



שם טוב
SHEM TOV

JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA (TORONTO)

VOLUME XX No. 2

June 2004 Tamuz 5764

EXHIBITION “AND I STILL SEE THEIR FACES - IMAGES OF POLISH JEWS”

Opening: September 1, 2004 at the BCE Place Galleria, Toronto

by Peter Jassem

Being in charge of programming at the 22nd IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Toronto two years ago, I tried to bring the acclaimed exhibition “And I Still See Their Faces – Images of Polish Jews” to our city, so that it would coincide with the seminar and hundreds of attendees would have a chance to see this most powerful memorial of Polish Jewry. Unfortunately, due to the substantial cost, I was able to present a preview, or about 10% of the exhibition contents, only. The beautiful accompanying albums were available at the conference as well. Soon after the conference I brought one of the books to the JGS meeting and displayed it on the table. I was soon approached by our members Ellie Kunigis Moidel and Sydney Lipsey. Sydney had tears in his eyes and Ellie purchased the album for him. She later explained:

When Sydney Lipsey, my brother-in-law, joined us at the monthly meeting, he and my husband Marvin Miller were looking through the book, never expecting to find pictures of Sydney’s sister. She was in four school photos from grades three to seven in a small town called Drobnin. The woman, Marianna Krawczyk, nee Sikorska, submitted the photos in the hope that “someone can recognize himself, a relative or a friend.” Sydney started to visibly shake and was at a loss for words when he recognized his sister Zise. She, along with five siblings and both parents, perished in Auschwitz. Marvin and I exchanged looks. We didn’t say a word. We just told Peter that we’ll buy the book And I Still See Their Faces – Images of Polish Jews. Sydney showed the pictures to all his children, grandchildren and their cousins. Unimaginable, horrific events happened. Thanks to Marianna, who remembered only several names of the people in her classes in a school in Drobnin, the Lipsey (Lipszyc) family has photos of Zise in safer times.



Zise Lipszyc is standing in the third row, second from the left, when you look at the picture. Other names of Jewish students on this picture as remembered by Marianna Krawczyk, nee Sikorska include Ekman, Falkiewicz, Fastakówna, Fefer, Goldberg, Kwiatek, Lisner, Miodownik and Panfil.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Programs organized by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) at the Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue - 470 Glencairn Avenue (unless otherwise noted)

Doors open at 7:30, program begins at 8 p.m.

Non-member fee: \$5.00 per meeting

We wish all members and friends a pleasant summer, and hope to see you in September.

Our meeting schedule for 2004-2005 has been tentatively set as follows:

Monday, September 27, 2004

Speaker: Bill Gladstone

Topic: The How, What and Why of Canadian

Naturalization Records

Available from Ottawa through the Access to Information Act, the naturalization papers filed by our immigrant relatives offer a treasure-trove of details of family history. Bill Gladstone, a former president of our Society and author of the "Roots and Remembrance" column in the Canadian Jewish News, will explain how to apply for and interpret these valuable genealogical documents.

Holocaust Education Week, November 2004

Date, Topic and Speaker TBA

Wednesday, November 24, 2004

Wednesday, December 15, 2004

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Wednesday, February 16, 2005

Wednesday, March 30, 2005

Wednesday, April 20, 2005

Wednesday, May 25, 2005

Wednesday, June 29, 2005

For further information visit our website at www.jgstoronto.ca or watch the "What's New" column in the Canadian Jewish News.

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The Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada was founded in 1985 and currently has over 200 members. Membership costs \$36 per calendar year, \$18 for students. (Please note that the out of town reduction has been deleted). Meetings are held September to June, usually on the last Wednesday of each month at 8:00 p.m. (doors open at 7:30) at Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, 470 Glencairn Avenue, Toronto (unless announced otherwise). Guests are always welcome. Details are usually printed in the *Canadian Jewish News* and on our website at: www.jgstoronto.ca.

The goals of the Society are to provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge and information through meetings, outings, workshops and guest lecturers, and thereby to promote an awareness of genealogy within the Jewish community of Canada. The Society is affiliated with the Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto and is registered as a non-profit charitable organization.

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Exhibition "And I Still See Their Faces" *cont'd from page 1*

Following this incident I was even more committed to bringing the entire collection to our city. I wanted all of you to see the colorful world of the Polish Jews. I wanted all Torontonians to be able to look into their eyes: what scientists, poets, artists, doctors, lawyers, rogues, and adventurers they might have been. What was the human promise that was lost? That promise is captured in the photographs of this collection, of Poland's Jews before the Holocaust: a memoir of a people who had a past but were denied a future.

These were images of ordinary people: the rich, the poor, families of princely wealth and desperate poverty, bankers, industrialists, soldiers, sailors, tinkers, tailors, university professors, farmers, who lived normal lives within the framework of their community. Whatever their religious commitment, by definition they were Jews and so slated for destruction. Oblivion! The goal of Hitler's final solution was to annihilate a culture, a people, and a history.

Jews were not always victims; the image of the people emaciated in striped garments, skeletal in their pain, is the image generally associated with "Jew" or the Holocaust, but there was a past, one that reached back over a millennium, to 965, the first recorded instance of the arrival of Jews in Poland. During the ensuing centuries they arrived as merchants, traders and craftspeople, from places as diverse as the Near East, Switzerland and France. But as was usually their fate, they came as refugees from persecution, the religious persecution that was rampant in Western Europe. The main wave of Jewish German-speaking immigrants fled to Poland in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Poland, in need of their talents as merchants and craftspeople, offered sanctuary to the Jews, offering protection and tolerance; in return they gave their blood and treasure in the fight for Polish independence, made a major contribution to the economic development of their adopted country, to its culture and its politics. In the eighteenth century they constituted over three-quarters of the entire Jewish world community. By 1939 the Jews were 10% of Poland's population of 33 million - 3.3 million, the largest Jewish population in Europe. They had become part of the thread that made up the tapestry of Poland and its history.

Their lives were now being recorded by the newly invented phenomenon, the camera, which had become the chronicler of peoples' histories, a newly forming art that documented the moments that spoke of the richness of life. And how fulsome that life was. There were political parties, sports clubs, live theatres, newspapers in Polish, Yiddish and Hebrew; there were Zionist organizations, socialist organizations, poetry written in Polish and Yiddish, academics, artists, actors, film makers. Jewish life was complex, vibrant, and diverse, as expected of a people whose history in Poland went back a thousand years - a history that came to a tragic close with the German occupation from 1939-45. With the decimation and destruction of the Jewish community in Poland, these photos become a triumph of life itself.

This exhibit brings the past to the present. It is more than a memorial. Many who have seen the collection have found the

relatives they had lost so long ago; visions of those in the context of a time long gone, but vibrant in memory and now realized in pictures - a bridge as well for the future generations who view this context. How did these photos survive? Many were entrusted to distant family members, or friends, neighbours or strangers. *"In the autumn of 1943, I met a woman on the road. She gave me her photograph and said 'maybe sometime, someone will recognize me, and he will know what happened to me.' The name of this woman is unknown."* A few photos have even come from Auschwitz - found in the ground, thrown out from the luggage stolen from people wrenched from their lives. Ironically, some were taken by German soldiers who had them developed at Polish photo shops, who made duplicates. A half a century later they sent them to the Shalom Foundation. In one instance a man wrote of the photograph he sent, *"I carried this photograph of my Mama through two selections by Dr. Mengele at Auschwitz. Once I held it in my mouth; the second time I had it taped with a bandage to the bottom of my foot. I was 14 years old. My dear Momma, Daddy, little sister Giza and brother Abrahamek, were already dead. They hid in the Plaszow Camp to avoid the deportation to Auschwitz. The commandant of the camp found them in March 1943 and shot them on the spot."*



The history of this exhibit begins in 1994 when an appeal by Golda Tencer, realizing the mandate of her Shalom Foundation, appeared on Polish television and asked viewers if they had any photographs of Polish Jews in their possession. She hoped that there might still be remaining, within the population at large, some photos of friends or relatives from the time before the annihilation of the Jewish community. As she so eloquently said: *"We will save its image from oblivion, out of conviction that the rescue of memory is at once also a task for the future, the fulfillment of the last will of Polish Jewry which came before us, who dreamed of a Europe and a world free of prejudice, hatred intolerance, and xenophobia."* Exceeding her most optimistic expectations, she received eight thousand photos.

From the eight thousand, 456 photos were chosen by a committee composed of internationally recognized photographers, artists, and historians, who saw this collection as transcending documentary to the level of art. Each photograph is accompanied by a poignant story in English that belongs to it.

Exhibition "And I Still See Their Faces" *cont'd from page 3*

Enlarged, beautifully reprinted photos in true shades of sepia, mounted on 3' x 4' framed panels, take up to 5,000 sq. ft. of gallery space. The exhibition is recorded in an album of 232 pages with 456 color reproductions. Edited by Anna Bikont, it was awarded "The Most Beautiful Book of the Year" in 1997 by the Association of Polish Book Publishers in Warsaw. The poster promoting the exhibition was designed by Lech Majewski, and it too has a story. Made in 1996, it is based on the 1924 photo of Wanda and Jacek Goldman. Wanda Goldman was killed in Bialystok by the Germans in the summer of 1941. Jacek left the Warsaw Ghetto to join the partisans and has never been heard of since.



Jacek Goldman and his sister Wanda

Since opening in Warsaw in 1996, the exhibit has been displayed, among other places, in Boston, Hamburg, St. Petersburg (Florida), Munich, Chicago, Mexico City, Detroit, Jerusalem, St. Petersburg (Russia), Frankfurt, Brussels, Prague, The Hague, Lancaster (Pennsylvania), San Jose (Costa Rica), Los Angeles, Paris, Buenos Aires and Montreal. Next shows are planned for Toronto and New York. The Boston curator said of the collection, *"The exhibition is a silent tribute to the people in the photographs. It is also a powerful and eloquent statement against racism, hatred, and apathy as well as sad and heart-breaking testimony to an entire lost world - with all its pitfalls and potential."*

I would like to thank those of you who have already made donations towards the exhibition and encourage others to contribute as well. Please spread the message to others who are able to help. The official organizer, The Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada, is a registered non-profit organization. All personal and corporate donations are tax deductible and tax receipts will be sent to you. All will be acknowledged in the exhibition brochure. We have already accumulated approximately 50% of the required funds. Please don't let this important project fail. Be part of its success.

Cheques issued to The Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada should be mailed to: 61-396 Woodsworth Road, Toronto ON, M2L 2T9. If you have any questions, please contact me at pjassem@rogers.com or call 416 859 2552.

UPDATE ON CEMETERY PROJECTS

Cemetery Committee Reactivated

We are pleased to report that our Society's Cemetery Committee has been re-founded and revitalized, thanks to the many members who have volunteered to help. Under the able stewardship of Shelley Stillman, the Committee has set as its main short-term goal the collection of data regarding all Jewish interments in the Greater Toronto Area. This includes the updating of the massive Roselawn Avenue project begun several years ago, which has collected information from most of the tombstones in this cemetery. As a long-term goal, the Committee will be in contact with the **JewishGen On-Line World Burial Registry (JOWBR)**, to arrange the submission of relevant information to that electronic database.

For further information on Toronto cemeteries and this project, please check our web site at www.jgstoronto.ca For information on JOWBR, you will find a link to the database at the JewishGen site at www.jewishgen.org

Canadian Tax Deductibility for Cemetery Restoration Projects

Given the value of tombstone information in genealogical (and other) research, cemetery restoration projects, especially in Poland, have become of the utmost interest in recent years. Brenda and Barney Dales, members of our Society as well as Co-Chairs of the **Ilza Historical Cemetery Restoration Project (IHCPR)**, report the recent launch of their project, which has been undertaken by the **Drildzer Congregation and Society**:

"The IHCPR committee has been working hard over the past year and a half to establish the groundwork both in North America and in Poland that will allow us to turn our cemetery into a place that will honour the memory of our ancestors buried there and of those Jews who were buried in at least one mass grave during the Shoah....We are working with the Polish Jewish Cemetery Committee Restoration Project (a charitable organization in the US), which has already successfully completed several projects such as ours. All work at the cemetery will be under the supervision of the Chief Rabbi of Warsaw and Lodz."

Donations to this project are now tax deductible in Canada, through arrangements made with the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto. This will be very exciting news to other groups wishing to set up or fund their own restoration projects.

For further information on this project, please check the IHCPR web site at www.ilzacemetery.org

FROM THE EAST, WEST, AND SOUTH: DOCUMENTING THE FOUNDATION OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN EASTERN EUROPE

by Kevin Brook

This article first appeared in the spring edition of Roots-Key; it is reprinted here with the kind permission of the author and of the editor of Roots-Key.

I Introduction

Many terms are used to describe Jews from Judea: *Hebrew*, *Israelite*, *Yisroel*, *Yehudi*, *Abrahamic*, *Canaanite*, *Ashkenazim*, *Sephardim*, and *Mizrahim*. In this essay *Judean* is used to mean an Israelite from the southern kingdom of Judah in order to avoid confusion with the broader religious concept of “Jewish,” which includes converts. Lands in Israel’s West Bank are sometimes still called Judea and Samaria. We can think of it this way: the Samaritans, who claim to have Israelite ancestry from the northern kingdom of Israel, are from Samaria, and the Judeans (Ashkenazim/Sephardim/Mizrahim) are from Judea. Based on the most ancient documentary sources, *Israelite* includes all twelve original tribes rather than those from the northern kingdom alone.

It is important to understand the spectrum of the “Jewish” experience in the broadest sense and to determine which groups have genetic ties and which groups have only a religious connection. Thus, we can theoretically group the populations as:

- (1) Non-Jewish Judeans, such as those who practise Christianity and those who are secular.
- (2) Judean Jews, whose members are religious Jews AND descend from Judeans – synagogues recognize their division into three religious tribes: *Israel*, *Kohen*, or *Levi*.
- (3) Converts to Judaism who are also Judeans – some are regarded as “returnees” to the faith, such as *Anusim* (whose ancestors were forced to adopt Christianity), while others simply have some Jewish ancestors in their family tree – they all become members of category 2 after conversion.
- (4) Converts to Judaism whose ancestry does not stem from Judeans (*ha-Ger* was attached to their names in medieval times).

II Genetic Evidence

Advances in genetic technology and testing techniques have enabled scientific assessments of the relationship between Ashkenazi Jews and other Jewish populations and ethnic groups. The direct paternal line is testable through Y chromosomes (known as Y-DNA) and the maternal line is testable through mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA). Researchers have been able to link patterns found in substantial proportions of Ashkenazi Y-DNA and mtDNA to the Middle East.

The first of the new round of studies was released in 2000 by Michael Hammer, Harry Ostrer, and their colleagues. This study showed that Ashkenazi Jews, like Sephardi Jews, share broad Y-DNA patterns with Palestinian Arabs, Lebanese, and Syrians. One of these patterns was termed the “Cohen Modal

Haplotype” due to its high prevalence among the Kohen tribe of Ashkenazi Jews. Some of the other Ashkenazi patterns were similar to this Cohen haplotype and also found among peoples of the Middle East. The next study, published in 2001 by Almut Nebel, Ariella Oppenheim, and their colleagues, reported that Ashkenazi Y-DNA is even more closely related to Kurds, Armenians, and Anatolian Turks than Lebanese and Syrian Arabs.

In 2002, the results of mtDNA were finally released after years of anticipation. The mtDNA study, by David Goldstein, Mark Thomas, Neil Bradman, and their colleagues, shows that many Ashkenazi maternal lines trace back to non-Judean populations, to a more significant extent than paternal lines.

The most surprising results were confirmed in 2003 with the release of a study by Doron Behar, Mark Thomas, Karl Skorecki, and their colleagues that shows fifty-two (52) percent of Ashkenazi Levites have haplotypes belonging to an Eastern European haplogroup called R1a1 (previously known as Eu19). R1a1 is believed to originate from people who lived in Eastern Europe as long as 9000 years ago. R1a1 is commonly found among Ukrainians, Belarusians, Sorbs, Poles, Hungarians, Udmurts, Chuvashes, and other groups in Eastern Europe. The Chuvashes are a Turkic-speaking people who may have some ancestral relationship with the Khazars. By contrast, R1a1 is hardly ever found among Sephardi Levites, or among most Middle Eastern peoples. (Even though some Kurds and Bedouins have R1a1, it is not nearly as common among them as among Slavs.) Some of the scientists think that R1a1 came to be prevalent among Ashkenazi Levites as the result of one or more Khazar men joining Ashkenazi communities. Judeans, like most other ethnic groups, have mixed over the millennia with their neighbors. The Jewish Diaspora, with the movement of Jews all over the world, resulted in a mixture with an extremely broad range of peoples. There are many known cases of Ashkenazi families whose Y-DNA is shared with Turkic peoples like Crimean Tatars or Uzbeks, or whose mtDNA originates from China or Europe. But even these families have Judean roots in most of the other branches of their family trees.

Ultimately, to answer questions about Jewish ancestry, we have to use genetic evidence in combination with documentary evidence, particularly since there is no genetic pattern that is exclusive to Judean Jews. The correlation is actually striking – we find that ancestors of Eastern European Jews lived among Khazars and Slavs for long periods of time and had plenty of opportunities to intermarry with both groups, possibly explaining the influx of apparently Khazar and Slav genetic patterns. Unfortunately, in the case of the Khazars, we have no contemporary Khazar DNA to test against, so it is not yet certain which haplotypes and chromosomes were common among them, even

if reasonable assumptions (such as that some Khazars may have possessed one or more patterns within the R1a1 haplogroup) can be made. Comparatively, the Eastern European connection is the lesser of the two genetic inputs – Jews are more Middle Eastern than Khazar.

III The Jews in Eastern Europe

The early history of Jews in Eastern Europe is complex and until recently was mostly obscure. Ten years of extensive research brings me to the conclusion that the Russian Jews are descended from a mixture of Central European Jews and Khazarian Jews, and not just from one or the other. My book, *The Jews of Khazaria*, explores the Khazar contribution. We are now able to trace many sets of migrations of Jews to Eastern Europe. Using onomastic and genetic studies along with historical documentation, we can show that Yiddish-speaking Jews were preceded by smaller populations of Jews who had spoken Czech and East Slavic. It is my hope that objective research will continue on these important matters.

During the eighth to tenth centuries, Jewish communities existed in several parts of the Khazar kingdom in what is now southern Russia and eastern Ukraine. Some of these Jews came from other countries, such as the Byzantine Empire, and were of Judean ancestry, while others were converts of Turkic Khazar ancestry. The kings and many of the nobles and governors of Khazaria voluntarily converted to rabbinical Judaism during the ninth century. Most medieval chroniclers referred to Judaism as the most important religion in Khazaria. An-Nadim indicated that the ability to write in Hebrew script was widespread among the Khazars. Khazar King Joseph wrote of his people's embrace of the Torah, Mishnah, and Talmud at synagogues founded by one of his predecessors, Obadiah, Christian of Stavelot referred to their adoption of the rite of circumcision, and Abd al-Jabbar al-Hamdani reported that the Khazars observed the Sabbath, Jewish festivals, and the laws of kosher food.

Gert Rispling's discovery in 2002 of a coin belonging to the "Land of the Khazars" series that bears the Jewish-oriented inscription "Moses is God's messenger" instead of the typical statement "Muhammad is God's messenger" is the first solid archaeological confirmation of the Khazars' conversion to Judaism. Many Khazars eventually resettled in Kievan Rus, the Byzantine Empire, and Hungary. There was a *Kozare* (Khazar) section within Podol, the commercial district of Kiev, where Khazars (presumably some of whom were Jewish) resided. The tenth-century *Kievan Letter*, written mostly in Hebrew with the exception of one Turkic word at the bottom of the page, evidently emanates from a mixed (Judean-Slavic-Khazar) Jewish community in Kiev. Reports have surfaced about some Khazars who stayed Jewish after the collapse of the Khazar state. The Byzantine scribe Constantine Akropolites (1250-1324) copied two eleventh-century tales about a Jewish Khazar in Pera, near Constantinople, who lived with her Jewish husband in the rabbinical Jewish district near the leprosarium founded by Saint Zotikos. Rabbi Abraham ibn Daud of Toledo recounted in *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* (1161) that he and his colleagues had seen Khazar students of Judaism in

Spain who told them that "the remnant of them is of the rabbinical belief."

Jews also migrated to Kievan Rus and Hungary from the West and South. Poland also became a desirable destination for persecuted Jews seeking new lives and new opportunities - this happened particularly after the issuance of the *Statute of Kalisz* by Prince Boleslaw V "the Pious" of Kalisz in 1264 and the *Privilege* issued by the King Kazimierz III Wielki in 1334, which granted rights and protections to Jews and their properties. According to Rabbi Israel Isserlein of Austria and Rabbi Moses ben Isaac ha-Levi Mintz of Germany, both of whom wrote in the fifteenth century, the Polish state of Kraków was an important place of refuge for Jews who had been expelled from Germany. Western Jews arrived in the Polish cities of Kraków, Kazimierz, Poznań, Wrocław, and Brest-Litovsk. Most of the newcomers came from Germany, Austria, or Bohemia - this included towns that had expelled Jews like Speyer, Köln, Prague, Mainz, and Vienna, and towns like Worms where many Jews had been persecuted and massacred.

The areas of Poland and Hungary in which these Jews settled were those that bordered Austria, Germany, and Silesia and were far from Kiev and Chernigov, hence bolstering the case that the majority of early Polish and Hungarian Jews came from the West rather than the East. Western Jews soon formed communities in Lithuania as well. The immigrants preserved their way of life, including specific religious customs not found among Sephardim or Mizrahim, and particular ways of designing their houses of worship. For instance, the fifteenth-century Old Synagogue of Kazimierz, Poland resembled the style of architecture found in synagogues in Prague and Worms. And Eastern European Jews refrained from eating rice, legumes, peanuts, and corn during Passover, just like Central European Jews but quite unlike Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews.

It would be a mistake to assume that the Western Jews never mingled with other Jews in Eastern Europe. Onomastic research into given and last names, as known from surviving records, has shown that the Czech-speaking and Yiddish-speaking Jews from Bohemia and Germany respectively merged with the earlier Jewish populations in cities in what are today Belarus and Lithuania.

We can trace both the migration of German and Czech Jewish names to Eastern Europe and the continued existence of East Slavic names among Jews. For instance, records of Jews with given names like Kasper, Ignat, Pcholka, Bogdana, and Ivanko from fifteenth and sixteenth century Brest and Grodno (in the Lithuanian Grand Duchy) indicate that they had a deep familiarity with the East Slavs' naming practices and also a fluency in the East Slavic language. Many of the earliest Jews of Poland had Slavic given-names typical of those found among Christian Czechs in Bohemia and Moravia, including Radochna and Czirna. Some of these Czech-speaking Jews' last names also reflected their origins – an example is the Jewish surname Teplitz, which is the German form of the name of the Bohemian town of Teplice. Meanwhile, the Jewish surnames Shapiro (indicating a heritage in Speyer, Rhineland Germany), Mintz (a

rabbinical family from Mainz, Germany), Frank (often from Franconia), Katzenellenbogen (a rabbinical family from Katzenelnbogen, Prussia), Bachrach (a rabbinical family from Bacharach, Rhineland Germany), Auerbach (a rabbinical family from Auerbach, Rhineland Germany), Landau (from Landau, Rhineland Germany), Halperin (from Heilbronn, Western Germany), Frankfurter (from Frankfurt, Germany), Wiener (from Vienna, Austria), Fischel (from Nürnberg, Germany), Ginsburg (a rabbinical family from Günzburg, Bavaria), and Hammerstein were clearly transmitted eastward by Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazi migrants from Central Europe.

The process by which these diverse Jews, speaking three different languages, coalesced into a single cultural group – all members of whom came to call themselves *Ashkenazim* – is fascinating to observe in the records. In Brest and Grodno, for example, East Slavic given names became considerably less prevalent by the latter half of the sixteenth century, in sharp contrast to earlier years. Some East Slavic names, like Mokhno and Mirukhna, survived among Lithuanian Jews until the late seventeenth century but disappeared soon afterwards. The sixteenth century and early seventeenth century were in fact the years when the proportion of Yiddish/Germanic names among Jews correspondingly increased throughout Eastern Europe while Slavic names decreased in use. It is evident that German Jews continued to arrive in large numbers in Eastern Europe until the Cossack uprising of 1648, which reversed the general direction of Jewish migrations. The German Jews popularized Yiddish given names like Kopelman, Liber, Mendel, and Golda in Jewish settlements in Eastern Europe and transformed some of the Slavic names into Yiddish-friendly versions (for instance, Bogdana became Badane and Drobna became Drobne). German Jews readily assimilated the Slavic Jews, as evidenced by the fact that some Jewish families in the Lithuanian Grand Duchy had some members with Slavic names and other members with German or Yiddish names. In 1635, a Jew from Vilnius, Lithuania testified before a Jewish court mainly in Yiddish but interspersed his speech with some East Slavic words. By the eighteenth century, Yiddish was the mother tongue of virtually all Eastern European Jews. The ascent of the Yiddish language and cultural traditions to the detriment of the earlier Slavic Jewish cultures suggests that East Slavic Jews were numerically overwhelmed by the Yiddish Jews.

The modern Yiddish language bears primarily Germanic traits due to the fact that it was created by the German and Austrian Jews. A current controversy concerns the degree of importance of the minority of Slavic vocabulary and linguistic traits in Yiddish and whether any of these words and features was bequeathed from East Slavic-speaking Jews. Unfortunately we do not possess any medieval documents from the East Slavic-speaking Jewish communities of Kievan Rus and the Lithuanian Grand Duchy, so it is not possible to compare Slavic elements of Yiddish with the language or dialect those pre-Yiddish Jews had spoken.

In summary, Eastern European Jews are descended from a mixture of German and Austrian Jews, Czech Jews, and East

Slavic Jews. The East Slavic Jews may have roots in both the Khazar and Byzantine empires, which necessitates further study of Jewish life in those lands. But the largest, and most influential, proportion of Eastern European Jews came from Central Europe. By this analysis, we can show that the dominant ethnic element among Eastern European Jews is Judean – the ancient Jewish people of Judea in the Middle East.

Kevin Alan Brook is an historian in Connecticut, U.S.A. who has researched the Khazars since 1993. His book The Jews of Khazaria was first published in 1999. He has contributed articles to The Encyclopaedia of Judaism Supplement One (2003) and Russian History/Histoire Russe, Vol. 30 (2003). Since 1995, Brook has maintained the Khazaria.com website. In August 2002 he spoke about the Khazars and theories of Jewish ancestry at the 22nd IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Toronto.

We Welcome These New Members to Our Society

Elaine Cheskes	Peter Lebensold
Harriett De Koven	Gordon Magrill
Corinne Farber	Daryl Roitman
Bernice Friedman	Joanne Rose
Moishe Green	Ben Schlesinger
Lewis Hertzman	Barbara Shainbaum

Requesting Volunteers for Treasurer

We are asking for volunteers to temporarily take on the position of treasurer until our December elections. It would be helpful if the treasurer was familiar with tracking and recording income and expenses and also with Quickbooks software. (Support will be provided on Quickbooks for anyone not familiar with it.) The treasurer should be able to attend most of our monthly executive meetings (August to December).

If you would be willing to consider volunteering as treasurer for the next few months please contact president@jgstoronto.ca to discuss this further.

JEWISHGEN PLUS

News from JewishGen and Jewish Genealogy Newsletters,
Compiled and Annotated by Henry Wellisch

Hebrew Language Resources on Russia and Ukraine

Here is a report from JewishGen on two periodicals of interest:

We have just returned from Ben Gurion University Library where we looked up some information in a periodical published in Hebrew from around 1917 to around 1925. Called "Reshumot," it contains memoirs, reminiscences, eyewitness reports of pogroms, etc. Another, even better, resource, is the periodical "He-avar" (the English language table of contents transliterates it as Heawar). It was published by the Association for the Historical Study of Russian and Ukrainian Jewry. Volume 21 has the index for volumes 1-20. The periodical appeared irregularly until about 1976. Many volumes have abstracts in English. The contents are straight history, book reviews, memoirs, correspondence, biographies, etc. It is a treasure house!
Ida and Yosef Schwarcz, Arad, Israel

Reshumot and He-avar are also available at a number of university libraries in the U.S. and may be available through Interlibrary Loan. The Library of Congress and OCLC accession numbers, taken from the WorldCat database, will help your librarian find them:
Reshumot GR98.A1, 5238064
He-avar DS135.R9, 6665265
Alan Shuchat, Newton, Mass.

I checked the on-line catalogue of Robarts Library at the University of Toronto and found that they have the following listings:
Reshumot, one copy, periodical, GR 98 A1 R47
He-Avar, ALTIRA (Association for the Study of the History of the Jews in Russia and Ukraine, Tel Aviv, Vols. 2 - 22, DS 135 R9 A88

National Obituary Archive

Michael Bernet, New York, reports on JewishGen:

The site below claims to list 60 million brief obituaries, searchable by name, location etc. It brings up dates, last addresses. It also lists funeral parlors and cemeteries by cities, and occasionally has an album of recollections attached to a name. It's based mostly on Social Security records:
<http://aolsvc.news.arrangeonline.aol.com/obituary/>

Allen County Public Library Newsletter

The May 2004 edition of "Generations," the newsletter of the Jewish Genealogical Society of St. Louis, has an announcement about a new genealogical newsletter. This is an excerpt:
The Allen County Public Library (ACPL) in Fort Wayne, Indiana is, after the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, the second largest genealogical library in North America. The Historical Department of the ACPL announces the publication of their electronic newsletter "Genealogical Gems." To subscribe to this mailing list, send a message with: ACPL NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBE in the subject line to: kspears@acpl.lib.in.us You will NOT receive a confirmation message, you will just begin to receive the newsletters, which are scheduled to be published once a month.

Response Times May be Shorter for International Tracing Service

"Zichron Note," the newsletter of the San Francisco JGS, recently had a short article on the International Tracing Service, which is administered under the International Committee of the Red Cross. (Some information on this service may be found by searching the Committee's web site at www.icrc.org.)

I want to point out that it usually takes up to five years to get an answer from the headquarters in Arolsen, Germany. However, the U.S. Red Cross has an arrangement with them under which a reply takes only a few months. This was confirmed to me by someone at the U.S. Red Cross and also by the Canadian Red Cross. I have now sent the prescribed form to the Red Cross office here in Toronto and hope to get an early reply.

MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF SHEM TOV

We are interested in relevant material for Shem Tov. If you have something to report, don't hesitate to contact us at:
shemtov@jgstoronto.ca

“Nu? What’s New?”

News about Jewish Genealogy from Avotaynu
Gary Mokotoff, Editor

New Printing Technique Makes Publishing Family Histories Cheaper

A major obstacle to publishing family histories, the high cost of printing, may be a thing of the past with the advent of a new printing technology called Print-On-Demand (POD). Prior to this process, to get a quality book printed required thousands of dollars of expenditure and print runs of at least 300. True POD capability allows for printing books, both soft cover and hard cover, in quantities as little as one.

The new printing equipment (an IBM 4100 in the case of the company I deal with) behaves like a giant 600 dpi (dots per inch) laser printer. The text, like office laser printers, comes from a computer, not from printing plates. The technology, called digital printing, makes it possible to do runs as short as one copy of a book, because a given print run actually prints many books at a time. A run might consist of 23 copies of Book A, followed by 63 copies of Book B, followed by 1 copy of Book C, followed by....

As an example, a 248-page book (size 5.5" x 8.5") had setup costs of less than \$100. The actual printing cost (softcover) with a 4-color cover is less than \$7.00 each, whether the quantity is 1 or 100. The only advantage to ordering larger quantities is the savings on shipping costs. A 616-page book (size 6 x 9) hardcover had less than \$200 in setup costs and cost less than \$20 per book to print. Allowable book sizes are in inches or millimeters.

This creates a new strategy for printing family histories where it is not uncommon that the exact number of books needed is difficult to predict. Now, a family historian might conclude that the family will want 43 copies, an additional 14 copies will go to archives and libraries and an additional 10 copies will be in reserve, for a total of 67 copies. S/he can request exactly 67 copies. When the reserve 10 copies are exhausted, an additional quantity of books, as little as one, can be ordered. POD orders are fulfilled in less than two weeks, usually less than one week. With a conventional printer, orders typically take 4-6 weeks.

Another advantage is that there is no need for a proof copy of the finished product. Each time I submit a new POD book to the printer, I order one copy of the book instead of a proof. After examining the results, I then place my order for the quantity desired. This avoids another potential disaster in book publishing, that a major error is found but cannot be corrected because of the cost to rerun. Avotaynu published "History of the Jews in Russia and Poland" by Simon Dubnow with a major error. The title was wrong on the book's cover! (Interestingly, we received only one complaint.) Had we done a short run, we could have corrected it after the initial books were sold. The book ran out of print after an initial run of 500 copies. Since we do not ex-

pect to sell that quantity again in the next five years, we originally planned to declare the book out of print. Instead, we gave the reprinting to our POD printer and now have copies in stock. You can order the book, with the corrected title, at <http://www.avotaynu.com/books/dubnow.htm>.

With the POD process, the completed book can be soft cover (perfect bound, in the same manner as our journal AVOTAYNU, or hard cover with the book's cover printed on the case or with a dust jacket. Whether soft cover or hard cover, the cover can be full 4-color.

The quality is excellent, that is, if you consider 600 dpi laser printing to be of acceptable quality. The first Avotaynu application appeared as good as using conventional printing methods except for the quality of the pictures. I think the problem may have been at my end because my 600 dpi laser printer produced better quality than the POD book.

Print-On-Demand should not be confused with Short-Run Printing. In using Google to find companies who claim they do POD, I found almost all were incapable of doing runs of less than 100 copies; that is, it was expensive to do such small runs. None claimed they could do only one copy of a book. It is my guess that these short run printers consider every job by itself rather than stacking many jobs in one continuous run.

Disadvantages: First, I have not yet solved the printing quality of pictures, which may be partially due to the POD process. Second, you do not have a large selection of paper. Because your job is actually a small part of a large run, the company doing the printing limits you to specific paper, at most a choice of two. Finally, you do not have complete freedom as to the dimensions of the book, but the permitted sizes conform to most standard sizes.

Then only company I have found that can provide full POD service in the U.S. is Lightning Source. Their web site is <http://www.lightningsource.com>. If you find other companies that claim they do POD, ask them for the cost to print one book. If they decline to quote, they are not a true POD company. I asked the salesman what would be the reaction of his company to receiving hundreds of new customers, all of whom wanted to publish one and only one book, in total quantities of less than 200, and he said "send them to us." Apparently they have numerous customers fitting this profile, and their sales and technical staff are geared for this type of clientele.

Avotaynu may get into the business of assisting genealogists in getting their family histories published. We are evaluating a program that would include many levels of service including (1) publishing only, (2) book layout, (3) light editing and proof reading, (4) substantive editing, (5) family history writing and (6) family history research. Look for a future issue of "Nu? What's New?" that will describe the service.

Spotlight on Members and Friends

Are you interested in volunteering on a genealogy project? Would you like to get some ideas for a project of your own? In this column we will profile some members and friends of our Society, who, in addition to researching their own family trees, are undertaking projects of interest to the general community.

Do you enjoy translating, whether it be articles on early Canadian Jewry or documents on Babylonian real estate? This is just one of the numerous talents that **Henry Wellisch** brings to our Society. Henry's formal contributions are many - Managing Editor of *Shem Tov*, Past President of the Society, Co-Organizer of the 2002 IAJGS conference in Toronto, to name but a few. He is also well-known as a wonderful lecturer and as a human repository of genealogical information that has benefitted many of our family histories. He is a fixture at Robarts Library at the University of Toronto, where he seeks out and translates from German any historical items that are likely to be of interest to the community at large.

Less well-known, perhaps, is Henry's own history, an extraordinary story detailing his escape from Vienna. This story has been the subject of a documentary, and the following is a brief summary, from his own words:

"...In September 1939 the war broke out, and about this time I received an affidavit through my cousin in the US. Since this country was neutral at the time it was still possible to go there. However before my turn at the US consulate I received a postcard from the Kultusgemeinde (Jewish community) advising me to report with 50 kg of luggage for transportation to occupied Poland.

"My parents and I felt that this had to be avoided at all costs and we desperately tried to find a way out. We discovered that various Zionist organizations and others were planning to send an "illegal" transport to Palestine. This was being done with the full knowledge of the German authorities and after my father paid a certain sum of money to one of the Zionist organizations I was able to complete all the formalities and left on December 24, 1939 for Pressburg (Bratislava) where the transport was to be assembled..... The plan was to sail down the Danube to Rumania and from there try to reach Palestine. The winter of 1939-40 was very severe however and the Danube froze. As a result we were forced to stay in Pressburg and wait for the spring and eventually in September of 1940 we were finally able to depart.

"....It took us about a week to reach the Danube delta and on arrival in Tulcea we were immediately transferred to three Greek ships, the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Milos. At this time I was able to transfer from the Pacific to the Atlantic where my parents were located. ...Conditions on the Atlantic were terrible to put it mildly. The overcrowding was so severe that the ship sometimes began to list to one side; the "Hagana" of which I was a member had to drive people to the other side to counteract this. There was little food and the sanitary facilities were extremely primitive. During the voyage many people became

ill, several died and were buried at sea.

".... On October 16 we arrived at Heraklion on the island of Crete and at this time ran out of coal, were unable to continue further and our ship remained anchored in the port surrounded by harbor police.

"On October 28, 1940 Italy declared war on Greece and there were daily air raid alarms but no attacks. Eventually, with the help of the Greek Jewish community, we were able to obtain coal and we left Heraklion on November 8. The Atlantic had a Greek captain and crew and was flying the Panama flag. During the first night out of Crete, the captain somehow managed to squander most of the coal and there were even rumors that some of the coal had been thrown over board. At this time the captain refused to continue in an easterly direction and stated that he wanted to return to Greek territory. Our transport committee decided to arrest him and continue the journey.

"This was done but within a day we ran out of coal, the ship came to a halt and the distress flag was hoisted, since the ship had no radio. It was now decided to strip the ship of all available wood for fuel. The decks, masts, interior partitions, and even furnishings were thrown into the furnace and in this fashion we continued for a day or two. When next morning we sighted land in the distance, we had finally run out of fuel and the engine stopped for good. It turned out that we had reached Cyprus in allied territory.

"After a few hours a tugboat approached and towed our ship into Limassol. British police came on board and after we were supplied with coal a British captain, crew and military escort, we set sail for the "promised land." Next morning with the sunrise we saw Mount Carmel, we sang the "Hatikva" and we knew that we had finally made it. I am quite sure that this was a moment which no one who was on board would ever forget.

"When we arrived in Haifa harbor, we were told by the British police that, because of overcrowding in the refugee camps, we would be temporarily accommodated on board a large French passenger liner, the *Patria*, which was at this time anchored in Haifa harbor. The people from the Pacific and Milos who had arrived earlier were already on board, and transshipment to the *Patria* started immediately.

"After only a few people had been transferred by barge to the *Patria* there was an explosion, the *Patria* capsized, sank and over 250 people drowned. As we found out later, the British had planned to deport us all on this ship, and the Palestinian Jewish underground had tried to prevent this with unforeseen results.

"After this disaster we were sent to Atlit camp near Haifa, but the British had not given up the plan to deport us; it was only postponed. Those who were actually on the *Patria* and had been rescued were to be allowed to remain in Palestine. The rest however, that is to say most of the passengers of the Atlantic, were to be deported to the island of Mauritius. One morning, two weeks later, we were told to get ready for embar-

kation after breakfast. However, we had gotten wind of this terrible scheme and decided to do what we could to frustrate it.

"Nobody packed, people refused to leave their huts and remained lying naked on their beds. The British assembled a large force of police and military, and after initial resistance and some brutality they were able to force the people into trucks and transport them to Haifa port.

"Two Dutch ships were waiting for us there and shortly after we had been deposited on board the ships sailed. We were, of course, angry, frustrated, and depressed; after all we had been through, we were to be deported to some remote island. It was a bitter time. After an uneventful voyage through the Suez Canal, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean we arrived at Port Louis in Mauritius. The colonial authorities had prepared an old prison that was to be used as the men's camp. The women's camp, consisting of corrugated metal huts, was nearby. Immediately after our arrival there was an outbreak of typhoid fever and about 50 people died within a month. My mother had typhoid fever and malaria at the same time and nearly died.

"After a while camp life settled into a certain routine. Each man had a cell in one of the two prison blocks. The cell doors were not locked, but nobody was allowed to leave the camp except under escort. After about six months married women were allowed to visit the men's camp during daylight hours. In the afternoons, all detainees could meet in an open area near the camp.

"The camp regime was not brutal and it absolutely could not be compared to the Nazi concentration camps; but still the food was insufficient, and the worst aspect was the remoteness of the place and the insistence of the British that we would never be allowed to enter Palestine.

"The detainees established a closely knit community with two synagogues, a school, a theater group, a library, soccer and volley ball teams, and various workshops. Since I had started to learn this trade after the Anschluss I decided to continue in the camp. Lectures, concerts and theater performances were organized and one could take courses in English, Hebrew, Jewish history, and many other subjects.

"About 200 young men volunteered for the various allied armies. I joined the Jewish Brigade Group, which was part of the British army, and left Mauritius at the beginning of 1945. After the end of hostilities all the refugees were eventually allowed to enter Palestine or had the choice of returning to their lands of origin. The vast majority chose Palestine and in August of 1945 the remaining 1300 persons, my parents among them, left Mauritius on the Franconia; 128 remained behind in the Jewish cemetery on the island.

"Together with the other 55 volunteers, I arrived in April 1945 at the Jewish Brigade Group Depot and Training Center in the Suez Canal zone. By that time the war in Europe was winding down and after a few months of basic training we joined the Brigade Group, which was then stationed in Holland. I was assigned to a transport company and our main task was to send as many Holocaust survivors as possible to Palestine, un-

officially and illegally, of course.

"My parents were living in Kirjat Haim near Haifa, and it was very difficult for my father to make a living. I decided to apply for a compassionate home posting which was granted, and I spent the rest of my army career in a British field bakery near Haifa. ...

"This changed on May 14, 1948, when all deferments were cancelled, and so on May 15 I left for a military camp at Tel Litwinski, not far from Tel Aviv, where I was assigned to the Engineering Corps. We completed a month-long course in mine laying, mine dismantling, building bridges, etc., and went immediately into action. With the Alexandroni Brigade our unit participated in many "actions" at the central front, later in the northern Negev in the fighting near the so-called Faluja pocket, and in the Beersheba area.

"I was discharged from the Israeli army sometime in 1949, and returned to my job as a cabinetmaker. Several of my best friends had been killed in the war and I was quite depressed at the time. My parents, who were totally dependent on me, wanted to join the rest of our family in Canada, where my father had been promised a job in my uncle's factory. And so in May 1951 we left for Canada where I have been living since then."

ADVERTISING RATES

SHEM TOV is now accepting display advertising for publication. Advertisers are requested to supply camera-ready art and payment by August 2004 for the Fall issue. Please indicate how many insertions you would like. As the chart indicates our basic rate is discounted for advertisements placed in four consecutive issues (one year) instead of a single issue only. By placing an ad in SHEM TOV, you are reaching a growing number of readers in Toronto, across Canada and internationally, and helping to support a unique and vital journal.

	One Issue	Four Issues (one year)
Full Page	\$60	\$200
Half Page	\$30	\$100
Quarter Page	\$18	\$ 60
Eighth Page	\$10	\$ 32

Search ads are also available. Rates are \$5 for the first 25 words and 25¢ per word thereafter, your name and address are free. Please write advertisement clearly with family surnames you are researching in UPPER CASE letters. Make your cheque payable to Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) and mail to: JGS of Canada (Toronto), P.O. Box 446, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M2N 5T1.

FAMILY LETTERS FROM HUNGARY

by Viviana Grosz

There are two reasons that motivated me to research and write about the letters that my grandparents sent to my father between 1936 and 1941.

First, I strongly believe that family documents contribute valuable historical testimony from many Holocaust victims who expressed their intimate thoughts through letter writing. In most cases, like that of my grandparents' letters, these documents are a little window into history, where one can, metaphorically speaking, "hear" ordinary people narrate the daily events of their lives, and convey their intimate thoughts and concerns against the backdrop of political turmoil. For this reason, I believe that as the population of survivors dwindles, and with them the opportunity to recover written testimonies from a painful period in history, it is the task of second and third generations of survivors to find, preserve and study family letters that give first-hand accounts of this era, and to treat them as historical documents.

The second reason is a more personal one. It has to do with a quote from Joseph Berger's memoirs, *Displaced Persons. Growing up American after the Holocaust*. Berger writes: "Does he believe that finding his kin now would greatly brighten his life, would reclaim some odd familial love; restore the lost home?" His answer then continues: "It is more primitive than that. One never stops searching for relatives that have vanished." I also have been searching. Before I ever knew about the existence of the letters, the extent of my knowledge about my father's immediate family was minimal. I knew, for example, that I was named Hannah after my grandmother, and that my father had had a younger brother whose name I never bothered to ask, and who died of food poisoning soon after the Russians liberated Auschwitz. But the discovery of the correspondence, and my subsequent reading of it, suddenly gave faces, voices and personalities to the family I never knew.

About a year after my father passed away, I started to think about how little I really knew about his family, and for that matter, about him as a young man before he married my mother in Mexico. I had, of course, many questions, but unfortunately by that time there was no one left to answer them. And then, I remembered the letters stashed away in the drawer of my father's night table where they had been for years. Somehow, I felt that although the Holocaust had deprived me of grandparents and other family, these documents could be my spiritual connection with a lost generation.

When I finally had them translated and was able to read their contents, I was introduced to a middle-aged couple named Ilka and Jenő, about my age, who lived "a quiet life" and struggled to pay debts, loans, and the government taxes "that are killing us." I found out that they owned a small neighborhood general store. They bought kosher meat, and when food restrictions became very bad, they still managed to have chicken for Shabbat once a week. I also learned that my grandfather smoked cigarettes, and that in January 1938 my grandmother had been very ill with a kidney infection that kept her in bed for three weeks under a strict diet of no salt.

In the first letters I read about how worried my grandpar-

ents were for their son, who had left Hungary in 1933, worked in Palestine for over a year, and at my grandmother's request left to go to a safer place, Mexico City. In my grandparents' eyes this locale must have seemed exotic, wild, and very hot, as many people still think of it today. But already after April of 1938, the tone of the letters changes from concern for the son's new life to despair about the increasing anti-Semitism in Hungary, the threats of war, the deteriorating living conditions, and the future of their younger son.

At this point, reading the letters becomes very emotional; I feel helpless, the same way my father must have felt, when "hearing" my grandparents describe their precarious situation, and cry for help. When my grandmother writes: "To whom should I tell our problems if not to my child" (July 31, 1938), I feel she is writing to me.

It is important to mention how the physical format of these letters has contributed to the mental picture I have drawn of my grandparents. Their distinctive handwriting styles become their voices, and help me to define their personalities. On the one hand, my grandmother appears as a woman of great intuition whose beautiful round and clean strokes, symmetrical spaces, and straight lines tell me of a self-reliant woman, a woman who speaks her mind when she writes that "I wanted to ease my heart in telling you how hurt I am" (March 3, 1937). And on the other hand, my grandfather shows a more introverted character with his smaller and softer letter strokes; he comes forth as a laid-back, reserved and practical man.

Getting back to Berger's question: Can finding a relative restore the lost home? I can't look for anyone because they are all gone, but the discovery of the letters has assisted my encounter with a vanished generation, and allowed me to fill in the gaps in my family's genealogy. This is why, as Berger writes, we never stop searching; second generation survivors, who suffer from the pain of loss and who grew up without the love of their grandparents, may find family documents that can help them initiate the healing process.

Viviana Grosz was born in Mexico City. Her parents fled Hungary shortly before World War II. Her father lost his family in the Holocaust, and her mother suffered the loss of her mother and a sister. Viviana has a degree in literature from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and a Master's degree in English as a Second Language from Kean University, New Jersey, where she is an adjunct professor.

The discovery of correspondence from Hungary, as well as relatives' oral histories, raised Ms. Grosz's interest in the Holocaust. Viviana is married, has three children, and lives in New Jersey.

**Next Year is our Twentieth Anniversary.
Please watch for further details.**