknamed "the black devil". Yiddish Document 3

82 The local police used handcuffs.

83 Yiddish Documents 1b, 2, 3, 12

84 This seems to be something not accepted by the BUND.

85 Russian Document 8, Yiddish Document 1b

86 Russian Document 9

87 Russian document 10

88 Russian Documents 13, 14; Yiddish document 8

89 Russian Document 44

90 Russian Document 43

91 Russian Document 44

92 Russian Documents 6, 37

93 Russian Document 58

94 The "Red Cross" had a large debt because of these activities. Russian Documents 6, 7, 16.

95 Russian Document 53

- E. Conclusion – Opposition to the government<sup>96</sup>

#### 4. *Political Aspects*<sup>97</sup>

##### A. External

##### • I. The Tzar

- A. Opposition
- B. Change in the government organization, which means the Czar.<sup>98</sup>
  - ▼ I. Revolution
  - ▼ II. Socialism
  - ▼ III. Political freedom
  - ▼ IV. Cultural freedom<sup>99</sup>
  - ▼ V. Cancellation of class structure.<sup>100</sup>
- C. Putting an end to the government's support of pogroms and riots against Jews.

##### • II. Canceling of the draft to army service.

##### • III. Defense

- A. Forbidding the police to enter private houses. This was done without any respect for privacy, modesty and/or the sick. The Social-Democratic Party saw disgrace in such arrests.<sup>101</sup>
- B. Jews who were arrested because they took part in BUND activities.<sup>102</sup>
- C. The unfairness of the local police, the local and national government, and of their spies<sup>103</sup>.

- ▼ 1. Importance of being aware of the surroundings.

- ▼ 2. It was obvious that there were inside spies, for the police couldn't have been so capable. There were many complaints against these spies.<sup>104</sup> The spies were requested to stop.<sup>105</sup>

- ▼ 3. Referring such incidents to the BUND executive committee.<sup>106</sup>

- D. Searching for The murderers of: Moroozov, Vitrov, Sichniko and Kivnson.<sup>107</sup>

- E. Punishments: Siberia, being cut off from Family and friends<sup>108</sup>

- F. The Russian Christian workers had united in fear of a pogrom from the Jews.<sup>109</sup>

##### B. Internal

##### • I. Uniting forces<sup>110</sup>

- A. The working class within themselves<sup>111</sup>
- B. All Jews, regardless of economic and/or social status or education.
- C. Property owners
  - ▼ 1. Solving socio-economic problems with SCHNEERSON, VAZVORSKY, LEVITT, LIBSHUTZ, Mintz and Markowitz.<sup>112</sup>

96 Russian Document 54

97 Russian Documents 46, 47 (without title)

98 Many people were arrested when they took part in such demonstrations. Russian Document 59

99 Russian Document 57 This included the right to take part in demonstrations. Russian Document 59

100 Russian Documents 14, 31; Yiddish Documents 6a, 7, 9, 13

101 Russian Document 59

102 Yiddish document 14

103 Russian Document 2; There was a spy by the name of ISAACSON; Russian Document 14. His nickname was "Yaákov". He had been discharged from the army in Vitebsk. Yiddish Documents 5, 14,

104 Russian Document 14

105 Russian Document 14, Yiddish Document 8

106 Yiddish Document 7

107 Russian Document 55

108 Russian Document 55

109 Russian Document 3

110 Yiddish Document 16 ;Russian Documents 3, 5, 32

111 Russian Document 56

112 Russian Document 31



BUND members in Odessa after the 1905 Revolution



A Bundist demonstration in 1917



The BUND monument in the Jewish cemetery in Warsaw

- ▼ 2. Solving political problems with SHEINFINKEL, Schneerson, Markowitz, RIBOVSKY, and ZAVOTZKY who weren't entirely against the administration.<sup>113</sup>

- D. Submitting names of Jews who didn't honor strikes or boycotts

- ▼ 1. The hope that this may hurt the local government.<sup>114</sup>

#### 4. Financial aspects:

A. Paying dues.<sup>115</sup>

B. Financial reports<sup>116</sup>

C. Organizing money for the families for the seven that were killed in the battle-Pogrom on October 17, 1905.<sup>117</sup>

So far, I have found little information that tells about the BUND in Vitebsk from 1907 until WWI. It was then very dangerous to distribute such circulars. I understand that at that time the BUND developed in Vitebsk as it did in all other places in the area.<sup>118</sup>

Continuation of the Vitebsk BUND after Vitebsk (VA,VT)

Members of the Vitebsk BUND came to the USA in 1908. They were organized as an extension of the Vitebsk BUND. Then they organized aid for other BUND members that arrived from Vitebsk. Afterwards this organization sponsored a cultural hall (with many varied activities), a sisterhood, cemetery plot, help for the elderly, an old-age home, and socio-economic aid. In 1938 they collected money for an orphanage. This organization was still in existence in 1956, when the Yiddish Memorial Book (**Vitebsk Amol**) was published. There is information about

113 Russian Documents 38, 39

114 Russian Document 14

115 Yiddish Document 1

116 Russian Document 20: June 15, 1905-October 15, 1905; Russian Document 19: from October 15, 1905-November 28, 1905

117 The amount still needed, and the amount each person was asked to contribute; the original sum was 110 rubles, 65 rubles had already been collected and another 45 rubles were needed. Yiddish Document 1

118 See *History of the BUND*

the people who were active in this organization in the Yiddish Memorial Book.

## Conclusion

After completing this article, I feel that now I do know a bit about what the **BUND** and the **BUND** in Vitebsk. I also know that I am missing quite a bit of information, which I hope to be able to obtain somehow.

The history of the BUND is similar to that of all the Jews in Eastern Europe. The BUND stood for changes for the good of the Jewish people. The BUND suffered a great deal as did all the Jewish factions of this period.

As a Religious Zionist I could state my opinion here. However, I feel that the important and correct thing would be to conclude this article in the following way: We should all honor the memory of the BUND, for the main goal was to make life easier for the Jewish people.

This article is dedicated to my husband Mordechai Rechtschafner who always has patience for my research.

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Conversation with Rivka Yaffe, April, 2009 (RY)

Telephone conversation with Professor Dov Levin, May 26, 2009 (DL)

*Esther Rechtschafner* was born in Brooklyn, New York, to a Religious Zionist family; a member of Bnei Akiva; attended public schools and graduated from Marshalliah Hebrew High School.

In 1962, she participated in Hachshara Bnei Akiva. Afterwards, she attended Brooklyn College and T.I. of Yeshiva University. She came on Aliya in 1964.

In 1965, she married Mordechai Rechtschafner, and they made their home in Kibbutz Ein Zurim; they now have 3 married daughters and 10 grandchildren.

Esther received a BA from the Open University in History and an MA from the Hebrew University in librarianship. Worked at various jobs on the kibbutz, and for 22 years as house-mother in Yeshivat HaKibbutz HaDati, and now work as librarian/archivist.

With a keen interest her family background, she began writing articles about the places that her grandparents came from. Her father (Oscar H[G]erschman) was a descendent of the Vilna Gaon.

## A Roots Search in an Ancient Will and the Expectation of the Coming of the Messiah and the Resurrection of the Dead

*Shmuel Shamir*

A will is a reliable source for the genealogy researcher. A will is the bequeather's instruction to transfer all or a part of his material and intellectual property after his death. A will can include instructions, of a moral and lifestyle nature, which the bequeather conveys to his descendants. For example, Abraham instructed his children and the members of his household to follow the path of God, of justice and righteousness<sup>1</sup>, similar to the will Ahitophel left to his children<sup>2</sup>.

In biblical times wills were made orally. In modern day Israel wills can be made in written form, or in front of witnesses, or in the presence of an authority, or in oral form.

In Hebrew law we differentiate between "a bequeathal of a person of sound body and mind" which is given by purchase and comes into force immediately, and "a will of a very sick person" (by someone who is bedridden) which is issued in front of witnesses and comes into force only after the bequeather's death<sup>3</sup>.

The Wills of the Tribes is one of the Deuterocanonical books which were apparently written in the last years of the second century BCE. It contains the words of Jacob's children to their own children. The will includes details of the commandments with morals and apocalyptic prophecies<sup>4</sup>.

Wills written in the Middle Ages contain a Hebrew literary element which includes instructions pertaining to morals and religion, some of which can be found in the

Talmud. These instructions are of a theoretical nature, of codes of behavior.

Many people have written different kinds of wills. In his books, Judge S.Z. Heshin cited legal characters contesting cases in the courts in this area.

One example of the content of a will is the will of Sir Moses MONTEFIORE, which was published in the Jewish Chronicle on August 25 1885, in which he writes about the origins of his family and relatives, and about his address.

A story which I thought to be a legend was illustrated by my late father who asked me, my wife, my brother Raphael and his wife to accompany him to the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem shortly after it was returned to Israeli hands in 1967. There he pointed to some ruins in the Jewish Quarter and told us that this was a family asset which we were obliged to safeguard until the Resurrection of the dead. It later transpired that there is a genuine will (from Heshvan 1 5404–1643) made by one of my ancestors by the name from Barukh MIZRAHI to his descendants. The will was written in Jerusalem, in perfect Hebrew, in which the bequeather instructed his children and their children to take care of the house and not to sell or mortgage it before the coming of the Messiah and the Resurrection of the Dead, and to protect his copper vessels and books until the coming of the Messiah, so that they could be restored to him with the Resurrection of the Dead.

1 See Genesis 18, 9

2 See Samuel 2, 17, 23

3 See 'The Will of a Healthy Person and The Will of an Unhealthy Person in Israeli Law by A. Kimmelman, a doctoral thesis from 5753 (1992-3).

4 See the collection of D Wachstein, The Legend to the Wills 11–12, 5784–5786 (1924–1926), and A Ye'ari, Collection of Wills – 5759 (1999–2000), and Dan Rothenberg, Finding Your Fathers, and the provisions of the 1965 Inheritance Law, section 3. The Wills of the Tribes in Deuterocanonical Literature, by A Cahana, Vol. A, see Kneh Reto.



Reference to Jewish history books from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the will was written, indicates maliciousness and extortion on the part of Pasha Farukh's family<sup>5</sup> in respect of the Jewish community in Jerusalem which then totaled about 1,000. It was clear to us that the will was written before the appearance of the false prophet Shabtai Zvi in 1666, and it indicates an intention to safeguard the property from expropriation by a despotic ruler, and a belief, expectation and longing for the coming of the Messiah and the Resurrection of the Dead.

Barukh Mizrahi's will contained the following elements: it was drawn up in front of three witnesses comprising a rabbinical court of law<sup>6</sup>, it included details of the bequeather's possessions, although it did not contain additional identification details of the bequeather and his family, the house survived on the site throughout all the generations until the present day, and the members of the family protected it until the creation of the state of Israel. It suffered damage in the 1927 earthquake and subsequently during the War of Independence, and later in the Six Day War (1967). The building was included in the expropriation area of the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem and, after the ruins were removed, a new house was built on the site by Jewish Quarter Development and Rehabilitation in the Old City Ltd.

Barukh Mizrahi's will did not note his origins, the names of his parents and the names of his descendants so we, the descendants, had to refer to the history books of the time. The bequeather did not sign the will himself. Only the witnesses, three judges, signed it. The judges were: Israel Binyamin, Israel Ezra and Shabtai Polastro. Our investigations into the lives of these rabbis produced no further details with regard to the bequeather's origins, as described below,

so we looked for more information in the relevant literature of the time.

Barukh Mizrahi's will and the house noted in the will were safeguarded by the family through the generations. His descendants safeguarded it and observed it, among themselves and with respect of anyone else. There was no debate over the authenticity of the will. It is cited, in full, in the book of Rabbi Raphael Hazan<sup>7</sup>. There the rabbi is asked what will happen to the house if there are no male descendants to keep the word of the will, and are the daughters obliged to observe the will. Following an in-depth discussion Rabbi Hazan replied that in the absence of male heirs the daughters are also heirs, and they must observe the will.

The will was reprinted in 1905 and was published again in the foreword of Israel Meir Mizrahi's *Questions and Answers Fruit of the Earth*, Volume 3, page 7. The will was presented during a court case concerning trespass by Michael Roitman, who exceeded the boundaries of his house and built a balcony above the area of Barukh Mizrahi's house. Elazar Mizrahi, the author's great grandfather, sued the trespasser. The court considered the evidence and, after deliberating, the court proposed to the sides to arrive at a compromise whereby Roitman, who was a publisher of holy writings, would print an ancient manuscript owned by Elazar Mizrahi, written by Israel Meir Mizrahi who lived in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, thereby obviating the need to demolish the balcony. Elazar replied that, in accordance with the terms of the will, he is not permitted to agree to the terms of the compromise proposal unless the Sephardic Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Yaakov Shaul Elyashar, approves it. Consent was eventually given and the book was published with the will on the second page.

The bequeather's given name was Barukh. It was a popular name in Jerusalem when the

5 See a dissertation about him by Aadel Manaah – a final paper from 1978, as part of an MA degree

6 See Baba Batra, 113

7 Questions and Answers Heker Lev, Vol. 12 (Hoshen, 36)

will was written. At the time there were around 150 Jewish families in Jerusalem. As we did not find any details of the bequeather's parents in the will we continued researching and examined documents of the Sharia court of law (which was the authorized court of law at the time and served as the court and notary archives) which were translated by Prof. Amnon Cohen in his books about Jews who appeared before the Sharia court of law in Jerusalem. Each of his books related to a hundred years and we also examined history books, Rozanes' *The Annals of Tugrama* and Yitzhak Ben Zvi's book *Eretz Israel and its Yishuv*, and ancient papers.

In Dror Ze'evi's book<sup>8</sup> *The Ottoman Period in the district of Jerusalem in the Seventeenth Century* we found, on page 12 (footnote 35), that Jews purchased houses from Muslims in the neighborhood of El Raisha (one of the Jewish neighborhoods in the Jewish Quarter) of Jerusalem. The author made reference to the Sijil (book) of the Muslim court, Vol. 107 page 324, no. 1401, 20, Rabia Te'eni 1033 (February 10 1624).

The various documents and Mina Rosen's research in her book<sup>9</sup> indicate that Barukh left for Kushta and the lands of the east, Persia and Aram, as an emissary of Jerusalem, in 1624. In Kushta he complained about the governor Ibn Farukh who ruined and extorted the Jews (the letter is cited in full on page 486)<sup>10</sup>.

Further investigation of A. Ye'ari's book, *An Emissary from Eretz Israel*, indicated that Barukh Gad was a member of a Jerusalem mission to Aram Naharaim (Babylon) and Persia in 1645, and on his return he related that he met someone from the Ten Tribes,

called Malkiel. When he returned to Jerusalem he brought with him a letter from Bnei Moshe (the Sons of Moses). This story was carefully analyzed by A. Ye'ari<sup>11</sup>.

In September 1621 **Barukh ben David** appeared before the Muslim Sharia court in Jerusalem and an entry was made in a book that he purchased from Ibrahim Ben Hassan el Bitar seven karats of three lower rooms in a house located in the neighborhood El Raisha in the Old City of Jerusalem. The court noted in the hijah that Barukh ben David had recently moved to Jerusalem. We will note here that, at the time, people came to Jerusalem from Tzfat and Italy<sup>12</sup>.

Another entry from December 1627 notes that Barukh Ben David, the Masharki Rabbi, purchased 5 karats of a mostly ruined house and 5 karats of a stable from the El Jaouni family, and it is noted there that **Barukh Ben David, the Masharki**, purchased 2 karats in the yard of the adjoining house and received the neighbor's permission to build an arch in the yard of above house.

Nineteen years later there is an entry in the documents of the Muslim court that Barukh Ben David, the Jew, purchased the whole room on the western side of the house in El Raisha from Zahara the Mugrabi.

It also transpired that **Barukh Ben David** was an emissary of the Jerusalem community to Kushta in 1624<sup>13</sup>. The Masharki in Arabic, and Mizrahi in Hebrew, is a title that was bestowed on Barukh Ben David, one of the pillars of the Sephardic community, after he returned from his mission to the eastern lands. It also transpired that Barukh was a wealthy man, and his signature as a guarantor of others' debts was gladly accepted. It

8 The Ottoman Century – about the 17<sup>th</sup> century in the district of Jerusalem

9 The Jewish Community in Jerusalem in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, p. 334

10 Ibid, p. 486, a discussion about the matter in letters in the book, pp. 309–310

11 Sinai magazine, Vol. 6, pp. 163–

12 See Rosen p. 39. Also see S. Simonson, "The History of the Jews in the Duchies of Manetoba A and Tarj, p. 348

13 See the emissary's letters in Mona Rosen's book "Jewish Community in Jerusalem in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century", p. 334

appears that the description “the Mizrahi” was given to Rabbi Barukh after he returned from his travels to the east.

Barukh El Masharki (the Mizrahi) was a Jew from Jerusalem. He was the father of Abraham who was a *shokhet*, a ritual slaughterer, in 1650<sup>14</sup> and wrote a book called *A Memory for the Children of Israel*, which was republished in 1795, which contained the laws of ritual slaughter<sup>15</sup>.

It appears, therefore, that the bequeather in 1643, Barukh Mizrahi, is Barukh Gad. **Barukh Gad** was an emissary from Jerusalem to Babylon (Aram Naharaim) and Persia in 1695<sup>16</sup>, and he was the bequeather’s grandson.

These excerpts indicate that David was Barukh’s father, although we do not have any further information about the bequeather, his origins and his descendants. Our investigations revealed three versions of the family’s origins:

- a. Descendants of the Re’em (Rabbi Elyahu Mizrahi), who served as chief rabbi and physician of the sultan (who lived in Kushta from 1450 to 1526).
- b. Descendants of the Morishkus – Jews who never left Jerusalem. This version is riddled with question marks about the people who feature in the history of Jerusalem.
- c. Descendants of the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492, who arrived in Jerusalem via Venice. This version is supported by references in history books of the time,

and by the fact that an ancient Venetian ornamental curtain from a Holy Ark, from the sixteenth century, has been preserved by the family through the generations.

In conclusion, it may be said that, thus far, we have not uncovered the origins of the family of Barukh Mizrahi, the author of the will, and a link between it and any of the above versions. However, we considered it important to record some of the history of the house and the family on a tablet, a commemorative stone, which is today located on a house on Hamalakh Street, on the corner of Hanevel Street, in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, and we are looking forward to the arrival of the Messiah and the Resurrection of the Dead in our time.

*Shmuel Shamir (Mizrahi), a Jerusalem native (b. 1923), was a member of the first graduating class of the Law School of the Hebrew University. An active attorney, his many outside interests include genealogy. A proficient journalist, 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, he is the father of Irit, Yael and Zv*

14 See Amnon Cohen In the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, p. 192

15 Ibid Amnon Cohen, p. 192

16 See about him in A Ye’ari, Sinai Vol. 6 (700), from p. 163, and also A. Ye’ari, Shlukhei Ami (My People’s Emissaries), p. 145 and p. 271

## How I discovered the synagogue of Coria in Spain

*Jacques Cory*

This story can be read on a realistic or a surrealistic level. Some people will say “if it is not true it is a good fairy tale”; others will read it with scepticism, wonder or incredulity. I am not an archeologist, an historian or a medium. I am a businessman, with a doctorate in business ethics. I teach courses in various universities, wrote academic books, articles, a website, but also a novel, a play and some poems. Every one according to his inclinations

On the 10th of August 1998, I wrote a letter to the mayor of Coria in Spain, notifying him that I intended to visit his town, as it is a tradition that my family name originates probably from the town of Coria. I wrote him that my mother tongue was Ladino, but that I studied Spanish as well. I added that I live in Israel, was born in Egypt, from parents and grandparents originating from Greece and Turkey, and that I visited Spain many times on business.

On August 20th 1998, the mayor of Coria wrote me: “Greetings to Don Jacobo CORY, and being aware of the interest that he has in our town I am pleased to invite and welcome him, in view of the importance of the enterprise that brings him to visit our country. Jose Maria Alvarez Pereira takes this opportunity to express him his personal respect.” On the same day I received an email from Juan Pedro Moreno, the archeologist responsible for the Service of Historic and Cultural Consultancy of the town council of Coria, who wrote me: “The motive of his visit seems to me very interesting and exciting. Mr. Mayor has transmitted to me his intention to visit us. Coria, keeps in its historic memory the name of the Synagogue street, and there are two possible locations. We hope to see him soon in our/his town, he will be well received.” On the 24th of August 1998 I wrote him that I would like very much to visit with him in his town and see the locations of the synagogue and the Jewish

quarter. Who knows, it might be that with my DNA, I would be able after 500 years to assist him in finding the exact location where my ancestors lived. It is very important for the tourism of his town He sees that I am already a local patriot and I hope to contribute something to the economy of our town”

On the 8th of October I visited the old synagogue of Castelo de Vide on the other side of the Portuguese border. I noticed there how the synagogue was built, and on the 9th of October I traveled with my wife Ruthy to Coria where we were received by Juan Pedro Moreno. Moreno showed me three possible sites of the synagogue but I discarded the first two ones (DNA, intuition or luck?) When we arrived to the third site, Moreno told me that there is here a problem as the old lady who lives there, is unwilling to open for anybody. Suddenly, the old lady (Mrs. Castaniera), who exactly resembled my mother, opened the door and came to us. I introduced myself, told her that I come from Israel, my name is Cory, and the origin of our family is from Coria. We are trying to find out where the synagogue is and we would like her to let us visit her house. She smiled and invited us to come in. Moreno was astonished. When we entered the house, I saw that the house was built exactly like the synagogue of Castelo de Vide. But the porch was square and not in an arch as with the synagogue of Vide. When I asked her why, she told me that she heard from her family, who lived in the same house for centuries, that the original porch was in an arch but it was destroyed during the earthquake of 1755. We went down to the basement and she showed us ancient books, but the oldest one was from 1500, after the Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492. She told Moreno that she agreed that excavations would be made in her house to discover the traces of the synagogue.

Moreno gave me a book “Coria and the Sierra de Gata” and wrote: “For our Jewish friends, let this book be another step for the encounter of two cultures that never should have been separated.” In 1999 the house of Mrs. Castaniera was sold to a private owner and until 2011 no excavations have been made, but Moreno told me in 2011 that looking into the archives of Coria he proved a few years ago that this house was effectively the site of the synagogue. It is impossible to visit the synagogue as private people live there. I read on the Internet that the Jewish community of Coria dated back to the XIIth century. In the Jewish quarter lived approximately 46 families with the professions of turner, tailor, goldsmith, tax collectors, etc. When the Jews were expelled from Spain, some of them settled in Portugal where they were converted later to Christianity, as Yuda de Alba. Truly, those are the facts.

I presume that the Jews from Coria (with my ancestors probably) fled to Portugal in 1492, as Coria was near the border of Portugal which received Jews until 1497. They thought that they would return soon to Spain and left the synagogue in the care of one of the families, who changed her name, as many Marranos did to names of trees – Castaniera, the chestnut tree. They were the ancestors of the lady who still lived there in 1998. They took with them all the books in Hebrew and because of that there were not any book in the house dating back to before 1500. The Jews of Portugal were forced to convert to Christianity, but many of them fled later on with the assistance of Dona Gracia Mendes and others to Turkey, Greece and Italy, where my family lived until they emigrated to Egypt, Israel, France or Brazil. Mrs. Casta-

niera, who knew probably that her house was the synagogue, being a Marrana, decided in her old age to enable excavations and transform the house to its initial function of a synagogue. Her likeness to my mother was not an optical illusion as we have pictures with her, but many Sephardic Jewish women until nowadays resemble Spanish women, as they married with Sephardic men for 500 years. The sympathy that the lady showed us, opening her house to a Jewish Israeli while she did not want to open it to her fellow townspeople, proved probably that she knew something of her Jewish ancestry. But who knows how things happen, why had I decided to visit Coria, why the archeologist asked me to assist him to find the synagogue, why the old lady decided to open her house to us, how a descendant from Coria coming from Israel discovered the synagogue after 500 years? Is it witchcraft, a negligible incident, a logic story? Who can know?

Just as an interminable row  
Are all the past incarnations of me,  
So too, in an interminable row  
Are all my future incarnations.  
How little – yea nothing – am I today  
Which is almost consigned to yesterday,  
But will be everything tomorrow.

*(Juan Ramon Jimenez, The Invisible Reality, The Present)*

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## Passing on traditions in the Karlin Stolin-style Chassidut

*Avraham Abish Shur*

The foundations of the Karlin Stolin genealogy were laid by R. Aharon HAUSMAN, may he enjoy a long life, a Karlin Chassid. Over eighty years of age, his memory is still lucid. Even as a young man he had a tremendous longing to absorb the history of Karlin Stolin chassidut, with all its hues and shades regarding their religious beliefs, their legends, traditions, customs, style of prayer and music. He carefully drew on the Karlin Stolin treasures from the elders, most of which he wrote down, engraved in his phenomenal memory and later printed. The genealogy he acquired from those in whose shadow he spent time is particularly noteworthy. With his exactitude and special skill at genealogical deciphering, he managed to preserve the genealogy of the righteous, and the biographies of some of the Karlin Stolin Chassidim in Eretz Israel (mainly in Jerusalem). The dynasty of the “Karlin holy race” appeared in his book, “*Memoires of Aharon, Jerusalem 1968*”, and a biography of over 120 Jerusalem Chassidim was published in his book, “The Staff of Aharon” (*Mateh Aharon*), 1990. He included biblical discourse and stories in the above works, and in the book “*Birkat Aharon*” (1970). Many Chassidim also heard rumors and stories from older members of the previous generation.

Karlin Chassidim are proud of precise traditions to which they are privy since ancient times. Not every Chassid is the right vehicle for conveying the tradition, for which such people are selected or are natural-born for the task. Only those known for their exactitude, and whose memory does not betray them, cite things in its name. The ability of the “storytellers” is tested in their conveyance; they are under constant scrutiny of the Chassidim who listen, and if they do not change even the slightest detail over the years they are considered suitable for communicating their traditions and stories to future generations.

Today, most of the stories and traditions have been printed and many others have been written down by hand. The young Chassidim recount them orally, although there are still some known by the older Chassidim that have yet to be recorded.

I believe this phenomenon is fairly unique relative to other chassidic courts and was created since the righteous men of the Karlin Stolin chassidut in their generations, were exact, insisting upon the tradition and customs in an extreme fashion. This is in addition to the value of truth that guided them and provided a basis for the dogma of the entire chassidic belief, shying away from the tendency to exaggerate and certainly refraining decisively from the stories made of whole cloth intended to increase interest.

There is another reason for preserving the traditions and conveying them exactly. Karlin Stolin chassidut is rooted in Israel, and its lifespan in that country is almost as the length of its existence – more than 200 years. Most of the chassidic courts were devastated in the Holocaust, the continuity of the rumors and traditions were interrupted and many chassidic manuscripts were destroyed. All these priceless valuable sources of information were destroyed. The natural tradition that was passed from one generation to the next was severed. Those who survived the war did not have the strength to pass on to the next generations the spiritual chassidic treasures from previous generations in an authentic manner. Many of the stories, traditions, genealogy, music and so on were lost.

In contrast, Karlin Stolin chassidut in Israel preserved its ancient cultural assets, with many Chassidim capable of communicating them to the next generations. And, as I have noted, we were fortunate that R. Aharon Hausman, with his rare skills, may he be blessed with a long life, curated and pre-

served a considerable portion of the treasures, some of which he had printed. Other older Chassidim should also be credited with saving the treasures and passing them on to our generation.

There are other chassidic courts with extremely exact traditions. Breslav Chassidim managed to wonderfully preserve much of their history, including music, stories, and genealogy. I am sure that the persecutions and the obligation to come from every corner of the world and gather in Oman on Rosh Hashana in the shadow of the elders of Chassidut stressed the exact transfer of the traditions and stories.

I cannot discuss all the chassidic storytelling and traditions that survived from long ago. Academic research over the generations refers selectively to this important source, whether it wishes distance, or whether it wishes to lay the foundations on it. There was not, and there still lacks, an agreed standard for everyone to determine what is the truth in the traditions and what is not.

As a researcher of the Karlin Stolin history, that covers a period of more than 250 years, I mainly use the kernels of their stories and traditions as a basis for familiarizing readers with the events and understanding the historical processes. When I cross-match them with other historical events, with national and geographical processes, or with archival material from the Polish or Russian authorities, I am often amazed and wonder at the great similarity between them.

So too with the customs. Karlin Stolin Chassidut has preserved a collection of ancient customs, many of which are still followed today. When I compare them with the primary sources of Chassidut and its opponents, I can definitely conclude that these customs originate with the start of Chassidut, but survived only in the Karlin court. Furthermore, many of the anti-chassidic writers, are most derisive of the chassidic customs in its early days, some of which are now extinct, apart from within the Karlin

court, and academic researchers who were not familiar with the Karlin Stolin customs were incapable of correctly understanding some of the writings of the first Mitnagdim that they studied and published.

I will present a few examples in illustration.

- 1) Karlin prayer is very loud, very different from what we know from all other chassidic courts. Such was the prayer of the Maggid of Mezritch and his pupils, but already by the second generation most had forgotten this, and it survived only amongst Karlin Stolin Chassidim.
- 2) The custom of baking matzot using legume flour – a strange custom with complex halachic implications. This custom, followed by the Magid of Mezeritch, was forgotten and became extinct but is mentioned in writings by mitnagdim and survived amongst Karlin Stolin Chassidim, that are cited without comment by Mr. M. LEVINSKI, who re-edited them.
- 3) Till now, the person leading the prayers in public amongst Karlin Stolin Chassidim stands and says the 13 tenets of faith before saying the prayer *Ata Horeta* on Simchat Torah, in front of the community and the children. He translates them, one by one, into Yiddish, and at the end of each tenet everyone says *Emet* (truth).

These things are mentioned in a distorted and harmful manner in the writings by Mitnagdim. No researcher knew how to explain them, as he was not aware of the custom that survived in the Karlin Stolin court.

From all the ancient and original folklore that was passed from one generation to the next, I will briefly discuss the rich music of the Karlin Stolin chassidut, whose flavor has never palled. The chassidic court managed to preserve an anthology of more than 700 ancient tunes, in many cases with the composer's name, date and which Chassidim "brought" it to Israel.

With Perestroika and the fall of the USSR in the early 1990s, the Rabbi of Karlin Stolin, *shlit'a*, the sole scion of the dynasty of righteous men who led the community for 250 years, asked the community to join the national effort to save Jewish youth from assimilation. Envoys of the Karlin Stolin chassidut became chief rabbis in Kiev, capital of the Ukraine, and in Minsk, capital of Belaruss, and were involved in the task with remarkable success, enjoying positive cooperation with the national Israeli factors and its youth movements. I myself was one of the activists. Together with my friends, I established educational and absorption institutions in Israel for boys and girls from the FSU. This work demanded traveling between Israel and the FSU. Between activities, the envoys who already spoke fluent Russian, devoted their time to scrounging through the Russian archives to locate and photograph material connected to the history of Karlin Stolin chassidut. They indeed found historical documents and sheet music, some of

which I publish from time to time in "*Beit Aharon VeYisrael*", a mainly religious anthology, produced by the center of Karlin Stolin institutions in Israel every two months for more than 25 years. The collection is distributed in the Torah and academic world, and is appreciated by religious scholars and researchers, and in which some 100 studies of mine on the history of the Karlin Stolin chassidut have appeared.

I was most moved when I published a 1784 census from the town of Karlin, containing the names of families of the Karlin dynasties. The census is written in ancient Polish and was translated by a professional. I was thrilled when I saw sections relating to their names and the names of family members, all according to the oral tradition. Everything was exact, the wives' names, those of sons and daughters, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, as if copied letter by letter from the book by the Chassid, R. Aharon Hausman, may he live a long life.

#### Kol Koreh - Call for Papers

The Israel Genealogical Society is pleased to issue this call for papers for the 7th Annual Seminar [Yom Iyun] to take place at Beit Hatefutzot in Tel Aviv on Tuesday, 29 November 2011 / 3 Kislev 5772. This year the central theme will be: **Genealogy is Multifaceted!**

Genealogy covers every aspect of the lives of our families: their daily lives, their emigration and immigration, marriages and divorces, births and deaths, education and occupations, property, illnesses, and even the food they ate.

Research in every area of genealogy today is aided in nontraditional ways, by understanding how to manipulate the latest technology, be it twitter, Facebook, webinars, blogs, ebooks or other options available through the internet.

This year our seminar will be divided into two parts. The first part will include presentations on different aspects of genealogy, from demography to everyday living. The second part will take a lecture to show how technology could be applied to researching that topic. There will be workshops at different levels where we will learn how to use various technical aspects to advance our research methods.

We invite you to propose lectures on any discipline linked to genealogy and if you have used any of the various methods of electronic research, please indicate that in your proposal. New ways of research will be covered in separate "hands on" sessions. If you would like to lead one of these, please indicate that.

**Length of your proposal:** Up to 100 words

**Indicate your preferred language of presentation[s]:** English or Hebrew or both

**Please include a short biography:** Under 50 words

**Last date for receiving your proposal:** 15 June 2011

**Address to which to send your proposal:** yomiyun7@gmail.com

We look forward to your submissions!

Dr. Martha Lev-Zion, Chairman

The Organizing Committee of the 7th Annual One Day Seminar, The Israel Genealogical Society



## **MISSING PERSONS BUREAU: SEARCHING FOR RELATIVES IN ISRAEL**

Joel Levy of London is searching for relatives in Israel. He has provided us with this photograph of his great-grandfather's sister & brother-in-law who apparently went to live in Israel.



Meyer Levy Sister  
and Brother in Law

This photo was given to me in South Africa many years ago by my great-aunt, (niece of the couple), just before she passed away.

That last meeting I had with her had 2 surprise revelations:

- 1 – She was sure that the family surname was not originally LEVY
- 2 – That she had a photo of her father's sister & brother-in-law who went to live in Israel – names not known.

So while we have no names to go on, we do have a photograph & I can add the following family information.

- 1 – The brother of the woman in the photo was my great-grandfather. His name was Myer Levy & born in about 1884 either in Shavel (Siauliai), LITHUANIA or in Riga, LATVIA
- 2 – The Original family surname could have been YANKELOV
- 3 – Meyer Levy's father was FEIVEL LEVY (Possibly Feivel Yankelov)
- 4 – Myer Levy came to London in about 1909, together with his wife, Dinah Sagorsky, who was from Zagar (Zagare)
- 5 – Myer & Dinah Levy had 2 children
  - Abe Levy – Born 1908 – Zagar (Zagare), Lithunaina
  - Ettie Levy-Born 1911 – London, UK
- 6 – This couple supposedly landed up living in ISRAEL

I realize this is a needle in a haystack due to all the unknowns and variables

With grateful thanks

Joel Levy, London UK

Vice-Chairman, JGSGB

**Joel Levy [jlevyuk@btopenworld.com](mailto:jlevyuk@btopenworld.com)**



## NEWS FROM ISRAELI MUSEUMS, ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES

### A Russian Library in Jerusalem

*Harriet Kasow*



[www.antho.net/html/jrl/ind.html](http://www.antho.net/html/jrl/ind.html)

Home page is in English but still under construction.

[www.jeruslib.com](http://www.jeruslib.com) In Russian only



**Purposes:** The library with its collection of books, journals and newspapers in the Russian language is a cultural center that aids in the absorption of Russian immigrants to the Israeli society. It does this by providing useful information necessary to live in the country in their native language as well as making the transition to a new culture less overwhelming by helping to maintain a link to their native land. There were nearly a million immigrants from the Former Soviet Union of all ages over the last decade and this Library provides a unique service to this population. Regular events and lectures are held. These include honoring authors, musicians and contributors to the Library.

**History:** It began in 1990 with a small private collection of Klara Elbert who is now the Library Director. It was located in a different part of town and sponsored by the Zionist Forum of Jews from FSU. This is the umbrella organization of former Soviet activists. It also was supported by the Jewish Agency. The library increased its collections by gifts and a minimum budget. Facing a lack of funding, a public and media appeal was made to save this collection. Support was provided by the Jerusalem municipality which made it part of their library system. The Ministry of Absorption also provides financial support. The Library moved to its present location in 2008.

**Organizational status:** It is now connected with the Jerusalem Municipality Library system. It has the largest collection of Russian material in a public library outside of Russia.

**Staff:** The Library Director is Klara Elbert and there are four additional librarians.

**Collections:** There are 100,000 books in the Russian language, 500 in the Yiddish language and about 1000 in other languages including bi-lingual dictionaries and language learning materials. There are Soviet journals from the Stalin era and a collection of anti-semitic material written by Jews. The collection is catalogued and is in the process of being put online. There is a rather unique rare book section which includes auto-graphed copies.



Library Director:  
Klara Elbert

There are Hebrew literary works translated into Russian as well as Russian works published in Israel. There are periodicals, newspapers and artifacts of various kinds.

**Genealogical Uses.** The reference section has several useful sources. There are various Jewish encyclopedias and books on Jewish names, Russian Empire names etc. There is a staff of four that are available for advice. It would be advisable to bring a Russian speaker who knows English or Hebrew to



The rare book room is in honor of Ida Milgrom 1908–2002

help with your translating and research needs. There are many in the Jerusalem area.

**Circulation statistics:** There are about 4000 users a month. The budget is at a minimal level but the facility is lovingly cared for and maintained in a very organized way as a good library should be.

**Location:** The library is located in the open air market (shuk) of Jerusalem called Ma-

hane Yehuda. It is in an enclosed mall that houses a supermarket and other services. For Jerusalemites and especially for Russian olim (immigrants) it is centrally located. The area bustles with shoppers, Middle Eastern restaurants, and coffee shops.

Shuk Ha Kanion

88 Agrippas St.

Jerusalem 94386

Tel. 972 2 537 5723

Hours: 10:00-19:00 Sunday-Thursday

*Harriet Kasow is the retired Media Librarian of the Bloomfield Library of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. She was the Librarian for the Israel Genealogy Society for 12 years and contributes to Sharsheret Hadorot and other genealogical periodicals*



## ASK THE EXPERT

### Family research in the area known as Bukovina

*Lea Haber Gedalia*

Bukovina is a tiny area in northern Moldova, known by this name since the Austro-Habsburg conquest at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. On its capture by the czarist army, the Jews there numbered 2,356 souls. Under this rule, and mainly between 1840-1914, the Golden Age of Bukovina Jews developed. At the end of WWI control was transferred to Romania and on the conclusion of WWII Bukovina was divided between Romania and the USSR, now the Ukraine.

The social stratification in Bukovina was remarkably polarized: rich, educated groups who acquired German-style general culture, and religious/ultra-orthodox, impoverished groups. Towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century two lively, active chassidic courts established themselves there – the FRIEDMAN dynasty (that settled in Sadigora, near Czernowitz) and the HAGER dynasty that settled in Vishnitz.

#### Sources of genealogical research in Bukovina

##### *1. Vital records: Lists of births, marriages and deaths*

The archival sources for the towns surviving in Romania are almost complete:

- Radauti: 1857–1887 births and deaths; 1870-1877 marriages
- Suceava: 1843–1894
- Gura Humorului: 1857–1909
- Vatra Dornei: 1877–1887
- Burdujeni: 1860-1865

More material can be found in the various municipalities. Entry is permitted but limited. In other words, only family

members are allowed to look at the family documents.

The archival sources for towns in the Ukraine are lacking. The lists should be checked on Miriam Weiner's site:

<http://www.rtrfoundation.org>

Much material is available for Czernowitz, but not for other towns in northern Bukovina. One can write to the archives, although hiring the services of a professional researcher is preferable. Recommended researchers are listed at

<http://www.shtetlinks.Jewishgen.org/sadgura/ReischToronto.gtml>

Sources located in the Mormon Family History Library in Salt Lake City include

- 40 microfilms that cover the years 1865–1940
- 105 microfilms of “public lists” for the years 1780–1937

<http://www.familysearch.org>

##### *2. Additional sources*

- The Czernowitz/Sadgura Discussion Group

<http://czernowitz.ehpes.com>:

This group embraces more than 350 members from around the world who illustrated life in Bukovina in general and in Czernowitz in particular through old photographs, songs, expressions, family stories, stories of travels, and a cookery book. These contributed to creating a data base with family names and place of origin, professions, names of roads according to period, censuses for the years 1869, 1880, 1897, 1900, address books and lists of business owners for the years 1898, 1909, 1914, 1917, 1936, Jewish farmers in 1808, high school graduates for the years 1853–1890, and so on.

- Edgar Hauster's blog:  
<http://hauster.blogspot.com>
- Peter Elbau's site:  
<http://bukowina.info/index.html>
- The Bukovina Jews Organization (the site is under construction):  
<http://www.bukowina.org.il>
- Steven Laski's Virtual Museum of Family History – the Czernowitz page:  
<http://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com>
- The central archive of the History of the Jewish People – the Czernowitz community books are on microfilm but are not catalogued. Their value seems to be mainly historical rather than genealogical.
- Memorial books (a partial list):
  - History of Radautz: R. Israel Harnik, 1948. A copy in German is in the Central Archive for the History of the People of Israel, Jerusalem.
  - The history of the Jews of Bukovina: Hugo Gold:  
<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/bukowinabook/Bukowina.html>
  - Pinkas Hakehillot Romania, vol. 2. Published by Yad Vashem (volume 2 pertains to Radautz, Sirt and Sade-gora)
  - The Book of Suceava (Shotz) Jews appeared in 2007

- The Holocaust of the Jews of North Bukovina was published by the Organization of Northern Bukovina Jews, 2009.

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*Dr. Lea Haber Gedalia was the national secretary of the Israeli Society for the Research of Family Roots since 2005. She is an active second generation member of the Organization of Bukovina Jews, a member of the team of those deciphering tombstones in the Czernowitz cemetery, responsible for establishing the Harlau, Romania, site in Jewishgen, a researcher and developer of family trees, a lecturer on genealogy and active in the organization of study days and conferences.*



## ABSTRACTS FROM FOREIGN JOURNALS

### *A genealogical inquiry from Metz to the Rhine valley*

Pascal FAUSTINI publishes an interim report about the 3-year rehabilitation process of the Crehange cemetery. Revue 99 has already described the 3-year work of German and East-European volunteer students, members of ASF, coached by Belgian academics. While the on-site rehabilitation phase is now completed, the inscriptions are now being deciphered and correlated with documentary evidence, so as to reconstruct the history of the local families. As a foretaste of the final publication, Faustini elaborates on the rare given name Ozer/Auser which he has found on a deed dated 1664. He shows that all individuals bearing this name are descendants of the Ozer Levy mentioned in said deed in spite of their migrating in all parts of the Moselle Departement.

### *Emile, Victor and Rene Worms: from Waldwisse to Paris via Luxembourg*

In their 3-part description of the Worms/Worms family (Revue # 99, 100 and 102), Louis Worms and Guy Worms stopped short after Moise Worms, born around 1767, married to a bride from Waldwisse. Laurent Moyse describes Moise's family and highlights the career of two of his grandsons and one of his great-grandsons, prominent lawyer, judge and politician and sociologist in France at the turn of the 20th century.

### *How research in Warsaw has evolved*

Daniel Vangheluwe updates the publication of his family searches in Revue #79 and 80 (2004) taking advantage of the computerization in the meantime of large amounts of data and documents by the Polish archives and Jewishgen's JRI-Poland. He shows a variety of case studies with the "how to" that can help the reader and even ends with a practical training program (the results of which can be checked in the footnotes).

### *Rachbats marvelous book*

Jean-Pierre DURAND tells us how the mythical book of his 21 generations remote ancestor Rabbi Simon ben Tsemah Duran, Rachbats (Palma de Majorque 1361-Algiers 1444) kept by his family and apparently lost was serendipitously discovered. In fact it is a mahzor, a collection of poems to be read on the High Holidays. The rebirth of this precious old manuscript led to its in-depth examination and analysis; the family decided in 2002 to donate it to the Paris Jewish Museum of Art and Culture. Jean-Pierre Duran shows how he descends from Rachbats, subject to a gap of 18 generations.

### *Ernest Kallmann*

All inquiries please only to Cercle de Genealogie Juive  
**office@genealoj.org**

Visit our website:

**www.genealoj.org**

(Click the Union Jack for the English version)

**Shemot: The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain. Volume 18, No. 3, December 2010.**

### *Harriet Kasow*

#### *"A Most Exciting Discovery" by Saul Issroff*

The discovery of the gravestone of the author's great-grandmother in a cemetery overgrown with foliage 2 miles from the town of Linkuva in Lithuania was aided by a photo that his father took in 1923 is described here. In 1994, in addition to the above discovery he found that 3 of his grandmother's sisters were murdered in the Shoah. He was able to give testimony to Yad Vashem for 46 names. Truly exciting.

*"The Elusive Henry Goldston" by Rosemary Wenzerul*

The author searched for her great uncle who was the youngest of 9 born in 1877 in London. He died and is buried in the Ivy Green Cemetery in Bremerton, Washington State in 1921 under the name Harry James. The methodology and records she used is the subject of this article.

*"Arnold Wertheimer: a Picture that Tells a Story" by Martin Nicholson*

This is another methodological search including the use of photos of a great great uncle who was born in Birmingham England in 1859 and apparently ended his life in South Africa. Searching in South African archives and the public library in Port Elizabeth proved through a newspaper of his participation in the Basutoland Gun War 1880–1881. Photos provided the primary documentation in this story. Court records published in the local newspapers showed the bankruptcy proceedings. His last known documented date of his activities is in 1885.

*"The Lightman Family of Leeds" by Ann Lightman*

The story of the family who immigrated to Leeds in the 1880's from Vilnius whose ancestor was Iosel Likhtmakher (1751–1797). The family business named Steam Cabinet Works-Louis Lightman & Sons survived until the 1960's. A lot of older family history was found using online resources but the article concentrates on local sources documenting the family's activities.

*"Letters Found after 70 Years" by Joanie Schirm*

To quote the author "I discovered 400 letters exchanged from 1939-46 between my father and 78 correspondents. These were sent from Czechoslovakia, Great Britain, Sweden, France, Palestine, China the United States and South America and chronicled intimate details of how my father and his friends' and relatives' lives and family histories were irrevocably reshaped by the Nazis".

*"A Gravestone on the Mount of Olives" by Tova Beer*

How to find a grave on the Mount of Olives: a case study could be the subtitle of this very informative article. Finding her great-grandfather's gravestone whose origin was Kolo-myia, Ukraine and was buried in 1910 was I am sure a highlight of family research.

*"Another Dreyfus Affair" by Sorrel Kerbel*

A review of the book "Der Juedische Friedhof in Hegenheim. This cemetery is located near Basle Switzerland. The author is searching the name Bloch which means outsider. Variations are Be-loch, Wallach. She came across a character named Bloch in one of Proust's novels and produces some interesting facts on seemingly unrelated matters.

*"An African Jew in a Welsh Town" by Harold Pollins*

This is an interesting well documented telling of Jews from Morocco who settled in Wales. Moroccan Jews had settled in England in 1811 and in the census for Merthyr Tydfil in 1851 appeared a Yentuv Levy whose birthplace was Morocco.

*"Sir Moses Montefiore and his Censuses" by Lucien Gubbay.*

Monfefore compiled censuses of the Jewish inhabitants of Palestine as well as those of Alexandria, Sidon and Beirut, during his visits between the years 1839-1875. The details are such that they provide a comprehensive view of Jewish life in this area. Much has been written about this but here is a concise summary of this endeavor. Some of this material is available at the website:

**[www.montefioreendowment.org.uk](http://www.montefioreendowment.org.uk)**

*"Frankfurt as a Genealogical Research Destination" by Jeanette Rosenberg*

Anyone who has read Amos Elon's "The Founders" about the Rothschild family, the city of Frankfurt and its Jewish inhabitants is well informed. Genealogical research seems like a natural enterprise for this city. Visits

made to various Jewish sites and a description of those and the various archives provide a model for future visits to towns and cities.

*“Birmingham’s Jewish Community” by Anthony Joseph*

Jews have lived in Birmingham from about the 1770’s. While the population increased from 50,000 in 1800 to about 1,000,000 today, the Jewish community has not increased over the years. The East European Jews may have used the city as a stepping stone to America. Some famous Jewish entertainers that were born here are Michael Balcon and his grandson Daniel Day-Lewis.

*“Sephardi Jews in Scotland” by Harvey Kaplan*

Most of the Jews in Scotland are Ashkenazi from the Russian Empire and Germany/Austria. There are some Sephardim that have settled Glasgow and Edinburgh. It is of

interest to read their stories. To me this is genealogy at its finest, documenting all the Jews of a given area.

*“Footsteps in the Past” by Doreen Berger*

This is a mini-biography of Samuel Lewis born in Birmingham 1837 died in London 1901. His entry in the “Jewish Encyclopedia” of 1903 lists his profession as English money-lender and philanthropist. By today’s standards this seems like a contradiction in terms. But you can read about his life’s work here.

*“This year in Chernivtsi” by Harold Jarvis.*

One of the points of interest in his brief review is the restoration of the Czernowitz Jewish Cemetery by CJCRO. The last two letters standing for Restoration Organization. Some of the workers are paid by ASF (Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste), a German NGO wishing to atone for Nazi crimes.





## BOOK REVIEW:

“Aliwal” by Adam Yamey,

*Saul Issroff*

Paperback, self published, 2010. pp.377.

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978-1446183229

[www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com) or [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk).

Paperback <http://www.lulu.com/product/paperback/aliwal/12558619>

A version of this review originally appeared in SHEMOT, the journal of the Jewish Genealogy Society of Great Britain and reproduced by courtesy of the editor.

This literary genre is I think, peculiar to genealogists. It is part fiction, part fact and part derived from the intelligent analysis of pertinent documents and family trees, and researching the relevant historical background to place the family in a relevant setting.

Heinrich (later Henry) Bergmann (c1830–1866) was a young Jewish boy in a small Bavarian town of Dittenheim. He had a poor future in Germany, and there was news of financial success from the few other family and friends who had immigrated to southern Africa. Jonas Bergtheil, a trader working initially for the Kilian family in the eastern Cape and later for the well known Mosenthal brothers from Hesse Cassel, offered him a job. He was the earliest of the author's blood relatives to reach South Africa, and one of the first group of German Jews to settle there. He arrived there in 1849, having set out from his birthplace in revolution-torn

Bavaria several months earlier. Despite becoming very successful as a merchant in the frontier town of Aliwal North, he took his own life. The circumstances that led to him to do so are explored in “Aliwal”, termed by Adam Yamey as “an historical adventure story, a fictionalized biography of a tragic relative”.

This book is self-published by a member of JGSGB and covers a large part of the early history of the Eastern Cape in South Africa. This is not a dry historical account. The book begins with a number of evocative scenes in Germany, and gives vivid descriptions of German Jewish village life, the social and commercial interactions and the family situations. The push and pull aspects of migration are cogently explained.

German Jews in South Africa, largely led by the Mosenthal family, were responsible for a lot of the early development of towns in the Cape and Orange Free State and the opening up of the hinterland of South Africa in the 19th century. They set up trading stores, many staffed by family from Hesse-Cassel. This book gives a wealth of detail of these enterprises, and although some of the descriptions are based on conjecture much is based on fact.

This book is of interest to those researching German Jewry, early South African colonial history and to genealogists who just want a good read. It tells a tragic but very interesting story.