

S. A. SIG

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Southern African Jewish Genealogy Special Interest Group Newsletter

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The Southern Africa Jewish Genealogy Special Interest Group (SA-SIG)

The Southern Africa Jewish Genealogy Special Interest Group (SA-SIG) was created to provide a forum for a free exchange of ideas, research tips, and information of interest to those researching Jewish family history in the communities of South Africa, Lesotho (Basutoland), Botswana (Bechuanaland), Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia), Zambia (Northern Rhodesia), Swaziland, Mozambique and the former Belgian Congo.

The SA-SIG maintains a set of Web Pages that can be found at: <http://www.jewishgen.org/safrica>

The SA-SIG Newsletter is published quarterly. Further information on how to subscribe to the Newsletter can be found at:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/SAfrica/newsletter/index.htm>

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The current issue is rich with content that some readers may feel is not of genealogical value. Those of us concerned with the production and editing decision-making take a perspective that genealogy on its own is incomplete if the social fabric of the

societies in which our antecedents lived is not included.

The 24th International Conference of Jewish Genealogy held in July in Jerusalem had a programme packed with interesting topics, with song and dance, genetics and genealogy, rabbinical genealogy, and the usual historical and geographical range of topics. We were fortunate in having a morning stream devoted to Southern Africa and linked closely to South African presence in Israel. Syd Shapiro of Telfed gave an audience of over 40 at the SA-SIG luncheon a full account. Most of the talks before lunch were attended by between 60-80 people. Richard Newman spoke about the Jews of Namibia (South West Africa), and included many historical anecdotes derived from his research. Beryl Baleson gave an outline of SA Genealogical Research resources, and I spoke on the Migration and Genealogy Project at the Kaplan Centre, University of Cape Town. I also spoke of the important role of German Jewish Immigrants in the development of South Africa (this is to be published in a future edition of *Avotaynu*). Louis Zetler gave an excellent talk about the creation of databases of Jewish births, marriages, and deaths for one's own state or country. Louis noted that the main purpose of these databases is to provide as much information as currently is available to enable future generations to be able to trace their relations. The information for the databases is derived from a number of sources, including the press, advertisements, online newspapers, etc. The data is then put into Excel spreadsheets. A section containing "doubtful" surnames is created for each year; these can sometimes be clarified with later additional information.

I have been attending these conferences for about 12 years and can only congratulate and thank the organisers for an outstanding event. Many Israelis attended, and many ex-South Africans managed to come on the South African day.

Saul Issroff

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to yet another South African Special Interest Group (SA-SIG) Newsletter for this year. I am always amazed at just how much information we manage to pack into each issue. Our contributors are very focused in providing valuable information which I hope you will find interesting. I find that I am continually learning something new about the country of my birth and I hope that this is the same for you.

The 24th International Jewish Genealogical Conference was held in Jerusalem recently. A whole day was set aside for sessions relating to Southern African genealogy which by all accounts, was well attended. Sidney Shapiro, the Director of Telfed, the Israeli Offices of the South African Zionist Federation delivered a paper at the luncheon which I have included in this newsletter.

There has been some discussion recently on JewishGen about Chief Rabbis. Not all countries have Chief Rabbis, South Africa being one of the few which does. Saul Issroff has provided an article about one of South Africa's past Chief Rabbis – Rabbi Louis Isaac Rabinowitz, who died a few years ago.

We have one new contributor to this Newsletter – Jacob Rosen who hails from Jerusalem. He is researching the Koenigsbuch family who originated in Brzesko, Galicia (now Poland). He has written an article about the research he conducted in finding members of this and other related family.

One of our regular contributors, Manfred Schwartz, has provided an interesting article of life in Central Africa during colonial times. He describes the hardships many families would have endured, particularly with transport, disease and isolation, to mention but a few.

Manfred has lead an interesting and full life which included travelling to *platteland dorps* with his maternal grandfather who was a commercial traveller, farming in East London, running a factory in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), and working in the field of industrial legislation. Now in his early eighties, he finds time to delve into his memory and write articles for this newsletter about long forgotten events and people.

Adam Yamey, also a past contributor who lives in London, has provided a meticulously researched article about his grandfather Iwan Isaac Bloch who lived in Barkly East, a town in the north-east Cape Province.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, Oudtshoorn will be celebrating its 120th anniversary this year. Details of forthcoming events regarding this historic milestone have been provided for your information.

Our Treasurer, Mike Getz, has provided a Financial Report in this issue of the Newsletter.

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SA-SIG TREASURER'S REPORT

July 2003 – June 2004

The year of 2003 commenced with a cash balance of \$500 in July. I expect our closing balance as of June 2004 to be approximately \$600. Income amounted to \$650, principally from membership fees. Expenditure, mainly for the printing and mailing of our newsletter totalled was just under \$500.

We have 30 paid up members for the year, eight of whom have renewed. We have previously considered supplying our newsletter in pdf format, freeing up funds expended on a hard copy version. We will need to consider our subscription and membership policies, if these are to continue or there is a preference for hard copy.

Future policies on programming, the possible acquisition of services or materials may have financial implications. A formal membership recruitment programme could be helpful and supportive of longer-term goals that the meeting may articulate.

I appreciate the support and oversight of Roy Ogus who patiently provides structure and administration to so much that we do. Saul continues his singular role, keeping us all on mission. He is consistently responsive to members' interests and needs. Bubbles Segall our Editor, and Beryl Baleson in

Israel, have contributed effort and time in their respective commitment to our activities.

I regret not being present at the important Annual Meeting in Jerusalem and wish all those attending a successful and fulfilling Conference.

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SOUTH AFRICANS IN ISRAEL

Olim or Émigrés

Sidney Shapiro

Sidney Shapiro, Director of Telfed, Israel Offices of the South African Zionist Federation, delivered this paper at the SA-SIG Luncheon as part of the 24th IAJGS Conference held in Jerusalem in July 2004.

From my very many years of working with South Africans, I have come to the realization that we are a people who lean towards understatement and modesty, or perhaps we just don't know how to blow our own trumpet.

At least this is the impression I got over the past ten years while examining the contribution of South Africans to the building of the Jewish State from the 1920's to this day. Not many people in Israel or other parts of the world truly appreciate the important role that South Africans have played in the development and advancement of the State of Israel, its society, economy, defence – their input can be found in a significant way in all spheres of Israeli life – except perhaps for politics, an area where but few South Africans feared to tread.

In order to better understand the South African community in Israel today, who they are, what they are, and what they are doing, I would like to create in your minds a tapestry of society. Examine each thread as it weaves in and out, over and under, thousands of other threads. You will see that every thread is interwoven, inter-dependent and helps to create a form or image. Now step back and look at the tapestry as a whole, secured by a firm and strong frame.

The tapestry is the tapestry of Israeli society; the frame – the borders of the State of Israel, and each

thread represents a citizen of Israel, including each and every South African *oleh* who is intertwined with *olim* from hundreds of different countries of origin and Israeli born Sabras. There is hardly any section of this tapestry where S. African Jewry has not made a seminal contribution.

Since the founding of the State 25,000 South African Jews have arrived on *Aliyah*. If we look at the Jewish population in South Africa over the past 100 years and take the average number, we will find that some 20 – 25% of South African Jews made *aliyah*. Until the end of the 1980's one in every three to four Jews leaving South Africa settled in Israel. Today the ratio is about 1 in six to seven.

The majority of these South Africans who chose *Eretz Yisrael* above America, Australia or wherever, in all likelihood had to be people with a committed ideological life's plan, who see the good of the people over the good of the individual, who have a belief in the Jewish State and the desire to be part of the history of its development and progress. This is the basic difference between *Aliyah* and migration – the latter being motivated by materialistic factors, an attempt at improving one's standard of living, or seeking a safer haven, whereas *Aliyah* is motivated by an emotional, spiritual, moving up, both in the secular and religious sense. Eizenstadt said: "The migrant tries to duplicate the values and lifestyle of his country of origin, whereas the *oleh* tries to build a new life altogether." In fact, if we want to be realistic, people would not choose to go to Israel for materialistic reasons. I venture to say that *aliyah* from South Africa beginning in the early 20th century to the 1980's was generated by a basic acceptance of Palestine/Israel as a true home of the Jews i.e. the central feature of the Jewish people and the commitment to it as such. The truth is that South African *aliyah* is a formidable story of individuals, which in the aggregate amounts to one of the most remarkable voluntary seminal contributions to the *yishuv* by a Diaspora community.

For example:

When Jacob Gesundheit invested capital in the Tiberias Development Company in the 1920's, his purpose was to build holiday resorts utilizing the natural beauty of the Kinneret, a trait which was so popular amongst the immigrant Jews in the dorps of South Africa by becoming hotel owners.

Gesundheit's aim was to attract tourists and thus inject the *yishuv* with sorely needed foreign currency.

When Chaim Joffe and Gesundheit together established the Palestine Cold Storage and Supply Company, it was with the realization that the storage of food and agricultural produce would be vital for the well being of the population during those difficult years. I assume they hoped to gain financially, but their priorities were for the good of the land and the people. This was the fore-runner of the cold storage industry in Israel.

If we look at a particular section of our tapestry, we can see, for instance, that the banking and insurance industries in Palestine and thereafter in the newborn state, were propelled by "the South African Group" consisting of some seven experienced South African business men – Migdal Binyan Insurance Company, Peltours Mercantile Insurance and many more. In fact, the insurance industry – both insurance companies and insurance brokers, was introduced into the Israeli market by South Africans. (Smokey Simon, Harold Stutzin). This tradition remains to this day with an inordinate number of South Africans in the insurance business.

It is generally not known that Israeli conglomerates such as Bank Leumi (Anglo Palestine Bank) Israel Africa Investments (African Palestine Investments) were founded by South African investors and entrepreneurs. The South African *olim* truly brought know-how and capital to the nascent Jewish State.

The late President Chaim Herzog, in a letter to the South African Zionist Federation (Israel) known as Telfed in March 1992, said *inter alia* "South African olim are a group true to the Zionist legacy its grandparents and great-grandparents brought with them from deeply Jewish homes in Eastern and Central Europe. The new skills learned in South Africa came with them to Israel; virtually every basically important aspect of Israeli life has benefited from them".

How true are his words! To my mind, the most significant and far reaching contribution by South Africans to Israel emanated from *Machal*. 3000 South Africans volunteered to fight in the War of Liberation – 800 were accepted. 800 young men and women many of whom had recently been de-

mobbed from the Allied Forces in WWII, comprised a group of volunteers which was far more significant in number and contribution than any other Jewish community in the world. A dramatic contribution of South African *Machal* was the building up and operating of the Israeli Air Force. Many are the exciting stories told of how some of these heroic soldiers brought Dakotas in South Africa, flew them to Israel and immediately entered bombing raids. (Sixteen Dakotas were purchased in South Africa, eleven arrived.)

(Ezer Weizman in recognising the seminal contribution of South Africans to the Israeli Air Force, often tells the non-apocryphal story – of the value of Sid Cohen's contribution to the air force: when, as Chief of the Air Force he was asked to provide a fighter escort for his uncle, the President, who was going abroad on his first state visit, he refused. When Sid Cohen returned to South Africa to complete his medical studies, Weizman provided two fighter planes to escort Sid's plane out of Israel).

The medical corps would have had a difficult time in functioning were it not for the large medical contingent from South Africa. Many of the doctors stayed on or returned to Israel later to make an enormous impact on medicine which is felt to this day. Perhaps because of their philosophy on doctor patient relations the disciplines of social, family and community medicine were introduced to Israel by South African doctors such as Professor Sidney Kark and also world famous cardiologists such as Professor Joe Bornman and Mervyn Gottesman.

There is hardly a specialization in Israeli hospitals and medical schools which does not have South African doctors in senior positions. The same goes for dentistry and other paramedical professions and private medicine where the first private medical centres were established by South Africans.

A relatively high percentage of the South African *olim* over the years came from the education professions. The system of teaching English took a dramatic change when the SA teachers made *aliyah*. Prior to the State, English at the famous Herzliya Gymnasia and Reali Haifa schools was taught by S. Africans. The establishment of high schools with English as the language of instruction was initiated by Telfed. For 50 years there has been a constant S. African influence in the field of Jewish Zionist

education in Israel and in the Diaspora. The late Louis Pincus and subsequently Mendel Kaplan as Chairmen of The Jewish Agency for Israel placed Jewish Zionist education at the top of their agendas. Names such as Simon Herman, Gidi Shimoni, Zeev Mankowitz, Avraham Infeld and Alan Hoffman are to this day synonymous with Jewish education and Israel-Diaspora relations. In the educational field one of the few South Africans to receive the prestigious Israel Prize is Professor Hillel Daleski (another South African to receive this prize is Dr Ian Froman for tennis).

One of the major institutions spearheading the cause of special education in Israel is Beit Issie Shapiro, founded and essentially run by South Africans.

Over all the many years I have been involved in S.A. affairs in Israel, I continue to be amazed as the contribution of South African Jewry becomes more and more apparent. If we, once again, compare *aliyah* with migration of South African Jews to other countries throughout the world, the latter have excelled as individuals by contributing to their individual fields of specialization. In Israel the impact of the contribution of individual South African *olim*, had a national significance because they, in very many instances, innovated, improved their professional or business fields which impacted countrywide in the smaller *yishuv*. By being “big fish in a small pond” they were provided the opportunity to influence society extensively and rapidly.

How many of you know that South Africans were in the forefront of the agricultural revolution when the innovations of modern science were brought from the laboratories to the farm. S. Africans who had come from the *plaas* or those who had trained on the pioneering farms near Klerksdorp, Palmietfontein, Brits or Oogies laid the very foundations of farming and agricultural modern methods. Arieh Zive (1939) in the cold storage of fruit; Dr Morris Zeligman – pest control; Sidney Lossin Yudelman – irrigation – just to name a very few.

Some 30 settlements – *kibbutzim*, *moshavim* and towns were founded by South African groups.

How can we forget sport? In other countries South Africans take sport for granted, however in Israel, Tennis, Bowls, Cricket, Golf, Rugby, Hockey,

Squash, Badminton, Netball were introduced by South Africans.

The type, extent and significance of the contribution of S. Africans to Israel and its society can be observed from some interesting characteristics of this S. African sub community in Israel which is in fact basically different from other S. African sub communities in the Diaspora:

- i. The fact that many S. Africans made *Aliyah* within a group framework provided an inherent strength not experienced in the emigration to other countries. In the pre and post state years, groups such as the graduates of the Pioneering Farm near Krugersdorp, or the graduates of the Cape Zionist Youth Executive or the Pioneering Soldiers were organized by the South African Zionist Federation in South Africa and then accompanied by Telfed which continues to look after the interest of the South African community in Israel till this day. This cohesiveness was not to be found elsewhere. The fact that many S. Africans made *Aliyah* motivated by the Zionist ideal, allowed them to feel at home fairly rapidly, to have some self-confidence and thus greater freedom of expression, especially as they were now members of the majority group.
- ii. S. Africans in Israel have been accepted by society in general as being a desirable element – considered to be well educated, influential and wealthy (even if this was not applicable to all S. Africans). They have thus been given many opportunities to contribute to their specific fields. This is given expression in the fact that we were and still are trailblazers, both on an organizational or individual level. Because Israel is a country of *olim* and is open to and accepting of newcomers, it is more accepting of innovations and new methods of doing things. It is a mosaic society and each ethnic group contributes its share.
- iii. On the individual level, South Africans’ work ethics and professional standards made a noticeable impact on society in general. Their influences can be seen in the marked changes effected in so called South African towns such as Raanana, Ramat Hasharon, Savyon,

Ashkelon (Kaanstad), Johannesburg and Durban Streets), Efrat, Kochav Yair, Kfar Shmaryahu and others.

- iv. The South African Jew in Israel, in the main, carries with him a distinctive background – a Litvak, a Zionist, often a Zionist Youth Movement graduate. It is mainly in Israel where these traits have a special significance. The South African feels a greater commitment and affiliation to his newly adopted country in Israel which gives him the impetus to make an extra effort to contribute and to influence his new surroundings. This emotional affinity by newcomers is not usually found in other countries, particularly in the initial years of residence.

There are however certain similarities and differences between *Aliyah* and emigration to other countries:

Aliyah and Olim

- Waves of emigration. 1961, 1972 – 1979, 1987, 1994. *Aliyah* 48, 56, 67, 73
- Young families 30 – 45 year olds
- Religious
- Weaker sectors of the community who cannot go elsewhere (elderly and medical insurance)

When I spoke of South Africans being trail blazers on the organizational level, I referred to Telfed, the first community organisation to be created – boasts many firsts, such as having created the first absorption centre, first rental housing project, direct absorption (Russians), which is now recognised by the Government and the Jewish Agency as the main method of absorbing new *olim*; new settlements – Manof, Sde Nitsan, Efrat, Kochav Yair and kibbutzim were initiated by South African through Telfed.

Telfed as a Jewish South African organisation is unique in its structure and operation. Although South Africans have got together in other countries they do not operate an office with professionals to assist their countrymen in settling down in their new countries.

Where, other than in Israel, will you find an organization of South Africans providing:

- professional counselors

- employment services
- financial assistance
- loans
- bursaries
- grants
- magazine and website
- rental housing
- regional absorption committees
- social and cultural activities
- the elderly (Protea Retirement Home)
- community welfare services
- fieldworkers
- companions to the elderly
- Projects – Modiin (open to *olim* from other countries)

Some of the fields in which South Africans are excelling:

- Housing – Teppersen, Nurick, Altman, Anglo Saxon Real Estate, Corex, Garrun, Platzky
- Food Industry – Burgher Ranch (broke tradition of falafel to the hamburger), Taste of Israel (Cadbury's) Nandos
- Amdocs, Retalex
- Architects – Harry Brand, Ben Peleg
- The Arts – such as Dance – Jeanette Ordman, Silvia Duran, Zvia Brumer
- Volunteerism – Shuls; Beit Issie Shapiro; Soldier's Welfare Organization; WIZO.

A question was put to me a short while ago:

In what way have South Africans changed in their identity or religious behaviour due to the influence of their new country?

As far as can be determined, there has been no research so far on this question in regard to the South Africans and therefore comments can only be made based on personal impressions.

1. Identify Change

- i. South Africans have by and large had to adjust to different behaviour patterns. The story goes that the first 3 words they learn in Hebrew are *toda*, *bevakasha* and *slichah*. After a number of years, the first words they forget are *toda*, *bevakasha* and *slichah*.
- ii. South Africans migrated to other countries which have similar cultural and social

backgrounds, and therefore didn't need to change significantly. We South Africans in Israel tend to regard ourselves as being the bastion of Western culture, however at the same time we also try to synthesize this with the Mid-Eastern culture in which we live, and therefore do change. Notwithstanding, in many cases our habits, manners and Anglo-culture infiltrate into the Middle-Eastern culture around us e.g. kibbutzim Tzora, Yizreel etc, cities Savion, Ra'anana.

- iii. Our behavioural changes can be observed by the fact that when living in South Africa we tended to mind our p's and q's. Being in Israel is like being at home more than anywhere else in the world. So if we express ourselves too openly which is sometimes interpreted as being aggressive or outspoken, it can be understood.

2. Values Do Change

- i. The fact that the *oleh* and/or his children have to do military service or live through wars and terrorist actions, influences them to become much more committed to their new country. They are more patriotic to their country in their feelings than they were to South Africa before they made *Aliyah*. "It is *my* home". Do South African Jewish emigrants to other countries feel the same about their new country?
- ii. Values in economic terms change: prior to *aliyah* the materialistic side of life was all important. South Africans are often prepared to do work in Israel they would not have dreamed of doing in South Africa, for example menial work.
- iii. Political Views Change

Events in Israel have caused *olim* to change their political views, e.g. Right-wing move to center, left-wing move to right, voting patterns change with each election. It is fascinating to talk to erstwhile *Habonim* graduates who voted for Right Wing and a former *Betar* Head who is today an extreme Left Wing supporter.

Israel is a vital effervescent society which, together with the differing time frames, causes people to change their political views.

3. Religious Behaviour

- i. Religious practice in Israel is generally regarded as being fully observant or not at all, with little room in between for the traditional style of observance familiar in S. Africa.

The exception to this is found in the more tolerant congregations such as the so-called South African *Shuls* – the Parow Shul, Kfar Shmaryahu and others. In addition, you will find South Africans joining the Conservative movement in Israel whereas in South Africa they wouldn't dream of doing this.

- ii. For those who arrive in Israel moderately religious and who get involved with the religious community, they tend to become much more religious and sometimes even Haredi.
- iii. There are those S. Africans who tended to identify with *Yiddishkeit* and the Jewish community through *Shul* attendance in S. Africa, many, once in Israel, adopt the attitude that they now live in Israel where the whole country is Jewish, where *Yom Kippur* and the *Chaggim* are national holidays, which one cannot but help feel and experience, and therefore do not need to attend *Shul* services. Incidentally, whilst some regard Israeli society as being essentially secular, recent research by *Machon Avichai* shows that there is a very high level of Jewish values and traditional observance across the board – 100% *Mezzuzot*, 88% *Pesach Seder*, 76% fast on *Yom Kippur*.
- iv. In other words, S. Africans tend to become polarized in their religious practice to the extreme in both directions of religious observance.

It is not clear to me if South African Jews in other countries have some identity change.

There is no doubt that in Israel our identity has changed due to the influence of our new country. How can it not be when in a South African

community as small as ours, 72 of our sons and daughters have paid the supreme sacrifice in defence of our country and a further 7 have been murdered by terrorists. There is virtually no South African in Israel who has not been touched by this in one way or another. Yes, we, as South Africans, are now more determined, committed and resolute than we have been before.

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Glossary

Olim

Immigrants

Oleh

Immigrant (singular)

Sabras

Israeli born citizens

Aliyah

Terminology used for “going up”
i.e. “going up to Israel”

Eretz Yisrael

Land of Israel

Yishuv

Area known as “Yishuv” before
the establishment of the State of
Israel

*Machal - Mitnadvim m'Chutz Le-
aretz*

Volunteers from abroad

Telfed

Offices of the South African
Zionist Federation in Tel Aviv

Toda

Thank you

Bevakasha

Please

Slicha

Sorry

Beit Issie Shapiro

Home for the Handicapped

Kibbutzim

Communal Agricultural
Settlements

Moshav

Private Agricultural Settlement

Chaggim

Holidays (Holy days)

Machon Avichai

Avichai Institute

RABBI LOUIS ISAAC RABINOWITZ

Saul Issroff

Rabbi Louis Isaac Rabinowitz, M.A. PhD., was the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregation of Johannesburg and the Federation of Synagogues of Transvaal and the Orange Free State from 1945. He was also head of the Beth Din.

He was educated at Yeshiva *Etz Chaim* in London as well as the University of London and Jews College, London. He was Professor of Hebrew at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Rabbi Rabinowitz was born in Edinburgh on 26 May 1906, the son of Rabbi and Mrs Jacob Rabinowitz. In 1927 he married Tania Amiel, daughter of the late Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv.

His first posting was to Shepherd's Bush in 1926, then to South Hackney and Cricklewood from 1932 to 1939. He was chaplain to the British Army until 1945 when he was called to Johannesburg. In 1947, in protest against British Policy in the Middle East, he discarded his war decorations in public.

Rabbi Rabinowitz was active in communal work and a strong Zionist, being Hon. President of the Zionist Federation, the Board of Jewish Education, the Israel United Appeal and the Society for the Welfare of the Jewish Deaf.

The Rabbi was an outstanding and fiery orator. He was outspoken in his criticism of the then South African Government's apartheid policy. At times this led to friction between him and the Board of Deputies.

He authored many books:

- The Social Life of Jews in France in the X11 to X1V Centuries (1938)
- Scholars from Judea (1942)
- *Herem Hayishub*: A contribution to the Medieval Economic History of the Jews (1945)
- Jewish Merchant Adventurers: A Study of the Radamites (1948). (This is a fairly detailed history of Jewish Travellers from before the Middle Ages and it includes a interesting section on the Khazars.)
- Out of the Depths (Sermon – 1951)

- Far East Mission (1952) (This has very interesting descriptions of the Bnei Israel in India and other remote communities).
- Sparks from the Anvil (Sermons – 1955)

One of his research projects in the late 1940's was to document the role of the Jews fighting with the Boers in the Boer War. He meticulously researched 198 of the approximately 250 Jews fighting with the Boers (Rabinowitz's *Boerejoode*). Much of this is verified with eyewitness accounts. This material is in the SAJBOD Archives ref. 124A (see *Jews on Commando* by David Saks. Jewish Affairs Spring 1999). An updated list with an additional 48 names is also published in this issue. (Louis I. Rabinowitz and David Y. Saks, *Jews in the Boer Forces, 1899-1902*).

In 1961 he went on *Aliyah*, and settled in Jerusalem where he became a Deputy Editor in Chief of the Encyclopaedia Judaica. He also became Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem under Teddy Kollek in 1969 and was head of Likud in the council.

His article on *How South African Jewry helped to build Israel* [in Feldberg, Leon (ed.), *South African Jewry 1976/77*. Roodepoort: Alex White, 1977] is a superb summary of the contribution, from 1900 onwards, of the mainly Litvak origin South African Jews in Israel.

He wrote the weekly column 'Torah and Flora' in the Jerusalem Post for many years.

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NEW BOOK FROM AVOTAYNU

Avotaynu Guide to Jewish Genealogy

The definitive guide to Jewish genealogical research. Written by more than 60 authors, each an expert in their own field. The list of authors is a veritable "Who's Who in Jewish Genealogy."

The book's more than 100 chapters cover all important aspects of the rich body of information available to do Jewish genealogical research. (Included is a section on South African genealogical research, written by the SA-SIG President.) This book is of immense value to both the novice just starting out, as well as the experienced researcher.

8½" x 11" 624 pp. Hardcover \$85.00

For more information, see Avotaynu's website:

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IWAN BLOCH AND BARKLY EAST

Adam Yamey

At 11 p.m. on the 8th April 1886, a birth was recorded in the town of Diessenhofen on the Swiss side of the Rhine. The child was my grandfather Iwan Isaak Bloch. He was of German nationality as his father Salomon Bloch was born in the town facing Diessenhofen on the German side of the Rhine, Gailingen in the state of Baden. His mother was Peppi Bloch, née Seligmann. She was one of the fifteen children of Isak Rafael Seligmann of Ichenhausen in Bavaria. Iwan died in 1931 in Johannesburg, having been a successful businessman and also the Mayor of a small town in the Eastern Cape, Barkly East. This is his story.

Before we return to Iwan, it is necessary to describe the events that led to his arrival in South Africa. The Mosenthals of Kassel were probably the first German Jews to have made a success of trading in South Africa. Around and shortly after 1839 Joseph Mosenthal and his brother Adolph settled in Cape Town and became general merchants. They were very successful and set up trading posts in the interior of the Cape Colony and beyond the Orange River (Saron & Hotz pp 349-55). The importance of the Mosenthals in establishing an efficient system of commerce throughout the Cape and beyond cannot be over emphasized. To quote Saron and Hotz (p. 350) they, "*not only acted as intermediaries who bought and sold; they were also, by force of circumstances, the financiers and bankers of that first generation in which their business took root*".

Further on, Saron and Hotz write (p 353), "*Firms like Mosenthals were responsible for attracting to South Africa, as assistants, many good class immigrants who were able to give services otherwise almost impossible to supply in the comparatively undeveloped state of commerce and finance. These men in turn contributed towards the further extension of trade and industry in their new homes.*" These homes were the small towns scattered all over the Cape Colony and along the Orange River. Iwan Bloch's uncle Sigmund Seligmann (Iwan's mother's brother) was one of these men attracted to South Africa. Louis Herrman (p. 216) noted that, "*The Mosenthals and their industrial and commercial activities were the means of introducing into South Africa nearly half the Jewish families who came to this land between 1845 and 1870*".

The Seligmann family of Ichenhausen in Bavaria was during the nineteenth century quite enormous. Many of the family were involved in commerce in Ichenhausen. Many of them emigrated. Sigmund Seligmann had a first cousin Heinrich Bergmann who arrived in South Africa in 1849. He was a very successful member of the Mosenthal business, and by the time of his death in 1866 was running their branch (under the name of “Mosenthal and Bergman”) and their bank (the Frontier Bank) in Aliwal North. I have written about Bergmann in a recently published article (see Stammbaum, issue 25, 2004). I suspect that Bergmann was one of the earliest members of the extended Seligmann family to reach South Africa. Sigmund Seligmann came to South Africa in 1874, aged 18 years (having already spent two years in the USA!). He worked in businesses in Rouxville (with a Mr. Wiarda) and in Lady Grey (with a Mr. Oelschig) before setting up his own trading business. His first business was started in partnership with Moss Vallentine in Dordrecht, Cape Colony, in 1884. This did well. In 1885 Sigmund decided to open another store, in Barkly East, on the Langkloof river, north of Dordrecht in the southern edge of the Drakensberg range of mountains. It is one of the highest towns in the Cape. The opening of S. Seligmann and Co. Ltd, took place in 1886. Gradually Sigmund sent for three of his nephews: Jakob Krämer, Julius Cornelius and Moritz Rosenberger (incidentally, he also was a member of the brass band of Barkly East). They came out from Germany and helped to run the business before and after Sigmund returned to Germany in 1898. Other nephews were sent out to help in the business and amongst these were Iwan Bloch and his brother Daniel.

Now I shall digress to describe the Jewish life of Barkly East, of which there is little to report. Barkly East was mainly a commercial centre for the flourishing local sheep farmers and the wool business. Its heyday antedated the building of good motor roads. In latter years when road transport became better (after WW2) its importance declined as the farmers were able to reach bigger centres such as Queenstown and East London. Saron and Hotz make one mention of Barkly East: a Jewish cemetery was consecrated there in 1894. The earliest gravestone in the cemetery records the death of Hannah (wife of Manassah) Woolf who died in February 1894. In an Appendix I have provided a list of the Jews who were buried in Barkly East,

with some notes about their families. I do not know when the first Jew(s) arrived in the town, but Iwan Bloch’s uncle Sigmund Seligmann was certainly there by 1885. Barkly East had no synagogue and was probably not visited much by rabbis from neighbouring towns. There was no anti-Semitism of any significance in the town, and most of the Jewish inhabitants were fully assimilated into ‘white’ society. The last Jewish family to live in Barkly East was that of Lazer Bortz. Lazer and his family were of Russian origin. They joined Seligmann’s on arrival in the town. Later they started their own business, a dealership in fuel. They left the town some years ago, in the 1980s (approx.) and were last heard of in Bloemfontein. Of all the Jewish businesses, the only one that retains its name today in Barkly East is that of Bortz, albeit under new ownership. Whilst we were visiting Barkly East last year, a curator in the town’s small museum showed us a small object which she had detached from the deserted and derelict former home of the Bortz family. She asked us to identify it, as she was unaware of its significance: it was the Mezuzah, with contents intact, from the family’s front door!

Before going out to South Africa, Iwan Bloch left Gailingen and lived in Zurich where he was employed in a department store. Clearly Iwan was a good choice as a helper in his uncle’s store as he had already had some experience in commerce. According to information on his Certificate of Naturalization (April 1908), Iwan arrived in South Africa in 1903, aged 17 years, landing at East London (where he stayed for 6 days at Deals Hotel) in 1903. Then he went to Barkly East where he became a “general dealer’s assistant” at S. Seligmann & Co. When Iwan arrived, the firm was directed by his three cousins: Krämer, Cornelius and Rosenberger. Seligmann’s was not only a general dealer (they sold everything from cups to coffins, from pins to farm equipment. My late mother recalled that the firm imported the latest clothes from the leading fashion houses of Paris. Seligmann’s was the ‘Harrods’ or ‘Saks Fifth Avenue’ of Barkly East!). It was also involved in issuing credit to farmers and handling the wool produced by the many sheep farmers in the area. When the farmers were hard up, Seligmann’s sold to them on credit, and when the wool was harvested the farmers settled their debts. Iwan worked his way up through the firm from clerk to a managing

director, in conjunction with his friend and neighbour Carl Blume.

According to Iwan's obituary (in the Barkly East Reporter), "*The late Mr. Bloch was born in Germany, and who was 45 years of age, came here in 1903 when he was a mere youth. He joined the firm of Messrs. S Seligmann & Co, and soon showed that he possessed a remarkable business attitude. Within a few years he and Mr. Blume had taken over the business, Mr. Bloch acting as managing director, a position he filled with great success.*" I am not sure exactly when Iwan became a managing director of Seligmann's, but it was most probably before 1916, when Iwan married Ilse, daughter of Senator Franz Joseph Ginsberg of King Williams Town, a signatory of South Africa's Act of Union in 1910. Her mother was Iwan Bloch's second cousin, Hedwig, née Rieser. Franz Ginsberg was not merely an important public figure in the Eastern Cape, but was also a major industrialist in the area. He was an important South African manufacturer of soap, candles and matches.

Iwan's business achievements alone would have qualified him as a success in life, but his was not enough for such a hardworking and intelligent person as he was. Returning to his obituary, "*But immersed in business as he was, he found time to take his share in public life here. For twelve years he was member of the Municipal Council, and for eight years in succession he was Mayor, until he retired in September last. It is not too much to say that we never had a better Mayor, and that his term of office was marked by great progress in Municipal matters. The electric light was installed; the accommodation for Natives in the Location was twice added to; and the town greatly benefited from his knowledge of finance and his business acumen. He was ever to the forefront in the advocacy and carrying out a progressive policy, and his actions were always designed with a view to furthering the best interests of the town as a whole.*" Iwan was a member of the Barkly East Municipal Council from 6th May 1919 until 21st Aug 1931, a few months before his death. He was, I believe, the first Jewish member of the Council, and most probably the town's only Jewish Mayor (his term of office was 4th Sep 1923 until 21st Aug 1931). Even before becoming a member of the Council, Iwan appears to have been interested in public works. I have a photograph of him in 1918 standing with several of the town's officials at the opening of a dam built to

improve the town's water supply. He was also Chairman of the town's Chamber of Commerce.

Iwan's impact on the development of Barkly East was not inconsiderable. In 1910 the town's Council had made enquiries into the possibility of acquiring an electricity generator to provide lighting for the Town Hall and the main square, but nothing came of it. Under Iwan's Mayoralty, in 1927, the electrification of Barkly East was finally achieved. Electricity was available for the use of inhabitants between the hours of 4 PM and 12 PM only! By 1930 Iwan Bloch warned the Council that the existing electricity scheme no longer met the needs of the town, and three years after his death this was remedied. Iwan's greatest municipal achievement was his involvement in bringing the railway to the town.

In about 1902 the burghers of Barkly East began to campaign to have a railway built to the town. A connection to Aliwal North would have joined Barkly East to the existing rail network of South Africa, and no doubt would have worked wonders for the prosperity of the town. A Railway Committee was established in October 1902. By November 1905 a railway had been built from Aliwal to Lady Grey, and was a success financially once it became functional. This fuelled optimism in Barkly East. By 1916 the railway had reached New England, 18 miles from Barkly East. Much campaigning for the railway occurred between 1916 and 1924 when the Railway Board of South Africa finally visited Barkly East in connection with extending the railway to the town. By the following year, Iwan Bloch had already become the Chairman of the town's Railway Committee. He received the news that the government had finally agreed to build the long awaited extension of the railway to Barkly East. Despite this there was procrastination on the part of the government, and the construction of the railway was delayed: there was a shortage of funds. It was not until May 1928 that Iwan Bloch received the following telegram from Mr. Sephton, a Member of the Legislative Assembly, "*£40,000 provided for the construction of New England/Barkly East Railway*". Exactly a year and two days before Iwan's death, the official opening of the railway to Barkly East was celebrated on 10th Dec 1930. Two days later the Barkly East Reporter wrote, "*As the train headed for the station, it was seen to consist of an engine and three of (sic) four coaches. The engine, which was decorated, had a*

very festive appearance. As it passed under the arch and entered the station, the Mayoress, Mrs. I. I. Bloch, performed the ceremony of christening it, by dashing a bottle of champagne.... against it'. The town celebrated the arrival of the railway with a day of events including a Fancy Dress Carnival in which cars were decorated in imaginative ways. I note with some pride that the car decorated by Seligmann's won second prize in the Best Decorated Car competition. In a fancy dress parade Iwan's brother Daniel and his wife appeared as a Swiss Couple. Amongst the children in fancy dress is mention of Master Iwan Bloch, one of my two uncles, dressed up as 'Red Riding Hood'. It is of interest to note that the extension of the railway from Lady Grey to Barkly East was, according to the South and East African Handbook and Guide (1947), "...one of the most costly (about (£8,000 per mile) in South Africa owing to the mountainous nature of the terrain", and is today, sadly, non-functional.

How Iwan found time for leisure is a puzzle, yet he did! Barkly East was in the Twenties and Thirties a hive of social activity, difficult to imagine today. Iwan participated in tennis parties, held more than once a week. There was time for playing bridge, a daily walk, and golf twice a week, not to mention many other social gatherings, where dinner-jackets (tuxedo) were *de rigueur*. The family owned a number of motor cars (the most expensive newest imported models of the time) including a Hupmobile, which was used to transport the large family (Iwan had four children) on holidays to a wide range of destinations all over South Africa. My mother recalled that she and her siblings were often car-sick, and on occasion Iwan's hat acted as a receptacle for one of the symptoms of this! Iwan and his wife also made occasional trips to Europe to see family members in Germany.

In the second half of 1931, Iwan suffered a massive heart attack. He was transported to Johannesburg for medical treatment. He spent his last weeks in a nursing home (? Fairview) in Johannesburg. He passed away on the 12th Dec 1931, and was buried in Johannesburg. His obituary noted that he was, "Of a kindly and sympathetic nature (and that) he will be sadly missed by a large circle of friends and by the poor alike". Although the Bloch family was not observant in religious matters it is worth noting that Iwan was buried in a Jewish cemetery, and the ceremony was officiated by a Rabbi.

He left behind him a widow and four children including my mother. His widow remarried Oscar Levy (from Melsungen in Germany), who also worked for Seligmann's. Tragically, he died shortly after their marriage and the birth of their son. He is buried in Barkly East. Seligmann's, the business continued to exist until the early 1960s, watched over by a member of the Bloch family and by the Ginsberg's in King Williams Town. A large fire in about 1965 destroyed the main building of Seligmann's. Today all that remains in Barkly East is the Bloch's former home and some of the many smaller buildings that belonged to the firm.

Appendix: Jewish Graves in the Cemetery at Barkly East

When we visited Barkly East in August 2003 we visited the small museum there. We met the curator who very kindly provided me with a list of the Jewish graves in the cemetery. The Jewish cemetery is within Barkly East's 'white' Christian cemetery on the edge of the town on the road leading to Moshesh's Ford and Rhodes, two places at which Seligmann's had branch stores. The Jewish section is small and separated from the rest of the cemetery by a metal fence. The whole place (both Christian and Jewish sections) is subject to theft (of marble and other fine stone, which can be used in building works) and I suspect that in a few years time most of the graves will be unrecognizable. The curator's list gives 11 graves: last year only 6 of these were identifiable – the rest were damaged too much to be recognised.

The listing is as follows:

1. Isaac **ROSENBERG**: b. London, d. 26 Apr 1956, aged 56 years.

Dr. Isaac Rosenberg was a highly respected and much loved medical doctor in Barkly East. His obituary reports that over 100 cars brought people to his funeral.

2. Emil **SELIGMAN**: b. 3 June 1877, d. 25 Aug. 1897

Emil Seligman(n) was born in Ichenhausen in Bavaria, and ran the branch of Seligmann's in Rhodes. He was a cousin of Iwan Bloch.

3. Bluma Chaia **ROSENBERG**: d. 30 Jul 1921, aged 52 years. (wife of Morris Rosenberg)

Mother of Isaac.

4. Lathan **LEVENSON**: d. 12 Jan 1927, aged 32 years.

5. Jack **VALLENTINE** : d. 7 Mar 1897, aged 32 years (son of Phillip).

Jack Vallentine, from London, worked with Sigmund Seligmann. His brother Moss Vallentine was a partner with Seligmann in a business in Dordrecht, south of Barkly East. Jack was married to Helene Perlmutter, sister of Erna Perlmutter who was married to Sigmund Seligmann. Jack's untimely death was caused by tetanus, contracted as a result of falling from a carriage.

6. Hannah **WOOLFE**: d. 10 Feb 1894 (wife of Manassah Woolfe).

There was a Louis Woolfe in Barkly East who worked for Seligmann's. In the 1930s he moved to Johannesburg.

7. N. **JOFFEE**: d. 7 Oct 1917, aged 11 months.

8. J. **JOFFEE**: d. 7 Oct 1917, aged 11 months.

There was a Joffe family in Barkly East during the 1920s.

9. **VAN DER HORST**: d. 5 Sep 1932, stillborn.

The Van Der Horst family was Jewish, and came from Holland. Solly Van Der Horst worked for Seligmann's, and later became a merchant (of cigars, possibly) in Durban.

10. S. **EDELSTEIN**: d. 17 Sep 1944.

The Edelstein's owned a department store in Barkly East. The other two such stores were Seligmann's and Mukheibir's. The latter is still in business.

11. Oscar **LEVY**: d. 27 Sep 1934, aged 32 years.

Oscar, son of Judah Levy of Melsungen in Hesse in Germany, came out to work in Seligmann's, invited by Iwan Bloch. He was highly educated. He married Iwan's widow, but died soon after.

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Documents and information kindly provided by Mr. F. Bloch, Mrs. F. Bradley, Detlef Girres, Mrs. J. Van Wyk, Mrs. W.S. Rindl, Dr. R. Rosenberg.

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CENTRAL AFRICA

Manfred Schwartz

Immediately after the 1939-1945 World War, a great wave of immigrants flooded the region, and Southern and Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland beckoned many immigrants to its borders. But more than a half a century earlier in 1889, Cecil John Rhodes of De Beers Diamond fame, established, almost as his own fiefdom, the British South Africa Company (BSA) which wielded enormous influence in Africa. In 1923 the country was granted internal self-government and then in 1953 became the Federation of the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland.

As the British Empire builder supreme, he advocated a string of British Possessions stretching from the Cape Colony to that of Egypt, thus on the map, each adjacent entity, printed in red, would form the route of success of British Imperialism. Thus during the latter part of the 1800's many settlers including numbers of Jews of eastern European origin came to this Paradise, and were instrumental in the development of the country.

Later many emigrated from the Boer Republics and the Cape Colony and Natal. One Zeederberg of Pietersberg maintained a Mail Coach Service. He was renowned for having teams of zebras drawing the coaches. Thus many who could afford it, used the Coach Service, from the South, while others via Mozambique were compelled to walk from Beira in the Portuguese Territory on the East Coast, far through Central Africa and inland. From the Zululand eastern coastal strip right up to East Africa and westwards to Equatorial Africa was 'fly belt' (tsetse) country, prevalent too was the feared Malaria Fever. Thus the intrepid settlers faced hazards from wild animals as well as all the debilitating diseases and shortages of adequate food.

Glossina (*Tsetse-fly*) which transmits Nagana in animals and sleeping sickness in man, precluded domestic animals from being utilised for transport. As the railways had not been laid, people had to WALK the several hundreds of miles, even so far as the Belgium Congo. One Issy Heimowitz actually told me that in the 1920's, when he came to Africa he had travelled for almost 1000 miles from Beira as far as Elizabethville (Lumbasha) in the Belgium Congo.

The area which became known as Southern Rhodesia was also targeted as a 'promised land' and many pioneers and settlers invaded the Territory and extended to Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland too. Many Sephardic Jews from the Greek Island of Rhodes (famous for one of the Ancient Wonders of the World, the statue of Helios, in the Aegean Sea) came, mainly, to Salisbury. They established a Synagogue in 1932, and kept to their own millennium old customs and culture. Their prayer services are somewhat different from Ashkenazi ones, and the melodies are different too, as are their habits and traditional foods. They have a different pronunciation of a few Hebrew vowels and one Hebrew consonant. However, Ashkenazim are adopting Sephardic pronunciation because it is what used in Israel.

From ancient times Sephardic Jews have been more integrated into the local non-Jewish cultures. Whereas with Ashkenazic Jews, where Judaism flourished, there was greater tension between Christians and Jews, and hence they tended to be isolated from their non-Jewish neighbours, either voluntarily or involuntarily.

In the Islamic lands where Sephardic Judaism developed, no such segregation existed. Sephardic Jewish thought and culture was strongly influenced by Arabic and Greek philosophy and science. Even in the post-war period they were never really totally integrated with the Ashkenazi Jews. It is probable that the Sephardic dialect, Ladino, a mixture of Hebrew and Spanish, precluded their complete absorption. Since they had no common Jewish lingua franca such as Yiddish (of the Slavo-Turic Jews) they were a separate community, and there were few intermarriages.

During the Spanish Inquisition, in 1492, it happened to be that the Ninth of Av was the date designated for all Jews of Spain to leave the country. The horrors which those Jews experienced is of such a magnitude, that one can hardly imagine that even the passing centuries will diminish them.

Prior to 1956 there was no Progressive Jewish Congregation or Reform Movement in Southern Rhodesia. Due to declining numbers generally, in 1977 the Salisbury congregation of Reform Jews, merged with the Orthodox Congregation of other Ashkenazi Jews, who are the Jews of France, Germany, and Eastern Europe. The word

“Ashkenazi” is derived from the Hebrew word for Germany.

In 1935, with the general world depression, Rhodesia too was affected. In order to gainfully employ the population and create and find work and some income, the Government forced every unemployed White male into work gangs or teams and paid them five shillings per day, plus board and food. To absorb the larger number of unemployed, labour intensive Public Service projects were proposed. Thus manual labourers would be used to create and construct a viable system of roads and thus open up the Country for faster communication.

The brilliant idea of Strip Roads came into vogue. These consisted of asphalt strips of 30 inches (750 mm) wide. Oncoming traffic would cause each driver to veer to their left, and thus use only the one strip in each direction. Thereafter each vehicle would return to the two strips, till the next oncoming vehicle. This system existed till just after the War, when slowly all the roads would be widened. The use of Strip Roads certainly opened up the entire country with relatively cheaper all weather roads. Shortly after their completion, the War broke out, and proved to be most useful when the S. A. Defence Force moved convoys of materials and men etc from The Union through Central and East Africa into Somalia, Eritrea, Egypt, and onto the Western Desert.

It was a strange irony that this was a fulfillment of Cecil John Rhodes’ dream of ‘Cape to Cairo’. With all British territories (the ‘all red route’ on every map), across the African Continent, was that dream realised.

During the war the Royal Air Force opened Air flying schools in several of the Commonwealth countries. With the ideal weather conditions prevailing for the most part of the year in Southern Africa scores of servicemen were trained in the two Rhodesias. The majority of Air Force personnel were from over-populated cities, who now experienced a new freedom in the Wild Africa of novels.

So, at the end of the War many ex-airmen and other servicemen decided to settle mainly in Southern Rhodesia. Of these there were quite a number of young Jewish men and women. The influx of cosmopolitan talent and ideas added to the local communities’ cultural and artistic activities, thereby

raising the standard of the Arts, Culture and entertainment and many other social activities.

After the 1948 elections and the victory of the Nationalist Party many South Africans feared that the strict race laws and Apartheid policies of the Government augured ill for the future. Thus large numbers of South Africans decided to emigrate and choose mainly Southern Rhodesia. This influx of new blood, mostly Jewish, helped augment the already existing industries and other commercial enterprises as well as to modernise and bring a greater impetus to the economy.

Added to this was the establishment of the State of Israel, which gave added interest to the Zionist fervour and support and bonding to the new young democracy. To economically assist the infant State, every effort at fund raising was a priority, which the generous community knowing no bounds, enthusiastically encouraged.

In 1949, the Jewish Communities of the Rhodesias celebrated the first anniversary of the Statehood of the Jewish Land of Israel, with elaborate functions and festivities, and this continued each year thereafter. The Zionist enthusiasm of the Rhodesians was akin to that of the other Southern African Jews, and was highlighted in all their fundraising activities. Their efforts at *Aliyah* too, swelled the English speaking numbers in Israel, here too contributing to economic and academic endeavours in Israel.

The expectancy of the Brave New World after the Second World War, which promised an end to all other Wars, gave everyone a brighter future, and showed up in their euphoric outlook and attitudes in every aspect of their activities and lives. The vibrancy of life, though hard, allowed people to enjoy the freedom of a life of leisure in a colonial atmosphere with pleasant, willing and freely available ‘cheap labour’. Like the words of the old song *Those were the Days*, people really thought that ‘they would never end’.

In the commercial sphere factories were established to take advantage of the plentiful, eager labour force. This, together with the need to become a self-supporting economy, gave rise to the manufacture of goods formerly imported from the UK, Continent and the United States.

The war effort had brought about the need for small factories to provide the goods and services required, for everyday wartime life. Building on the expertise from already established industries in the Union of South Africa and the United Kingdom, many concerns opened branches or subsidiaries in Southern Rhodesia. The result was a spate of new and better factories mushrooming throughout the two Rhodesias.

Prosperity was felt in the air and the entire country experienced the effects of the rebirth of Rhodesian achievements - Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial, Constructional or Cultural. The fires of economic success were further fuelled by virtual full employment and immigrants entering the Country. People were gainfully employed with the chance to earn money, and were spending their wages and salaries to satisfy their yearnings, aspirations, and newly discovered wants.

Many would claim that the colonial days were not as bad as the post period, where Jack is as good, or even better than his Master. Further, it may be considered erroneous that the idea of *Uhuru* with its idiom of 'majority rule' is the panacea to remedy all historical evils. Despite the shackles of the Indigenous Peoples throughout the colonies, there were certain degrees of education, health services, legal processes, law and order.

In all these fields, there are specific examples of how Jewish endeavour and achievement has been influential. Throughout their long history of migration, settlement and entrepreneurship, the Jews have always contributed adequately and sufficiently to every country which has hosted them. Their ability to reach pinnacles of excellence in every field is so well recorded that one has at the back of ones mind the thought that no matter where or when they are, the Jews become achievers, leaders and prosperous citizens.

The Central African scene was no different. Jews filled high positions in all spheres with their drive, enthusiasm, expertise, high ethic standards and achievements. From agriculture to zoology, Jews make the grade and make their Home Land or Country of Adoption prosperous.

For the names of many Jewish tradesmen, businessmen commercial and industrialists in the early 1950's, they can be accessed from the following websites:

Bulawayo, Zimbabwe:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/safrica/communities/16/index.htm>

Harare Zimbabwe:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/safrica/communities/12/index.htm>

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SEARCHING KOENIGSBUCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

Jacob Rosen

The following is an excerpt from the search I am conducting regarding the Koenigsbuch family who originated in Brzesko, Galicia (now Poland), and whose unknown branches are spread throughout the world.

Neither my late mother nor her late brother, who were supposedly the only survivors from the Koenigsbuch family, were aware that their father, Asher Koenigsbuch had many cousins who left Brzesko for Germany prior to WWI. When I realized, in November 2002, that this was the case, I went on an Internet search "cruise". One of the first things I discovered was that one of those cousins, Jacob Koenigsbuch, escaped from Herne, Germany, to Buenos Aires in 1939. I received his marriage certificate from his grandson that indicated that his mother's maiden name was Teichteil.

On July 27, 2003, I searched the JOWBR (JewishGen Online World Burial Registry) database and discovered that a woman by the name of Amalie Teichteil-Koenigsbuch died on September 6, 1942 in Johannesburg. A fax, in reply to the one that I sent to the Johannesburg Burial Society, said that they had no details about the deceased. I then checked the National Archives of South Africa (www.national.archives.gov.za) for Koenigsbuch. They had a divorce file from 1943 of Erna Teichteil-Koenigsbuch. A copy of the file, which was ordered through a fellow genealogist, disclosed that she was born in Essen, Germany, married there in 1934 to Fritz Klestadt after which they emigrated to South Africa.

About the same time, I discovered through the rather modest search engine, *Hotbot* (www.hotbot.com) a student in Toulouse, France, by the name of Florent Koenigsbuch-Teichteil. An e-mail exchange revealed that his grandfather Heinz Koenigsbuch-Teichteil was born in 1913 in Essen, Germany, where he died in 2002. Heinz indeed had a sister in South Africa. Florent and his father, who also resides in Toulouse, knew only that this sister had two daughters and lived in Cape Town, South Africa. They did not have her address or the names of her daughters. More important, they did not even know her updated surname!

So, I decided to look for Erna XXX who was born in Germany, had two daughters and resided in Cape Town, but considering her date of birth, it was questionable whether she was still alive. A search in Cape Town's telephone directory did not yield any results. Neither were the attempts to locate relatives of Fritz Klestadt who died in Johannesburg in 1987.

An enquiry through contacts in Pretoria and an ad in *The South Africa Jewish Report* led to people who were members of *B'nai Brith* in Cape Town – in which most of the German Jewish immigrants were active. They could not recall anyone with this name. Some remembered a Koenigsberg family whose children now live in England (many people confuse the rare name Koenigsbuch with the more common name of Koenigsberg). A posting on Jewishgen did not bring me any further results.

As a last resort, I contacted Beryl Baleson, the SA-SIG Coordinator in Israel. She did not leave a stone unturned in Cape Town, but to no avail.

Then it occurred to me that perhaps we were on the wrong track and that we should look further into South Africa. After all, Erna XXX was divorced in Johannesburg. Maybe she remarried and stayed there. But, what is her surname? Is she alive? Beryl, the wonderful "search engine" did it again! She contacted Dr. Saul Issroff from London who reviewed what we had done so far. He put us in contact with a lady in Johannesburg by the name of Madeline (surname unknown to me). She contacted an elderly gentleman who is the "doyen" of the German Jewish Community in Johannesburg.

Well, it worked. Mr. Franz Benedikt knew Erna and her new surname. A search in Johannesburg's telephone directory yielded both a telephone number and an address. However, repeated calls to that number were not answered. Perhaps she does not live there any more?

Another attempt by Paul Cheifitz was successful. Erna answered the phone on May 17, 2004 after returning from hospital. She is 95 years old.

We found Erna and her two daughters who are married and all reside in Johannesburg. We also found that Amalie was her mother.

I would like to thank also Mrs. Diane Wolfson from Pretoria and Mrs. Goldie Glick from Cape Town for their help and dedication.

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LESLIE / KINROSS REUNION

A reunion of people that lived / farmed in the LESLIE / KINROSS region of the Transvaal will be held on Sunday, 24 October 2004 at the Pinelands *Shul* hall, in Johannesburg.

If you know anyone from that area, please notify them of this meeting, or they can contact one of the organisers, Ms. Dorrin Glen, in Johannesburg, directly, for exact details of the reunion.

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**The 25th IAJGS International
Conference on Jewish
Genealogy**

will be held 10 - 15 July 2005

at the

Flamingo Hotel

In Las Vegas, Nevada

*For more information about the
conference, see:*

<http://www.jgssn.org/>

OUTDSHOORN AT 120 YEARS

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The United Hebrew Institutions of Oudtshoorn will celebrate the community's 120th anniversary on the weekend 12 to 14 November 2004.

Prominent rabbinical leaders including Rabbi Desmond Maizels, Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, spiritual leader of the Country Communities and a top cantor and choir will be in attendance.

The National Board of Deputies' Management Committee will meet in Oudtshoorn on Sunday, 14th November, the first time in the history of the Board that they meet outside Johannesburg, indicating the significance of the occasion.

The planned programme is:

Friday Shul Service:

6.30 pm, followed by an *Oneg Shabbat*

Saturday morning Shul Service:

9 am, followed by Brocha/Lunch

Saturday afternoon Shul Service:

6.30 pm, followed by *Seudah Shlishit* and *Ma-ariv* Service

Saturday evening:

8 pm, *braai* at Welgeluk, Safari Farm

At this function *Stoepstories* will be presented by present and former Oudtshoornites. Anybody interested in participating please contact us ASAP.

Sunday Morning:

10 am, a Memorial Service at the Cemetery followed by a Tea at 11.30 am at the Shul

A list of available accommodation – guesthouses, hotels, self catering accommodation etc will be provided. All visitors must please contact us for info of functions and accommodation.

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