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President’s Report

First, let me say Shanah Tovah to everyone. In concert with the New Year, the Latvia SIG is expanding its primary role of helping SIG members become more productive genealogy researchers. Those of you with web access have probably noticed that new databases have been added to the JewishGen Latvia Database. All of us owe a debt of gratitude as well as our thanks to Arlene Beare who has, almost single handedly, acquired the data from the archives and made it available to researchers around the world. Arlene continues to maintain close contact with the archivists in Riga and is spearheading the effort to bring on-line the 1897 All Russian Census for Dvinsk (Daugavpils).

As I mentioned in our last newsletter, I am now in possession of thirty oral testimonies and Russian transcripts of the testimonies. With Latvia SIG sponsorship, we have begun to translate these testimonies into English and I am very happy that this issue of the newsletter contains the first of these translations. I have asked the editor to start with the testimony of Zalman Jakub, the well known historian from Daugavpils, since I had the privilege of meeting him in Daugavpils during the summer of 2001. In the photograph of Zalman, you can see him autographing one of his books for me.

Also in the last issue, I talked about our effort to develop a Dvinsk Shtetlink that will be accessible via the Latvia SIG web site under JewishGen. Dave Howard has already begun this development and we need help from any of you who can provide interesting Dvinsk-related material. Please contact me directly at: bbshay@starpower.net or Dave Howard at: dshoward@usa.net if you have information, photos, video clips, official documents, etc. that you think would be helpful and of interest to the Latvia SIG community.

Mike Getz, my mentor, has collected interesting historical material concerning the Holocaust and Latvia that I have begun to “computerize” that material with the intent of making it available on our web site. I have asked the editor to include two samples of this material in this issue of the newsletter and he has agreed. More of this material will be made available in future issues.

The major genealogical event of the year is the annual IAJGS conference, and the 2005 version was held this past July in Las Vegas, Nevada. I am happy to report that the Latvia SIG had a very good turnout at the conference. Despite some early organizational difficulties, the Latvia SIG held a spirited meeting and a very congenial luncheon. I am happy to report that I was nominated and elected President of the SIG for a second term—and this time I was present.

In an attempt to avoid succession difficulties that have arisen in the past, the board decided to add the office of Vice President and I am happy to announce that Henry Blumberg was nominated and elected to that office. Henry has been involved with Latvia-specific genealogy for a number of years, and attended the Liepaja memorial ceremony last year. He will be a great asset to the organization and I look forward to working with him. Henry gave a memorable presentation entitled, “The Liepaja Memorial Wall: Restoring Names, Honoring Memories,” at our annual meeting. A version of that presentation is included in this issue of the newsletter.

Mike Getz and Rhea Plottel will continue as treasurer and membership chair, respectively. Arlene Beare will continue to be our database coordinator and Dave Howard will fill the role of web site coordinator.

While at the IAJGS conference I met with Mike Getz, Henry Blumberg and Dave Howard. Much of our discussion concerned how the Latvia SIG could provide added value to its membership while continuing to grow. We came up with a number of ideas and recommendations that I would like you to think about and, hopefully, respond to, including the following:

- Existing members should actively recruit new members - including children and other relatives
- A plan should be developed to attract younger members
- More use should be made of the Latvian family finder and it should be sortable by name
and shtetl

- A more detailed questionnaire should be distributed requesting information about research successes (and failures), shtetl origins, and local Lansmanshaften. To encourage members to respond, perhaps a CD of past newsletters should be given to those who do.

- We should encourage more cooperation with other SIGs, e.g. Belarus, Litvak, and Rokiskis.

- Backdated newsletters and/or selected articles should be made available on the Latvia SIG web site.

- Information useful for members interested in preparing family histories should be provided, such as the historical, political and cultural context surrounding a particular shtetl at a particular time.

- Update the SIG web site with additional links and content.

- The connection with Israel should be strengthened, e.g. with Yad Vashem and Beth Hatefutsoth.

- List of members who have actually traveled to Latvia along with advice for others who plan to travel there.

- List of Latvian contacts who may be helpful to potential travelers

- Establish contacts outside of Latvia from which pertinent material may be available, e.g. Stockholm, Estonia, Minsk (Latgale material) and Moscow

- Update the Latvia bibliography

- Establish contacts with the USHMM. (Mike Getz has been in contact with Valdim Altshang)

Please note that this issue of the newsletter is the first of the new membership year, so, if you haven’t done so already, complete the membership questionnaire included with this issue and send it with your dues to Mike Getz, our treasurer.

Barry, Dave, Henry, and Mike in LV

As you probably know, the Jewish Genealogical Society of New York is hosting the 2006 IAJGS annual conference, which will be held at the New York Marriott Marquis hotel in New York City from August 13th to 18th. A call for papers has been announced with a deadline with a deadline of December 1, 2005 for submissions of abstracts.

The Latvia SIG is interested in sponsoring a speaker at the conference, so if you or someone you know is interested in presenting a paper, please go to the conference web site: http://www.jgsny2006.org/call.cfm to submit an abstract. All abstract submissions must be submitted via the on-line abstract module process. Suggested topics for submittals include:

- Computer Training Workshops
- Eastern and Central European research
- Genetics and DNA Research
- Holocaust Research
- Immigration, Naturalization and Migration Methodology
- Metropolitan New York City and New York State Research
- Non-European Research (e.g. India, China)
- Rabbinical Research Repositories
- Sephardic Research
- Technology and Internet Resources
- United States Research
- Yiddish Theater/Tin Pan Alley
As in past conferences, the Latvia SIG will be hosting a luncheon as well as its annual meeting. These two venues offer you a great opportunity to present interesting material to the Latvia SIG community in a less formal environment. Those of you who attended these venues in Las Vegas can attest to the membership’s interest in such presentations. So, please submit your ideas as to what you would like to see as well as what you would like to present.

Barry Shay
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Treasurer’s Report

This report covers the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005. Our opening balance on 1 July 2004 stood at $4500 ($3400 July 2003). At the end of June 2005 our approximate balance will be $5400 ($4400 June 2004). Income for the year totaled $2800, including almost $1000 in generous donations from members. Members have contributed and additional $975 to the SIG through JewishGen.

Expenditures of some $1900 included printing and mailing of newsletters, archival research and minor items for the Jerusalem conference.

We currently have 75 paid-up members, reflecting decline from the previous year. Our membership is concentrated in the United States and Canada, with fewer but important subscribers in the UK, Europe and Israel. The SIG also supplies copies of the newsletter to institutions and individuals in the UK, Europe and Israel that are interested and involved in our sphere of interest.

The needs and opportunities to develop our base of knowledge remain important. As priorities are established fundraising must become important too. We will need to boost recruitment to reach these goals. Generally, the core interest in Latvia’s Jewish Genealogy remains encouraging. Involvement and participation of a younger generation is also apparent both in the US and Israel.

I want to express my appreciation to Rhea Plottel for her help in maintaining our membership base. Our president, Barry Shay, has been heavily engaged in the affairs of the SIG as well as editing its newsletter, which is a key link to our membership. In many respects he has also broadened our approach to the business of the SIG. Barry has carried almost the total burden of preparing for and setting up our involvement in this conference.

The help and support I have always enjoyed from members and colleagues are deeply appreciated.

I will be happy to respond to any questions or comments.

Mike Getz
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Editor’s Comments

As far as I know, the contents of this issue of the newsletter represent a first for the Latvia SIG. I am happy to include archival material from USHMM and Beth Hatefutsoth in Tel Aviv as well the first translation into English of one of the oral testimonies conducted by the Center for Judaic Studies, at the University of Latvia, in Riga. The interviews were carried out by Aina Antane, secretary to Professor Ruven Ferber - the lead researcher for the project.

The Latvia SIG has begun translating these transcripts into English and I decided to include Zalman Jakub’s account first, since I had the privilege of meeting him in Daugavpils during the summer of 2001. In the photo, Zalman is signing a copy of his book for me. The photo was taken at Jewish community center in Daugavpils where I was introduced to Zalman Jakub by Sofija Meyerova, head of the Jewish community.
The reports from the USHMM were obtained by Mike Getz and contain first-hand accounts of the ghastly treatment of Latvian Jews by the Germans and Latvians. In this first letter, Selma Schebschelowitz describes life and death in the Riga Ghetto that will be etched in your mind for years to come.

The material, also obtained by Mike Getz, from Beth Hatefutsoth provides brief historical accounts of Jewish shtetls throughout Latvia and the effect of the Holocaust on those shtetls. Dov Levin and Martha Lev-Zion made the acquisition of these document possible, and we can not thank them enough for their efforts.

I am thankful to Rochelle Kaplan and Henry Blumberg for providing material of interest to the Latvian SIG community that was presented at the IAGJS conference in Las Vegas. Rochelle’s contribution highlights Alexander Beider’s fact-filled account of the origin of Jewish surnames in Latvia and Lithuania. Personally, I have been able to determine the origin of my own surname through Beider’s research.

Henry Blumberg, our new vice president, was kind enough to recast the moving account of his visit to the Liepaja Memorial ceremonies that he presented in Las Vegas for this issue of the newsletter. I look forward to Henry providing additional articles for future issues.

I have been in contact with Lois Rosen for the past few months, and I am very happy that she was able to document Schmuel’s story for this issue. I anticipate more contributions from Lois as she continues her research.

Finally, I received a note from Dvora (Debbie) Shafrir-Keret, who wrote the moving story, in the June 2005 issue, of how she found her grandmother Johanna Gerson after many years of trying. Debbie wanted to clarify the point that she and her family descended from the Friedmann and Brick families and not from the Gerson family as was written in the article.

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**JewishGen Latvia Database Update**

*By Arlene Beare*

The JewishGen Latvia Database has grown at an impressive rate and now covers families that were living in Latvia in the 19th century and beyond. The following databases are currently available for searching on the JewishGen web site.

**All Latvia**
- Jewish Religious Personnel In The Russian Empire, 1853/1854
- All Russian 1897 Census – Riga, Rezekne, Kruspils
- Livland Gubernia
- Jewish Inhabitants of Riga 1885/1886
- Riga Tax Administration Lists 1858-1917
- Extraordinary Commission Lists for Riga
- Riga Passport And Travel Document Registration List 1900

**Courland Gubernia**
- Courland 1907 Duma Voters Lists
- Recruits Enlistment Registers (1845-1874) and 1874 Bauska Family Lists
- Passlossen - Jews Without Lawful Permit 1855
- Jews in Hasenpoth/Aizpute 1834
- Kurland Young Men’s Mutual Association “KYMMAS”
- Curland Vedomosti Database

**Vitebsk Gubernia**
- Dvinsk/Daugavpils Family Lists 1876-1917
- 1911 Vsia Rossiia Business Directory - Vitebsk

One of the most informative databases is the 1897 All Russian Census. We are fortunate to have the 1897 data for Riga, Rezekne and Kruspils. We plan to continue to add to this database and we now have data for Friedrichstadt, now Jaunjelgava, Jakobstadt, now Jekabpils, Talsen and Tukums.

The Latvia SIG has added two large databases to the JewishGen Latvia Database. The first is a family list for 1898 belonging to the Jewish Community of Rezekne. The original is handwritten in Russian Script and forms part of the holdings of the Latvia State Historical Archives in Riga. The original list, of nearly 7,000 surnames, contains children as well as adults.

The second is a very large listing of Riga marriages with over 9,000 bride and groom given
names and surnames, resulting in almost 20,000 names.

We are acquiring family lists for smaller communities and they will be combined into a Smaller Districts Family Lists database. We already have family lists for Cesis, Tukums, Riga and Ludza districts, which we plan to make available in the next year.

In your personal research, please remember to verify with the Latvian State Historical Archives that the data you feel belongs to your family does, indeed, belong to your family. You should be able to obtain copies of original documents from the Archives.

The archivists represent an important resource with many other sources at their disposal. Currently, you may have to wait between six months and one year to receive material. A deposit is no longer required in your initial request. If the archivists feel that research can be performed on your behalf, they will inform you to send a deposit. They will also notify you if they feel that a productive search is not possible based on the information you provided.

I am looking for someone conversant with Excel, and not employed full time, to assist me in preparing databases for web access. Please contact me at: arl@dircon.co.uk if you are interested.

**Boss Beider Does It Again!**
By Rochelle Kaplan

Alexander Beider’s IAJGS July Conference fascinating lectures on Reliable Etymology and the Surnames from Latvia and Lithuania were brilliant – no surprise to Beider watchers. I will summarize the Baltic surnames talk.

Alexander began by stating that he required two sources for each surname and thanking the Jewish Gen Courland, Latvia and Litvak SIGs. Then he delved into Latvian history.

Today, Latvia is divided into four districts: Vidzeme (main city Riga), Kurzeme (main city Liepaja), Zemgale (main cities Jelgava, Jekabpils) and Latgale (main cities Daugavpils, Rezekne, Ludza). In the latter 18th century, the country was divided differently. There was Russian Livonia, with its capital Riga. Jews then were prohibited from living in Riga. Polish Livonia, established in 1772, contained the main cities of Dunaburg (now Daugavpils), Rezhitsa and Lyutsin. The Duchy of Courland, established in 1795, included the main cities of Libau (now Liepaja) and Mitau (now Jelgava). This was later annexed by Russia. The Bishopric of Piltene, dating from 1795 had as its main cities Grobin (now Grobina) and Hasenpoth (now Aizpute). This was annexed by Russia from Poland.

In 1824, there were 513 Jews in Riga. In the western part of Vitebsk in 1802 there were 1900 Jewish male taxpayers, primarily in Dinaburg, Rezhitsa and Lyutsin. In Courland in 1797, 5000 Jewish males resided, primarily in Mitau, Libau, Grobin and Hasenpoth. Jews have been known to live in Courland since the 15th century. Not known is where they came from. They may have migrated from Poland, Northern Germany and Prussia.

In Courland, an 1804 law required surnames. Before then, Jews used a first name and patronymic. One example was Moses Abraham. Moses was the child, Abraham the father. Another example was Behr Aronowitz, a recent migrant from Lithuania or Dinaburg. The son was Behr; the father was Aron. The suffix “owitz” was a foreign suffix meaning “son of”. One of the most common surname patterns was that first names became surnames. This was prevalent before 1804. Christians followed this pattern. Some examples were Marcus, Laser and Lippman. Also following this pattern were Jacobsohn, Mendelsohn and Michaelsohn. The suffix “sohn” is a Germanized rendition of “son of”. Further examples included Berkowitz, Jankelowitz and Judelowitz, with the suffix “owitz” being Polish for “son of”. This pattern was used by recent migrants from Poland. Beider noted that first names were not the same for Jews and Christians, except for Jacob. Another patronymic pattern used the German suffix “stamm”, which means “descended from”. Examples include Bernstamm and Mendelstamm.

Another pattern was to use Latinized surnames such as Benedictus, Lowius, Wullfius, Massenius (from Baruch or Benedict, Leib, Wulf and
Moses). Related to this were the Latin geniticized form of adding a suffix vowel, such as Jacobi, Marcuse and Stephany. This pattern was also used in Prussia. Germanized versions of “ov” led to surnames such as Asarow, Davidoff, Jeruchmanow.

Surnames were often designed to look like typical German place names. Thus, Germanized Jewish first names plus toponymic endings that look German include examples like Aronstein, Feitelberg, Herzberg, Levinthal, Mansfeld, Hirschhorn and Bernitz. Another pattern used place names where Jews and nobles lived. Examples of this type are Goldinger, Mitauer, Hasenpoth, Friedrichsboig, and Sallgaller.

Another surname source was artificial compound names with a pleasant meaning. Among these are Eisenstein, Engelberg, Konigsfesst, Himmelhoch, Blumenfeld and Paradiesgarten.

Occupational surnames such as Kramer, Wasserman, Fleisher, Glaser and Blechman were created. Rarer were rabbinical surnames. Yiddish and Hebrew names, moreover, became sources for surnames, but this practice was also uncommon. A few surnames came from Slavic words.

Common threads to Courland surnames were that they were German sounding, similar to Prussia patterns in 1812. Rarely used were rabbinic, Hebrew or Slavic names. The surnames were assigned by local Christian clerks. Till the end of the 19th century, German was the official language of Courland and the culture was German. The area was close to neighboring Prussia.

Different naming patterns arose in the Western Vitebsk Gubernia — which included Dinaberg, Rechitsa and Lutuzin. There, half the surnames derived from place names. Examples include Bobrov, Dell, Lotsov and Dridza. Many surnames came from Hebrew and/or Biblical expressions. Examples include Khait, Magid, Sandler, Tager, Gamzu, Isiemini, Mamiote, Vovsi, Zangvil and Don-Yakhiya. Only a small number of surnames were patronymics.

Beider then outlined Lithuanian history. The area was annexed by Russia in 1795, in the third partition of Poland. Vilna Gubernia was created in 1798. Lithuania from 1798-1801 was Vilna and Slonim. Since 1842, Lithuania was Vilna and Kovno. The Jewish population was concentrated in Vilna, Troki, Sventysany and Oshmyany. There were 13,000 Jews in 1797. In the Kovno Novo area, including Aleksandrovsk, Ponevzh, Telshi, Shavilia and Rossieny, there were 33,000 Jews in 1797.

An unusual naming pattern included occupationally derived names. In Troki (Trakai) District, examples include Reznikovich, Glezerovich and Blyakherovich. Sometimes the names had a Slavic root or Yiddish and Belarus/Polsih suffix. In Telshi (Telsiai), no suffixes were used in surnames. Names were derived from first names only or from Lithuanian place names. Examples of this type include Ayzik, Bentzel, Fayvush, Beyl, Duseyk, Gorzhd, Yavshits, Yazdayts and Beyrakh.

A common surname source was from male given names. Aronson, Abramovich, Abelson, Shaevichzon, Izraelevichson and Berelovich fit this description. Note that the suffix “vich” is Slavic, corresponding to German “son” or “zon”. In Izraelevichson where both suffixes were used, Izrael was the grandfather.

Another common source for surnames was Lithuanian place names. In Kovno, these were suffixless. In Vilna Gubernia, surnames often end with the suffix “ski”, which is the Belarus adjective “of”. The “ski” often occurs after place names. In both Kovno and Vilna, 10% of surnames end with the suffix “er”, meaning inhabitant of. Lithuanian surnames usually end in consonants. They show the influence of Slavic languages. The Belarusian suffix “ovich” or “evich”, meaning “son of” occurs in matronymic examples Dvorkovich, Esterovich and Rivkovich. Occupational names led to surnames such as Kravetz, Kushner and Reznik. Occupationally derived surnames also came from non-Slavic sources. Examples from German include Glaser, Kramer, Miller and Nadel. From Yiddish come Glezer, Kremer, Milner and Nodel. From Hebrew derive Katsev, Khait, Melamud and Sandler. The surname picked depended on the status of Yiddish and the Courland influence. Created were other German
artificial names such as Rosenberg, Rosensweig and Rosenthal. Other Hebrew surnames found were Arpakhsande, Beyslekhem, Katz, Segal, Rambam and Mapu. A few artificial names honor medieval scholars.

Beider noted that the status of the Latvian language was low in Courland and in Western Vitebsk. Latvian was the vernacular, peasant language. The status of Yiddish was also low.

Beider talked about spelling changes. Courland used German from 1804 to the 1890s, Russian from the 1890s to 1918, Latvian from 1918 to the 1940s, Russian from the 1940s to 1990 and Latvian from 1990 to the present. Thus, names were transliterated. Lithuania used Russian from 1804 to 1918, Lithuanian in Kaunas or Polish in Vilnius from 1918 to the 1940s, Russian from the 1940s to 1990, and Lithuanian from 1990 to the present, so names were transliterated. As a result, the same name looks different. Lewin is a common Jewish name in Polish or German. It becomes Levinas in Lithuanian, Levi in Latvian, Levin in English and Levine in America.

In response to comments and questions, Beider stated that the suffix “man”, meaning man in German or Yiddish, was used to create name variety. Examples include Weisman and Rivasman (Rivka’s husband). He noted that in Lithuanian, surnames take different variants depending on marital status and gender. Russian and Latvian take different forms for gender. Polish used to take different forms but doesn’t any longer. The Russian suffix “ovna” means “daughter of”.

**The Liepaja Holocaust Memorial**

By Henry Blumberg

On 9 June 2004 the Liepaja Holocaust Memorial was unveiled among distinguished guests, Holocaust survivors from many countries and descendants of Libauers who traveled there from various locations around the world.

Guests of honor included the representative of the President of Latvia, Uldis Sesks, the mayor of Liepaja and the ambassadors of Germany, Israel, Russia, Sweden and the USA. Also present were George Schwab, President, National Committee on American Foreign Policy, Steven Springfield, President, Jewish Survivors of Latvia, Arkadij Suharenko, President of the Latvian Council of Jewish Communities and Sergey Zaharjin, a sponsor of the event.

**Liepaja Holocaust Memorial Wall**

Among the many that attended the dedication ceremony were members of the Jewish Survivors of Latvia as well as a group from Israel organized by Mr. Sol Feigerson. In addition to a number of Holocaust survivors there were also numerous Libauer descendants.

A small group of dedicated people, namely Prof Edward Anders of the USA, Vladimir Bahns and Ilana Ivanova of Liepaja, comprised the Memorial Committee.

**Vladimir Bahns**

Ilana Ivanova worked tirelessly in preparing the detailed program for the dedication ceremony and arranged a schedule of activities for the guests and visitors. Edward and Joan Anders hosted a
dinner for all visitors and guests at the Liva Hotel. Sergej Zaharjin generously paid most of the expenses for close to 50 guests including two days hotel accommodation as well as providing free return bus transportation from Riga to Liepaja. A welcoming dinner was also hosted by the families of Sergej and Valerij Zaharjin.

In the program prepared for the memorial dedication, Edward Anders and Vladimir Bans point out that the need for the memorial became evident in 1998 when one of them learned that the names of most Liepaja Holocaust victims had been forgotten. Apparently, Yad Vashem had since 1953 collected victims’ names from survivors but only 20% of the names from Latvia had been recovered, and there appeared to be little hope of getting additional names. As only 2% of Latvian Jews had survived the German occupation, many Liepaja Jewish families and friends were totally annihilated in the Holocaust, leaving nobody to remember their names.

Juris Dibrovskis in Riga aided in searching a dozen archival sources in five countries for the names of Jews who lived in Liepaja on the eve of the Holocaust. His efforts combined with others resulted in a memorial book published in 2001 listing 7,060 names. The list posted on the memorial wall includes the names of 6,422 names of the victims of Hitler and Stalin and is estimated to represent at least 93% of the total.

A list of brave Latvians who rescued Jews is also inscribed on the memorial wall. Roberts and Johanna Seduls hid 11 Jews for nearly two years in a cleverly disguised hideout in the basement of the apartment building in Tirgonu Iela 14 (now 22) and could be considered to be the most outstanding of the recorded rescuers. Tragically, Roberts Seduls was killed by an artillery shell on 10 May 1945, but his wife, helped by a few others, continued to care for the Jews until the end of the war.

Two daughters of Roberts Seduls were guests of honor as was the grandson of Grieta Enins who had rescued two Jews. The rescuers saved thirty-three Jews by hiding them for days, months or years or providing them with false papers.

It appears that the punishment for hiding a Jew was much more severe in Latvia than in many other countries. The historian Margers Vestermanis reports that fifty-two Latvians paid with their lives for hiding Jews. The hosts had huge problems in feeding the fugitives. Accordingly, even if the hosts had the means to buy food on the black market they had to hide the large amount of food and other signs of an increased number of people, voices, footsteps, laundry, etc., from the neighbors.

Bella Blumberg, a Holocaust survivor of Libau with her daughter Rita Bogdanova, (both living in Riga) sitting with Henry Blumberg of Toronto and Gina Schochat and Vivian Rakoff, also of Toronto at the dinner hosted by Edward and Joan Anders.
Jenny Sommer, also a holocaust survivor, originally from Libau and now living in New Jersey with Bella Blumberg. They had not seen each other since the war.

Ed Anders in his presentation stated that: “we have come here to honor the 6,400 Liepaja Jews who died in Hitler’s Holocaust and in Stalin’s Gulag.” He added: “But we also want to honor the 200 survivors and those brave Latvians and Germans who saved 33 of them. Lastly, we want to thank the Soviet, British, and American armies that liberated the rest”.

On June 29, 1941 some Jews died defending Latvia and leaving about 6,500 behind. On July 3, 1941 Jews were arrested and the Einsatzgruppen shot 47 of them. Furthermore, on July 24 & 25, 1941 the notorious Latvian SD commando under Viktors Arajs arrived from Riga and shot about 1,100 Jewish men.

Shootings of men and women continued in the next months – first at the lighthouse and fish factory, then on the navy base. Towards the end of 1941, from December 15 to 17, 1941, 2,749 people, mainly women and children, were shot at Skede by three firing squads and at the end of 1941 only 1,050 Jews were alive.

Long trenches were dug in Skede before the massacre of the Jews. The victims were forced to undress and were placed in small groups along the edge of the trench and then shot by German and Latvian squads. The bodies fell into the mass grave.

By July 1, 1942 only 832 survivors were left and they were forced into the Ghetto.

On October 8, 1943, 800 people were sent to Kaiserwald near Riga. There the prisoners suffered from hunger, cold and overcrowding. In 1944, when the Soviet army closed in thousands of
Jews in the camp were killed or deported to Stutthof camp. From August to September 1944, 350 Jews remained in Kaiserwald and they were deported to the Stutthof concentration camp, east of Danzig, Poland.

After liberation, 176 Jews were left with 44 survivors in Liepaja. Thus very few of the Liepaja Jews survived the occupation.

Today only six of the original Liepaja families remain; all other members of the Liepaja Jewish Community are immigrants from Russia or the Ukraine.

In a message read at the memorial, Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of Latvia stated, “Today, standing here at the memorial site for the victims of Nazism, it is important for everyone to understand and evaluate the events of that time. What madness and hatred had seized people that caused them to destroy thousands of innocent fellow men?”

Henry Blumberg, originally from Cape Town, SA, is a senior partner with Blumberg Segal LLP, Barristers & Solicitors in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. His father Julius (Sundel) Blumberg was born in Libau.

Schmuel’s Story
By Lois Rosen
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This is the beginning of a story. We all have the pieces of the lives of our relatives in one form or other, and they are all beginnings of stories. We continue our research, and find out more. The story unfolds and grows, and we must tell it again - from the beginning. It is an old story, but seems new. It is the story of my family and of yours. We must always tell it. Again.

This is the story of Schmuel Rozinko, a member of my family. He was one of Abram and Enta Rozinko’s ten children. The Rosinko family lived in Dvinsk, Latvia. According to the 1st All Russian census of 1897, the family lived in a two-room apartment in a wooden house in Dvinsk at the corner of Ogorodnay and Bolotnaya Streets. Abram and Enta’s three oldest children, Hana, Tamara and Schewel-Selik, were already on their own. They had six children at home, and the youngest, Rakhel, wasn’t born yet. They had also taken in a foster child, a one-year-old named Haja Kwin. Schmuel was six years old in 1897. His 14-year-old sister worked at an umbrella factory, and his 8-year-old brother studied the Talmud. His brother Gershen-Mendel was listed as deaf and dumb. His father Abram was a porter.

Through the early 1900’s, five of Schmuel’s siblings emigrated. Feiga came to the US in 1904 at age 22. She became Fanny. Hirsch became Harry and also immigrated to the US. Leib became Louis and came in 1914 at age 18. Tamara married and left for England, and Rakhel married and moved to Poland. Hana, Schewel-Selik, Gerschen-Mendel, and Schmuel married and remained in Latvia.

The family left Dvinsk in 1920 for Riga. Schmuel and his wife had three children: Michel, Ilya and Sara. Sara died at age two of typhus, and Michel died much later as a soldier in the war. Ilya survived.

Ilya was rounded up with many others by the Russians before the Nazis invaded Latvia. He was labeled a spy and was sent to the Russian Gulag. He was exiled to the northern Russian region called Vorkuta, and was imprisoned there for 28 years working in the coal mines. There he met his wife, a Ukrainian Jew named Raisa. They had two children. In 1968, the young family was released and they made their way back to Riga!

Almost all of Ilya’s relatives in Latvia were lost. His grandparents, Abram and Enta, had died before he was sent to Vorkuta, and most of the others were killed by the Nazis in 1941. Gershen-Mendel’s son survived, as did Michel’s wife. They have told a story of a train ride. In an attempt to leave Riga before the Nazis advanced, many of the family boarded a train. As the train was departing, Schmuel got off. He said that he was born in Latvia, and that it was in Latvia that he would die. His wife Lea followed him.

Schmuel and Lea suffered the fate of hundreds of Jews in Riga almost immediately after the Nazis entered Riga in 1941. They were living near the famous Choral Synagogue on Gogol Street. In the synagogue many Jews who had fled other parts of Europe were taking refuge. On a day that is for-
ever in the memory of surviving Latvian Jews, July 4, 1941, the Nazis rounded up Jews in the neighborhood and locked them in the synagogue with the refugees. They then burned down the building, killing all inside.

When Ilya returned to Riga, he spent his life helping to create a memorial on the site of his parents’ death. Today, the synagogue is not rebuilt, but remains in ruin, with a memorial to those who perished there. Ilya passed away in Riga in 1994. His two children now have children and grandchildren of their own.

We know from Yad Vashem testimonies that some family members were murdered on November 30, 1941 when the Nazis shot thousands of Jews in the Rumbula Forest outside Riga. We can well imagine the fate of the others. Each of their Riga house registers for 1941 notes, “Struck off house register, unknown to where.”

The information for this story comes from Yad Vashem testimonies and documents provided by the Latvian State Historical Archives. In addition, there were stories. Stories told to me by Schmuel’s great grand daughter, whom I was able to find through the JewishGen Family Finder.
I will continue to research, and tell the story. Again. From the beginning.

**Interview with Zalman Jakub**

A. A. = Aina Antane  
Z. J. = Zalman Jakub

**A. A.:** What do you remember from your school years?

Z. J.: Well, I do remember myself, since my school years I remember myself. And also since pre-school time I remember something, foggy. But normally I remember myself from my school years. Well, what else. My father was working; he worked as a locksmith-mechanic and also as a welder. He could work as a painter; he had several kinds of professions like that. But my mother was a housewife. Her name was Etabaha, well; she was a housewife. We were a bunch of kids. One girl died, we were five children. She died young. Well, what else? I went to school when I was probably six years old.

**A. A.:** Didn’t you attend Heder?

Z. J.: No, I didn’t go to Heder. I went to a middle school that was a religious school. My father was a pious man. Then, probably, in the fifth grade I switched to a second Jewish school. Well, I went there in the fifth grade.

**A. A.:** Was that school in Hebrew?

Z. J.: Yes, the school was in Hebrew, and of course I read in Hebrew, for example, I read “Les Miserables.” So, that’s how well I knew Hebrew. I read classics. But Yiddish was harder to learn. I haven’t studied it, but I know it well, of course. I write in Yiddish, I was published in “Heimland,” such a magazine, you know. They have published many of my writings there, even about the ghetto. About our ghetto, I will show you right now.

**A. A.:** Tell me now, please, if you can, about your family, you said your father was a pious man, does it mean this family was orthodox, religious?

Z. J.: Well, he wasn’t a fanatic. He wasn’t a fanatic. I remember, once he told me that somewhere in the synagogue, when Jews were arguing, then he said the same way it is circling around the lamp, that’s how the Earth orbits around the Sun. But not as if the Earth is held by the whale who is holding his tail in his mouth. So, father, I remember, was telling me, I was asking - what will happen with our Earth if the whale lets his tail out of his mouth? What will happen with our planet Earth? But he showed me, I also remember, he showed on the paper and then around the lamp how the Sun is changing, how day is coming, how night is coming. I remember, at home we had that kind of book, the history of cosmography, that kind of book. About astronomy. In my opinion, cosmography. Well, what else can I say?

We didn’t live rich. My father was working as a welder. Sometimes he had job, sometimes he didn’t. I remember that one uncle was helping us. He was my mother’s brother and he lived in Riga. He helped us financially, I remember. We were poor.

**A.A.:** Tell me, please, what language were you speaking in your family?

Z. J.: Only in Jewish.

**AA.:** In Yiddish?

Z. J.: In Yiddish. We spoke only in Yiddish. We didn’t speak in Russian, didn’t speak in Hebrew. Only in Jewish.

**A. A.:** How did you communicate outside, in the neighborhood? Were there only Jews around?

Z. J.: No, in our neighborhood lived Pashkevic’s. There lived somebody. There were one, two apartments where Poles lived. So, there was one Pashkevic family, that owned a joinery. So, there were only two apartments. One for Pashkevic’s, and I was close friends with Misha.

**A.:** And in what language did you speak with him?

Z. J.: We spoke in Russian, but how I spoke with him, I can’t tell you.

**A. A.:** But you knew Russian, you had some conversational skills in Russian, too?

Z. J.: Somehow we communicated, I didn’t know
the grammar, so, and even now the same. But my wife, she has read a thousand pages, probably.

A. A.: Tell me, please, how do you remember, what were the relationships among children of different nationalities in Daugavpils. Were there any problems with the other kids?

Z. J.: No, there weren’t any problems. There was no violence or hatred or anti-Semitic actions. No, there weren’t any. I don’t remember any such thing. There wasn’t.

A.: Tell me, please?

Z. J.: I remember, my wife and me, we were walking late at night, when it started to get light already. I remember, we were standing in front of her door, and then her mother told us it is bedtime already. And we were not afraid; we were walking alone, you know, where our beach is. There, in our beach, near the factory, where the levee is. Not only we were in love, but everybody was who was there. In those times lots of folks were walking on the levee. So, we were walking from the factory to the beach and weren’t scared even a little bit. No one would attack you, or beat you. Never. I remember I was standing with my wife in front of her doorway. It was starting to get light outside and her mother told us it is time to go to bed. There was nothing to be afraid of. Nowadays even going outside is frightening. There are hooligans, and those kinds of things. You can read that in newspapers. But then there weren’t those kinds of things. There weren’t.

A. A.: Tell me, please, tell me a little about your family’s way of life. Who were the people your parents socialized with? Were they mostly relatives? Or your father’s coworkers?

Z. J.: Well, father didn’t work anywhere, he worked at home.

A.: Did he have his own workshop?

Z. J.: No, no. What workshop? I remember, in the kitchen there was a machine tool. That’s how he was working; he didn’t have any workshop. We didn’t socialize with anybody, well, just relatives. Well, with neighbors, too. There were some acquaintances, I remember. Of course, my parents had acquaintances. We, children, also had acquaintances-schoolmates. So, we also had acquaintances. No, not a lot, but a few we communicated with. And whom I visited. And they were visiting us. But I can tell, that there weren’t many. Just a few. I had one fellow; his name was Pashka Roin. At the last day of evacuation he came to us - it was at dawn, and there were such a fuss, we didn’t know what to do. He ran to us and said that at the rail-station there is a special train. He said: “Go, don’t be late.”

My brother recently wrote me a letter where he said that, perhaps, only thanks to Pashka we saved ourselves, otherwise we would have stayed there. But he came and woke us up, he woke us and we went and we sat in one special train. We sat in one carriage. After that they started to bomb. My brother and me, we didn’t become confused. Then we walked back to, how it’s called, to Polock, across the border, how was it, I have forgotten. They went on special trains over there. I was in Vitebsk, we got to Leningrad, where our relatives were, our uncles and aunts lived there. And then there were organized good evacuation point from Leningrad, they fed us with cocoa and all that kind of food, they fed us very well. Then they send a special train. That’s how we evacuated.

A. A.: Tell me, please, little bit more, lets return to pre-war time. You already told me about holidays, did you honor all holidays?

Z. J.: All holidays, all holidays.

A.: All holidays...

Z. J.: Also traditional ones...

A.: And candles, and...

Z. J.: And candles, and Shabbat. And mother, I remember, prayed at the candles. I remember, mother always prayed with lighted candles. Also on Passover. And Matzo. My father was a pious man, but he wasn’t fanatic. He didn’t believe in many things, like the Earth has been held by a whale. Standing on the whale. He didn’t believe
in such things. Like today I remember, he said about the Sun. That’s how day and night, Earth is turning, I remember, it was like it happened today.

A. A: Tell me, please, what was the mood in your family and among your relatives before the war and if you remember, when the war started. Did you know anything about Hitler’s brutalities? Did you hear anything?


A. A.: And what was the attitude in your family, to evacuate? Or, we have already lived with Germans; we can live further. What was the mood?

Z. J.: No, we knew about his brutalities. Because we had there in Germany…

A.: How did you know? By rumors?

Z. J.: We didn’t have a radio, our neighbors did. When Hitler gave a speech then we asked our father-he knew German. Once he lived in Germany, he lived at his uncle’s. And he spoke German; therefore they invited him. And he said, come, listen what he is talking about. And a few people gathered there and he translated and was telling what is going on there, what he is talking about, so, therefore it was known about his brutalities. Of course, we knew what they were doing in Germany. I even remember, some Jews came from Germany to our town, they all were terribly hungry, I remember, one came to Synagoge and told what was happening in Germany. It was known, it was written about.

A.: So, it means, you understood, that if the war started...

Z. J.: Everybody knew that.

A.: And understood?

Z. J.: And understood that.

A.: And understood that we would need to evacuate.

Z. J.: Yes, I knew. I remember, father told us that when there were Germans in Daugavpils, it was a good life there. They gave jobs, services, I remember all that. But those were different Germans.

A.: Different ideology?

Z. J.: Yes.

A. A.: Tell me, please, so war has started. How was your life, events? How your friend came.

Z. J.: I already left in June, and we lost each other on the road. I went with my brother to Sverdlovsk region, the Kamenislavs area. I have already forgotten the name of the village. But they went to the Kuibishev region. They went there. They stayed in the special train, but we jumped off. Therefore we had to walk. And then they contacted our relatives in Leningrad. When I came, I immediately wrote to my uncle in Leningrad, they were in Leningrad. Even my aunt. I wrote to them where I was. But when they came to the Kuibishev region, I had already forgotten the name of the place, the collective farm, where they were. And they also wrote. So. And so I suddenly came, I came from the work and they told me that there is a telegram saying that they had come. They came to me, to me they came, to the Sverdlovsk region. What was the name of the place, Kamin? They came to Kamislav. So they came to me and told me how cold they were, they all were in summer clothing, bare and naked. Didn’t have anything. There was some kind of epidemic, they went to Middle Asia, but there, in Middle Asia was a little snow, but a lot of flies and many got sick from those flies, got diarrhea, and lot of people died because of those flies.

A.A.: Did they die from dysentery?

Z. J.: Maybe from dysentery, maybe not from dysentery. I don’t know. And they keep saying: let’s go, let’s go, and so they went to the Sverdlovsk region and they lived in the Altai area. Father and mother lived there.

A.A.: What did you do over there?

Z. J.: I was there, I remember, we came there; sometime around November we still were near Tashkent. That railroad station was outside Tashkent city. I was there, we were there, we came
there, but we were told that it is very cold there. We went there and were told it is warmer. By the way, those, who went to Siberia’s collective farms survived more than those who went to Asia. Many people got sick there from eating fruits, but those who lived in Siberia’s collective farms, they worked there at the collective farms; there were potatoes, carrots, cabbages, pumpkins.

A.A: Go on. What else was happening there?

Z. J.: Then, well, I was called to serve in the army, I remember, I served four years, I came here when they returned. The last six months I had a very good assignment, I served at the commandant’s headquarters in the city…near Berlin. I was in Berlin after May 9th, sometime around May 12th I was in Berlin. I sent greetings from Berlin. What was there, what I saw? I didn’t see Reichstag. But near the Brandenburg Gate, I was there. The main thing was-Germany and Berlin were so demolished, I even wrote in the letter that they should be rebuilt; they were so demolished. In Berlin, it was in such ruins, so one had to climb like on the mountain to get through.

A. A.: Tell me, please, more, I am not asking the rest, tell me, please, how do you remember your family’s everyday life, existence, family traditions, traditional food in your family, for example. Before the war, in your childhood. Everyday and holiday food.

Z. J.: Holiday meals were much better.

A.A: What was traditional food?

Z. J.: Well, what was there? Stuffed fish, carrots, parsley. We all prepared something, baked something, well, what is its name - aspic. I remember we prepared aspic. Mother baked different kinds of buns; there was a cooker. It was like that, I remember. Well, of course we were trying to buy different meat at the market. We especially were trying so holidays would be more festive. So it would not be like everyday.

A.A: How was the everyday life?

Z. J.: Well, I remember, financially we didn’t live rich, father was working, we weren’t rich. The economic situation during the crisis in the 30’s was especially hard; it was hard. I remember, my father was working at the state employment agency and I remember they were giving subsidies for the youngest brother. And they were giving out soup; they were giving it to everybody. Father was working some time at the city’s garden. There was some kind of planning going on, some kind of device, I understand. He was working as a sweeper. So that’s how we lived - not rich.

A.A: When you remembering your town...

Z. J.: Piece of meat, meat dumplings. Or we made chops. Or stewed something. And there was a soup. During summer there were potatoes across to us. Apples, berries, fruits. We made stewed fruits. Our household was without luxury. Well, on holidays we were trying to buy something.

A. A.: Tell me, please, about children’s clothing, family clothing. Did your mother make them herself or did you buy them?

Z. J.: No, mother didn’t sew, she wasn’t a tailor, we bought everything. And I remember, when we were little, across from us there lived one Jewish woman Vusha - she was sewing for all of us. She sewed for us, I remember. She sewed shirts, pants, I remember.

A. A.: Do you remember, were there any traditional stores, where your parents went shopping?

Z. J.: There were around us several stores, I remember. I remember, it was here, I lived on Rainis Street 39, I lived near my home. But now there isn’t that house anymore. They built a three-story building. But I lived all my life near the house and area where I used to live. Rainis Street 39. All the time I lived here. So over there were shops, I remember, in one store there were even goats. In front of the Postal Office there was a shop. Same like nowadays. Well, nowadays there are more shops. We weren’t rich, what wealth could we have? We didn’t live rich. Father did everything with his own hands; he was a specialist in repairing sewing machines. It was his specialty, to say. In sewing machines. Shteinman is writing about that.
A.: Tell me, please...

Z. J.: He went to the tailor and repaired machines there. Or, I remember, more difficult repair, I remember, also Shteinman wrote about it. Maybe the machine was working fine, but the needle was installed incorrectly. And the machine didn’t work. I remember, mother said - Iosse will come from school, he has to earn, it was fixed, the needle was put in incorrectly. It wasn’t sewing then. I remember, he fixed it. He went to repair it, I remember. There were machines made by our people, constructed in our factory. I remember there was some factory, not factory. It was open only a month, father was repairing in this factory, too; I remember.

A. A.: Well, tell me, please, what do you remember, how did you think about life in the Jewish community?

Z. J.: I can’t tell at all. I was too young to know and have an opinion.

A.: Don’t remember?

Z. J.: Something was going on there, something was happening. I know that community was giving coupons for visiting doctors; they would cost less or for free. I remember, yes. There were occasions when they went for those coupons. There in the community there was the pharmacy, it was cheaper. I remember that, yes. It wasn’t useful for us, that they would give us discounts. But I know they would give 2-3 cubes of firewood there for poor people. For poor people. Charity was very developed there. In this community. Well, what else I can tell?

A. A.: What do you think was interesting? What didn’t I ask, which childhood memories are the brightest?

Z. J.: What was the brightest? I wanted to write for newspapers. I don’t know where that came from, but I liked to write. I was keeping a diary. I left a big diary here, and my neighbor told me that our house burned down in the first day of the war. And my diary got lost. But during the war in the soldier camps I’ve got a big notebook and started to write the diary. And was writing what was going on. I decided if I’ll stay alive, I’ll write as Remarque was writing. Remarque was an example for me. I was also thinking to write like “All Quiet on the Western Front”, I remember about that, how missiles exploded, it was frightening. Wagons were going, my God, I wrote home, it is child’s play comparing with what is going on here. It was a child’s play then, in that war. I remember I was watching “All Quiet on the Western Front”, there was such a movie, those horrors what we were committing there, and then I was writing, that it was a child’s play. Compared what we are seeing here. And what an intensity of fire! It was a strong artillery, it is not the same kind of thing.

So, I also thought, I wrote the diary and somebody, a political commissar or somebody noticed I was writing, he sent for me and said: show me what are you writing about. And he called me later, but my diary was very big, and I wished he would give it to me back that paper, at least for writing letters; they were giving us thick paper. I had a thick, rough draft. I thought he could tear out written pages. He called me and said: well, if you would say you had a check-up for infection with louses and somebody was found in the company. Personally, during all the time I didn’t notice anything like that in our company. It was very strict; if they found louses on anybody then everybody who was sleeping near him was checked, too. There was checking everyday. If they found louses on anybody, all had to take a steam bath. During all the war they didn’t find any. And so they said, you are writing there, I wrote, for example, one tutor went for exercises and left his overcoat, so when he returned from the exercises his overcoat was gone. So somebody liked his overcoat and took it. But how would it look if Germans would get your diary? You know how compromising it would be? So they took my diary and I didn’t write another anymore. I started to write detailed letters home. I have hundreds of letters from the war times, hundreds at home, they saved all the letters I wrote.

A.: Now it is such a source!

Z. J.: Such a source. I was writing personal matters, I wrote whom I met, I couldn’t write about military matters, everybody knew that, you won’t
write about battles.

A.: Are there any emotional memories?

Z. J.: By the way I am a philatelist, I collect stamps, I have thousands of stamps. Now I am not doing that anymore, but I used to. So I was at the exhibition, I flew from Berlin. When I came to Berlin, I gave twenty to all correspondents; everybody got one post card. I didn't write anything on them, just “Greetings from Berlin”, nothing more. And put a date. If you want, I can show you.

A.: Of course, it is so interesting! Thank you.

The original recorded interview of Zalman Jakub took place on December 1, 2000. The interviewer was Aina Antane of the Center for Judaic Studies, University of Latvia, Riga. The translation of the Russian transcription was done by Inga Long in Falls Church, Virginia.

One Day Seminar at the Museum of the Diaspora in Tel Aviv

Submitted by Martha Levinson Lev-Zion for the Organizing Committee, Israel Genealogical Society

We at the Israel Genealogical Society [IGS] are fairly bursting our buttons with pride in the one day seminar [Yom Iyun] that we have arranged for the 28th of November 2005 at Beit Hatefutzot [the Diaspora Museum] on the Tel Aviv University campus. If you could have one genealogical wish, wouldn't it be that you could find that illusive document that would allow you to prove once and for all that a tie that binds was true? We at the IGS have been feverishly working for over a year to arrange just such a seminar that would allow you to find the missing key.

Without fear of contradiction, I can categorically state that every Jewish family in the world has family - known or unknown – in Israel. Our seminar, "Family Roots in the Land of Israel and in the World," will demonstrate what I mean. We have invited archivists from the smaller, but sometimes more interesting archives, to address us with talks on their holdings. When we invited proposals, even we didn't know details of all the treasures these archives hold, but after reading the abstracts and talking with the archivists, it is hard not to jump up and down with enthusiasm!

Go to our website's direct seminar access:
http://www.isragen.org.il/NROS/YY2005/

There you can get pdf files in Hebrew and/or in English of the program, the abstracts and the biographies of the speakers. See for yourself what an incredible program we have arranged for you!

From our opening keynote speaker on Eastern European Aliyah from the late 1800's to 1920, to a detailed description of the microfilm collection of the Diaspora Museum, at the close of the day, you will be enthralled for the entire time.

One caveat: regretfully, places are limited due to the number of seats available and we can only accept reservations on a first come first serve basis. Early registration ends on 10 November, if there are still places available. Registration includes coffee and cake and a chance for a greatly discounted hot lunch, but here too, places are limited. Please register early so you will not be disappointed. When the places are gone, they are gone and that's it.

The registration form can be downloaded at:

You are going to love this day and we are looking forward to seeing you there!

Membership Fees Are Now Due

This is a reminder to kindly renew your subscription to the Latvia SIG and Newsletter. Our subscription year runs from July 2005 through June 2006. Please mail your check for US $20 for the US and Canada, and $30 (bankable in the US) from elsewhere, to:

Latvia SIG
5450 Whitley Park Terrace, #901
Bethesda, MD 20814
USA

You can also remit your payment through PayPal to: mgetz@erols.com. We look forward to your participation and support.

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reside outside the United States and Canada, the Latvia SIG accepts payment via PayPal. PayPal is a web-based service that facilitates paying bills and fees via email.

With PayPal, you can send money to anyone with an email address by simply signing up for a PayPal account. To do this go to the PayPal web-site, http://www.paypal.com, and follow the directions provided to create an account. Once you have an account, log into your account and click the **Send Money** tab. Now enter the Latvia SIG email address, which is: MikeGetz005@comcast.net, and enter the amount you would like to send. To fund the payment, add a credit card to your PayPal account by entering your credit card number as instructed. Money can also be deducted from your bank account, if you choose to do so.

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It is important that new members complete and mail the membership form on the following page — this form can also be found on the Latvia SIG web site — so that we can enter family names and locations on our **Family Finder**. Also, please include the other information requested on the form to help us make the Latvia SIG an even more effective resource for genealogical research.

Please note that the new membership year began in July after the IAJGS meeting in Las Vegas.
This letter is one of a series beginning in Oct 1941, probably routed from Riga to Stockholm. They were directed to the World Jewish Council and are on record at the USHMM. The series continues with a number of lists through 1943 detailing those murdered by the Germans and Latvians. Some of the latter are identified in Selma's letter from Stockholm. Additional letters will be included in forthcoming issues of this newsletter.

The Latvia SIG acknowledges the untiring efforts of Mike Getz in obtaining this remarkable collection of material from the USHMM and making it available to the SIG.

The following is the cover letter that accompanied the letter from Selma, with the letter following.

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS
RESCUE DEPARTMENT

July 10, 1944

Memo

To: Members of the Office Committee
From: Dr. Kubowitzki

I attach herewith a copy of a report prepared by Mrs. Alexander Andersen nee Selma Schebschelowitz which I received from Hillel Storoch through the American Legation in Stockholm and the War Refugee Board.

ef
#660
May, 1944.

I, Selma Schebschelowits, was born on August 19, 1930, at Goldingen (Kuldiga).

I entered the Hebrew elementary school and afterwards the Latvian gymnasium; I become a student of the English college at Riga in 1932, as I intended to become a gymnasium teacher. The war broke out. My parents (Joosef and Emma Schebschelowits) and my 19-year-old sister (Paula) fled from Goldingen to Riga. My brother (Selig) went to Russia. As I could not leave my parents alone and helpless, I stayed together with them at Riga.

After the Germans invasion, I worked in the ruins of the "old town" and with the prefecture. From August 19 until November 28, 1941, I was employed with the Waffen-SS as a maid. I had to do the heaviest work in the kitchen of the SS (Valdemarastr. 69 and afterwards Marienstr. 4).

On October 13, my parents and I had to leave for the ghetto. With the exception of some things which my mother had sent to the country, through our former house maid, all our properties were pillaged.

The evening before the massacres, I succeeded in escaping from the ghetto, as a result of a friend's (Alexander Andersen, now my husband) great love and sacrifice. An unknown Latvian lady harboured me until my husband succeeded in finding a shelter for me.

For two years and five months I lived under the most unbelievable circumstances. In 1942 I got my hair bleached. In the darkness of the autumn evenings, I met Jews whom I furnished with food. I was in contact with the Jews in the ghetto during the two years.

By risking my own life, I succeeded in finding a room where Jews, in case of a new terror, could find shelter.

In 1943 we tried to escape to Sweden, but we did not succeed in organizing the voyage.

One long year went, a year without light and sun. In April of this year, we succeeded. I dressed up as an old woman, and my husband and I started our voyage. We were on the rough sea for seventeen hours. After having gone half the way to Sweden, we saw a German aeroplane. Our only desire at that moment was an easy death. The plane came lower and lower . . . Perhaps the German pilot had a good heart . . .

It began raining. Our tired eyes looked afar. We had only three kilometers to go to reach the Swedish coast. A man of the navy on the isle of Gotland waved to us in a friendly way. I folded my hands and whispered: "Schmah Jisrael, adonai eloheinu, adonai echad!"

July 1, 1941. After hard fighting, the Germans forced their way to Riga. Street boys and Latvian women pillage the shops, especially tobacco shops and shops dealing in manufactured goods. The red-white-red flags are displayed on the houses. Young Latvian men and women express their thanks to the Germans by strewing flowers on the path for the German soldiers.
The Latvian people are ordered, via broadcasts, to fight against the domestic enemy, as the "foreign enemy" has been conquered. And on this very day the "Lettische Sicherheitskommando" (a kind of police) is founded under the leadership of a former student Arajī.

Street boys not older than 15-16 years, students, etc. are walking about with red-white-red badges and guns in the streets of Riga. Jewish women and children who are just buying food in the shops are carried off by the "Par konkrusts" to Valdemara Street 19, where the murder organization's residence is situated. The Jews who entered this house have never again seen the daylight.

The night between the third and fourth of July, there is ringing and knocking on the doors of all Jews. "Open the door, the police!" are the words of drunken men's voices. Latvian policemen force their way into the flats. Young Jews are pulled out of their beds and carried off, supposedly in order to work. Wives who want to follow their husbands are forbidden to weep; at the moment they have to stay at home; even their turn will come soon.

In this way, first one and then another group of young Jews march to the next police district. They hardly foresee what will happen to them. - Some hours later the doors of the Riga Central Prison are opened for them. Six thousand people are languishing, parched, in the small cells of the prison. The Latvian guards have contrived various and different inquisitions. Daughters and wives of the imprisoned persons who show any interest in their relatives are scornfully refused. - "You must now seek other men!" is the answer of a "lettgallisch" grinning policeman. The despairing and hopeless women are sitting by the roadside, near the prison, where they hope in vain to see their husbands, fathers, and brothers. Some time later, they learn that all have been shot. (It is only a small number of prisoners that succeeded in escaping, among whom were Doctor Berniker and his son.)

Latvian women come into the Jewish flats and ask for clothes, money and food for the Jews who — as the women say — are working with Tukum and elsewhere. The despairing women who believe what the Latvian women are telling them go to fetch all possible things in order — as they suppose — to make the pain and torture easier for the men. They do not know that the Latvian women to whom they gave all these things shut the door behind themselves scornfully grinning.

The terror continues. Every day one Jew or another, even whole families disappear in the house of horror of the "Par konkrusts."

All synagogues of Riga are burnt. One carries off young Jewish men and women during the night from the neighboring houses, one locks up them in the burning synagogues without any pity, where they are burnt together with Sifrei-Tora and other Jewish holy objects. The Russians living in the "Mokauer Vorstadt" are eye witnesses of all this terror and horror. Weeping Russian ladies told later about the crying for help and the moaning of dying young girls. Even two rabbis are burnt alive.

Now the order comes that all Jews are required to work. The next morning all who can work meet with the nearest police district. There are now forty to two hundred persons on the hard benches of the small cells of the third police district where formerly drunken persons and residivists spent away the nights; these
unhappy persons shall now get work. A Latvian boy blocks with his gun the door to the street. Policemen who mock the Jews are going in and out. The door is opened again. A Latvian about 30 years old enters the cell. He chooses the most beautiful young girls among all other persons and asks them to clean and scour his flat in the "Freiheitsstrasse." One hour later two girls of the group come in weeping terribly. The Latvian named Olle Oline has requested them to share his bed with him, and has promised them to give them easier work. As long as he forced the one girl to meet his wishes, the other girls ran back to the police district in order to lodge a complaint. But with whom? The policemen only mock. Jews are defenseless. One can treat them as one wants to do...

The next day the Jews of the third police district have to work with the prefecture. Women, among them may with academic education, have to clean windows and to wash and scour the floors. A Latvian street boy, thirteen years old, in torn trousers and dirty shirt, is the guard of the working Jews. From time to time he beats the ladies with a ruler on the fingers. An old Jewish couple from the Kaiserwald is forcibly carried into the room; these people have been pilfered their flat and all their things have been taken. Afterwards they are locked up in the cellars of the prefecture.

The worst happens in the court of the prefecture. Young Jews must box each other under the leadership of Latvian policemen. Then one puts water on them when they sink down powerlessly, and as soon as they come to consciousness again the "play" begins from the beginning. It happens that one leads electricity through the bodies of several men, others are pierced with needles (Sorje Zsawen).

On July 15, new work begins for the Jews - they have to carry stones within the ruins of the "old town." Thousands of Jews are working in this part of the town which the Germans have destroyed. Latvian students, scouts and members of the "Laspus" are forming equipped with sticks, the groups of guards. - German officers come in order to see the work the Jews are doing.

In order to create an amazing picture the Latvians are hooting at Jewish old women and are beating every person they dislike. Women who sink down powerless because of the July heat are trodden upon by the policemen with their feet. After working twelve hours in rubbish and dust, they are driven back to the police district and from there home.

Some German troops begin to employ Jews. One likes to work with the Germans as it happens that one gets food (a waterlike soup once a day). Those who are working with the SS (Sicherheitsdienst) have it worse, even those with the "Waffen-SS", as the Waffen-SS comes mostly from Poland where one is specialized in maltreating and shooting the Jews (Hugo Kannengiesser, a German SS-man with the troops in the Marienstrasse 4, talked proudly of his shooting 300 Jews at Ljublins with his own hand, before his troops were carried over to Riga).

In August an order is published in the "Deutsche Zeitung in Ostland" "that all Jews have to bear the David star." The Nuremberg Law is put in force. Jews are defenseless...

A second order: Jews have to bear the David star on one side and on the back. It is forbidden for Jews to go on the footpath. That very day an old Jewish woman is "bellowed" by a Latvian as she is going on the footpath. A Jewish woman turns crazy near the Latvian statue of liberty. Perkonkrust members force
young Jewish girls to go down on their knees in the street. Scornfully they ask them whether the girls know Stalin's constitution by heart. A picture of desperation. Some of the Latvians refuse to sell food to the Jews. But, of course, there are good people even among the Latvians who are prepared to buy all for their neighbours - the Jews. (The Baltic merchant Meierkung in the Valdemara Street 89 is selling bread almost entirely to Jews).

August 1941. The Ghetto is founded. The Jews must leave the town. One part of the town after the other is cleared of Jews ("Judenfrei"). There is an unbelievable picture to see in the Gertrude Street. This street - the way to the ghetto is crowded from the morning to the evening. Old and young, big and small, everybody is bearing a parcel or a bag; old people wheel a barrow in order to take the things which the Germans and Latvians not yet pillaged into the ghetto. The Jews may not have Aryan drivers for their transports. Not much has been left for the Jews of all their furniture etc., as they have been pillaged systematically by the Germans as well as by the Latvians. Their present transports include only an old couch, a table and chairs. All their glass-ware, curtains, beautiful earthenware, carpets, etc. - all these things are already decorating the flats of the Latvian policemen and German SS-men.

The Ghetto... A part of the poorest district of Riga - the Možaņu Vorotne - shall become the ghetto. Russian families who have been dwelling here for several decades must leave their houses and move into the town. When many of these people refused to do so, German SS-men appeared with the Russians in order to carry off them from their flats. The ghetto shall be made with more speed... .

Six to seven Jews have to lodge in a room not larger than 9 square metres. In spite of this fact there are not enough rooms, as 33,000 Jews shall be lodged in the ghetto. The Jews receive special food cards with the inscription JEW, and are allowed to buy only in the shops opened in the ghetto. Every person gets 100 grammes meat weekly, 100 grammes bread daily, 4 kilos potatoes monthly, 100 grammes butter weekly.

(No food is sold to Jews in the city)

The ghetto is surrounded with a double barbed wire. Posts which have been driven into the pavement can still be seen today. The enormous gate through which the Jewish columns have to go, strictly guarded, was situated at the beginning of the S adomnikow Street. This gate was open until October 15, and even Aryan persons had the right to enter the ghetto. Christian wives might visit their Jewish husbands in the ghetto, and even in the morning of the 15th of October, one could see a handsome Latvian man arm in arm with a Jewish girl walking in the ghetto. Pupils of the French Lyceum brought food to their Jewish comrades (Miss Zoppe, formerly secretary with the institute of languages).

At noon on the 15th of October the gate is shut. Two policemen with fixed bayonets guard the gate. Round the ghetto guards are watching. They may shoot at every Jew who stands "suspiciously" near the barbed wire. During the very first days they shot a young man who - as one stated - tried to escape from the ghetto. Jews are not allowed to wear things of value and jewelry.
The next day the gate was shut. Columns meet before the gate. Every Jew is fingered exactly to see whether food has been carried with them from the town. One takes the rings from the wives. All money which will be found in the pockets will be confiscated. In a small house which is situated on the right of the gate one undresses women. It happens very often that they must kiss Stalin’s picture or the picture of other leaders of the Soviet Union. One seeks for bread which could be hidden in pockets, galoshes and stockings. Children who will not eat their bread in the town in order to bring it to their hungry parents in the ghetto are beaten and whipped. The terror increases. The women are treated in the worst manner in the control house.

The food which one gave the Jews becomes smaller and smaller. One gets only 100 grammes horse meat on the cards weekly. One sends rotten potatoes into the ghetto. The Jewish women try with desperation to appease their children’s hunger. One makes some “puding” out of the peel of the potatoes. But certain diseases of the stomach are the result. Many people die, especially the older ones, and the mortality increases. One funeral follows the other in the old Jewish churchyard. Aryan persons who bring the food into the shops of the ghetto sell a whole bread at 100 RI (at the price of 50 RI one could buy at that time English coat stuff). The guards of the ghetto become more and more cruel. Policemen shoot during the night into the windows, especially near the barbed wire.

At the end of October night drunken Latvians enter during the night a Jewish flat in order to make a domiciliary visit. After having found hundreds of cigarettes they ordered a young lady to stand at a wall (Prope, milliner), and they shot her in the presence of her old mother. Latvian visits in Jewish flats during the night become more and more frequent. Women are undressed, ravished and beaten, until they are unconscious.

November 27, 1941. Again people are marching in the streets of the ghetto. An order. The men are separated from the women and children. Every man packs his parcel. What does one intend with this new order? Nobody has time to think. All must be ready within twenty four hours. On this very day in the evening a guard has knocked out the eye of a young girl (Chosaid) with a rubber whip, the others must go down on their knees before the policemen and are beaten until they cannot moan anymore because of their suffering. Some of these unhappy creatures are carried over into the Jewish hospital in the evening. All inhabitants of the ghetto are ordered that they may not go into the city to work on November 30, as one intends to take a census on that day. In case a Jew goes into the city on that day his food cards can be taken away.

The Latvian “Sicherheitscommando” sounds alarm. The omnibuses are coming during the night of the 30th of November before the ghetto. Young men who can work are separated from their families. Women, children and old persons are ordered to put themselves in columns. Germans and Latvians force their way into the ghetto. Unbelievable things happen during this autumn night. Children are taken from their mothers’ arms and then murdered by the SS-men with bayonets. Dead bodies are trodden upon with the feet. Thousands of Jews are driven along the Leitgallerstrasse in the direction of Sirotava. Immense policemen with fixed bayonets guard the columns of the Jews. The murderers get alcohol. With brutality everybody is shot who cannot go the long way. Afterwards one collects the dead bodies in motorcars.
A young Jewish woman who asks a policeman to where the people are carrie
gets the answer: "Say first where your valuables are!" When the woman had
answered him, the policeman replied (Pricis Veldis) "To be shot!"

The sad way is finished at the end of the Lettgallastrasse near the wor
"Quadrat". Men must dig their graves together with Russian war prisoners. One
by one they must stand by the grave undressed and then go down on their knees
Drunken sadists are shooting with M.G. Only in a few cases are they dead im-
mediately. After having shot a column the next must do the same. In this man-
er about 15,000 Jews are murdered during the night of the 30th of November.
Policemen were standing at the graves and were beating the dying men with
sticks. One pulls down the women's earrings together with the lobe of the ear
On the way near the grave bags, parcels and valuables were lying which the
murderers, after having done their bloody job put into their pockets.

The Jews who were still in the ghetto do not know how their brethren
found their end. They are convinced that one has carried them to another cam
The seven hundred Jews (women and old persons) who were murdered in the ghatt
were buried by their relatives. One is weeping and hopes that the horror has
come to an end. The columns continue to go to their work. The normal life in
the ghetto continues.

December 7. The Jews must again be ready. The night of the 30th of
November finds its repetition. Even German Jews have been carried to the
"slaughter house" of European Jewry - to Latvia. Thousands of German Jews are
waiting in tents near the mass graves, until the Latvian Jews have been shot,
in order to be killed by the same murderous hand.

The two mass graves near the Skirotava and in the Bikervaschen Wald give
proof of the Latvian-German deeds of horror in the Riga ghetto.

Eye witnesses are telling that the cries of distress and the moaning of
the crippled Jews could be heard even several hours from the grave.

Three to four thousand Jews were still alive after this murdering, among
them three hundred women. The ghetto is diminished. A part of the ghetto has
to lodge the women. Men may enter the women's ghetto only with a special permi
by the commander. The manager is the German Jew Wandt. Even the Germans
suffer losses as a German SS-man is shot by his own comrade.

The German commander of the ghetto - Krause - who can show special merits
in connection with the shooting and tormenting the Jews is very often to be
seen in the ghetto. It is he who introduces the death penalty of hanging. Jews
in whose pockets bread or butter are found are immediately shot by Krause. The
Krause executes the death penalty all inhabitants of the ghetto have to be
present. The inquisition is done in the old churchyard where the dead bodies
will be buried afterwards by the Jews.

The murderer Krause's wife and child wait for him until he has done his
deed of horror, and then they walk together through the streets of the ghetto.
It happens often that the Jews collect money and valuables which they hand ove
to Krause. By this manner one is safeguarded against the death penalty. This
in spite of the fact that the law forbids that Jews possess money ... During
the course of half a year Krause received from the Jews of the Riga ghetto valuables and money for 150,000 RM.
Women are short-clipped by Krause personally, and for his amusement Jews must fight against each other. - Krause turns ill. He is carried into the SS hospital. He was the murderer of his own nerves... 

Jews are systematically divided among the groups of German troops in the city. Some groups are employed with the delousing station of the SS-hospital Rothenburg. 

A great number is working in the tailor workshops of the German Wehrmacht in the ghetto. Even Jewish watchmakers and shoemakers are still in the Riga ghetto. All have to work for the interest of their own murderers. The owner (a lady) of the former "Jockey Club" is now the leader of the tailor workshop for the Reichskommissariat. 

Herbst 1943. Again some hundred Jews are shot. The ghetto is dissolved, Russian refugees must be lodged there. Some of the craftsmen are shot and others are carried over to the workshops in the Kaiserswald. They work during the day and during the night, strictly watched behind barbed wire by the S.S., the S. and the German Wehrmacht. How long? Even the fate of these unhappy people seem to be clear... 

It is now scarcely three years since the first Jews have been shot in Riga. Seen from the political side, much has changed meanwhile. Even the murderers of the Riga Jews know that Germany is going toward its decay and fall with ominous steps. One is beginning to fear God's and man's retaliation. One denies his own deeds. 

The Jewish mass graves of the women and babies cry to Heaven. Thousands of crippled dead bodies which will be found after the War are the natural proof of all the terrible deeds of horror. 

The above happened at Riga. The Jewish suffering in the provincial towns is shorter but more depressing. 

Immediately upon the German invasion of Latvia the Latvians drove all Jews of the provincial towns into synagogues and other buildings. From there they are carried into the woods in order to be shot. Drunken policemen throw children in the air and shoot with M.G. and pistols. Children are murdered in the presence of their mothers. The Latvians who participated in these deeds were Fibis, Granowskis, Valdis and the brothers Brikers, the owners of the hotel at Goldingen. The eldest Brikers throws a sweet little girl of 8 years into the air - Hella Holzmann - and shoots at her, but in vain. When all other Jews were shot and the child begs to stay alive he tears her hair, throws her into the air and lets her sink down dead on the pavement. Some women (Katz, Gitelson and Feitelberg) have been shot by the Latvians, but they were not dead only wounded. They returned bleeding to the town and asked for help from the Red Cross. But later they were definitely shot. 

The Latvians who participated in Modolm are: Driks, Kimmers, Paogdasova. Furthermore the German field gendarmery participated in the shooting in Modolm. At the beginning one pillaged all things from the Jews as it happened everywhere. Afterwards one drove the Jews into a school where they were requested to spend some nights with the murderers. One promised them to let them alive. The unhappy women who believed in this way to be able to save their lives obeyed.
Two intelligent Jewish girls, the daughters of the merchantman Kamin, who we studying at the Riga conservatorium refused and declared to be prepared to d respectable and honest. In vain! They were drawn into the bed with force an afterwards murdered together with the others.

A total of 26,000 Jews were hot in the province. At Libau and Duenenburg there were small ghettos, but only for a short time.

Mixed marriages.

There were about 400 mixed marriages at Riga. The Jewish wives were al- lowed to live together with their Aryan husbands in the city. Jewish husbands of Aryan women had to live in the ghetto. The Jewish women who lived in the city had to be sterilized. Besides the wives of some reputed Latvians are Jewish.

Selma Andersen

Selda Schobescheiwitz

Foreign Jews.

Have not been prisioned before March 1942. Some foreign Jews have then been put in the ghetto, some in the prison. Many have also been shot.

In 1943 fifty five Jews were alive in the Central Prison at Riga, who little by little died of hunger. During the Saturday nights when the guards, mostly "Lettgallen", were drunk, they put the Jews in cold water where one bound their arms under their knees. Many hours they were tor- tured in this way until they lost consciousness. The Jews were not allowed to do any work in the prison as contrasted with other prisoners. In this way the Jews died in prison of hunger and blows.
Two intelligent Jewish girls, the daughters of the merchantman Kazin, who were studying at the Riga conservatorium refused and declared to be prepared to do respectable and honest. In vain! They were drawn into the bed with force an afterwards murdered together with the others.

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The following men participated in the terror against Jews.

**Goldingen**
1. Fibigs
2. Brothers Bricker, the owners of the hotel
3. Valdis Granowski

**Hodolm**
1. Dreika
2. Kinkers, Vilis - Rupniecibas iela 16 - 3
3. Bogdanow

**Riga**
1. Feliksas Ditietis - has shot 3000 Jews
   - committed suicide in the hotel "Smila"
2. Peters Elglitis - Valdemara iela 6, later an interpreter with the Gest
   has participated in shooting 4000 Jews, was then sent to Budapest as specialist
3. Peteris Ruka - member of the "Sicherheitskommando"
4. Kierins Upite - leading officer of the "Perkonkr"
5. Viskas
6. Kintlers S.D.
7. Sriker
8. Mischke, "Gebietsinspektor" (German) / inspector of the district/
9. Bokman ) "Gebietskommissar" / comissariat officer of the
10. Deits )
11. Cukurs - pilote, is called at Riga Jew murderer2
12. Damkops / Jokaba iela 13, 17, Neudites pag. "Grodi"
13. Fricis Sakin S.D. formerly student with the Russian institute
14. Arvids Spole, Jonava iela 20
15. Untersarifiren Zapf - Jewish department
16. Ribbe with tailor Tartin
17. Tailor Tartin - Valdemara
18. Hairdresser (woman) Suma delivered up Mrs. Trubek
19. Zabinis, Valdemara 39-14
21. Egwinski - Kirchenstr. 33
22. Frenkel, Jewish spy
23. Broder - "Wirtschaftskommandant" / household and economic commander/
   of the ghetto
24. Arajs, has founded the "Sicherheitskommando"
25. Luduno, manager of the Central Prison

**Denouncers:**
Ingeneer Alvars - Aizsargu iela
Vilis Bute - Milgravis

**Rundkreise,**
Hauke, Martin - German from Tilsit, 1st shot eleven Jews.
Member of the party.
Wachmeister (sergeant officer) Koehler
Scharführer (troop leader) Josef Slany - Riga
Oberscharführer Jakob

7/7/44-658-Rn
PERSONS WHO HAVE BEEN SHOT AT RIGA

Abramowitz Family
Beierfeld Family
Birshansky, Ina
Blumenfeld and family
Bottleib Family
Durbach, Meyer (family)
Durbach from Goldingen (merchant)
Elkan, Brivibas Iela 81-8
Fain, Mrs. and her three children
Gabbe Family
Goldinger, Robert and family (mill)
Gottleib and family from Mitas
Haase, Doctor and wife
Hair Family
Heimansohn, Family (druggist)
Heimansohn Family
Hunau Family
Jatskian and family
Joffe and family
Kahn Family (baker)
Kahn, M. Family
Kaplan Family (manufacturer)
Kaufmann, Mrs. (hosiery works MONA)
Kozin (tinmith) and family
Laguschker (brother and sister)
Liebenhal, Family (lumberman)
Lippmann, Mrs. (at Riga)
Lai, Mrs.
Latskel, Mrs. and baby
Sadowitz and family
Scheidchelowitz, Mrs. Dasa and daughter
Scheidchelowitz, Hermann and son
Scheidchelowitz, Joseff (family)
Scheppchelowitz, Mrs. Ruth
Schleifer, Mrs. from Goldingen
Scheeweiss, Mrs. Danny (pregnant)
Scheeweiss Family
Schuhmann, Mr. (manufacturer)
Schwartz, Louis Family
Weisberg, J. Family
Weisberg, Leo Family
Wolin, Rabbi and family
Trubek Family

FRIENDS WHO HAVE BEEN SHOT

Balson, Miss Myute
Balson, Morris and family
Benowsky Family
Berkman - dentist
Besplow, Mrs. and daughter
Blumberg family
Blumenau and family
Benes, A. and family
Benes Family
Davidow, Family (Kirchenstrasse)
Edelberg, Sch. and Family
Ettinger and family
Feitelberg, A. Family - Goldingen
Feitelberg, Max and family
Fleischer, A. Family
Friedberg, Family
Friedlander, Mrs.
Friedmann and wife (teacher)
Friedmann - Garn isla 2
Gittelschon, Mrs.
Gittelschon, W. Family - Goldingen
Goldberg, H. Family
Goldberg Family (Mrs. G. teacher with the English College)
Goldinger Family - Goldingen
Gottschalk Family - Goldingen
Grunberg, E. and family
Grunberg, Mrs. and sons
Gutkin Family
Gutmann Family (Sanbas str., Max
Harrik Family (metal works)
Hemelin Family (Mrs. K. dressmaker)
Herzberg, Robert Family
Herzberg, Max and family
Hillmann Family
Hirschfeld Family
Hirschmann, A. Family - Goldingen
Hirschmann, Fr. Family
Hirschowitz, A. Family
Hirschowitz, L. Family
Hirschowitz, Miss doctor Susy
Holzmann, J.
Holzmann, Leopold and family
Jakobovitch Family (Iuenier - Skolas isla 14-22)
Jatzkan, Mrs. and daughter
Josephson, N. and family
Josephson, R.
Kahn, Bernhard and family
Katz Family
Kierschner Family
Kirschner Family - Goldingen
Klein Family (from Goldingen)
Knoppling Family (mouth organ works Graciniekas isla 2)
Knoppling, Mrs.
Kor and family
Lemchen Family - Goldingen
Linde, Mrs. - dentist
Lowenberg, Ch. Family - Goldingen
Lurje Family
Meerson, Z. Family - Goldingen
Nicholson, Sophie (teacher with the English College)
Lurin, Mrs. and daughter (lumberman)
Matzsohn, B. Family
Perlmann Family - Valdemaara str. 39-22
Peterburger Family (from Goldingen)
Prupis, Mrs.
1. Rubin Family
2. Rubin Family
3. Rubin Family
Rubinstein, Advocate
Sayugo, Family
Schappir, Family
Scheer Family - Goldingen
Scheinker Family
Schenkermann, Advocate and family
Schepschelowitz, Sch. and family
Schroder, Mrs.
Schukin Family - Kirchenstrasse 31
Schumacher, J. Family 1 (Mrs. Sch. dressmaker)
Schumacher Family 2/ (merchant)
3. Schumacher, Mrs.
4/ Schumacher Family (bookkeeper)
Schumacher Family 5/ (tinmith)
Schumacher Family 6/ (shoemaker)
Seidenberg, Miss Isida
Soitoons Family
Soituoin and family
Witt and family
Zoswan, Mrs. and child

Jews who are still alive

Abramowicz, Doctor went with the Russians
Barnbaum - tailor - Kaiserwald
Borsin
Bespalow - teacher
Blumenfeld, carried off
Broido, Dentist
Cheifan, Baker, carried off
Drimba, Tailor
Dribins - Valdemaara 33
Rittinger, Mrs. dentist
Friedlander, Ingenieur - Stabu 6 - Kaiserwald
Friedmann, Mrs.
Goldberg, about 25-26 years old, Jewish policeman
Gremen - teacher
Grunberg, Mrs. Jethy no Lewinsky
Gutmann, Mrs. of the firm Joskowiz
Harriek, Sanja - son of the metal manufacturer
Harriek - metal works, one son in China
Idelsohn, Doctor - Komeri
Database of Jewish Communities in Latvia

The Beth Hatefutsoth Communities database provides information about individual Jewish communities in the Diaspora. It consists of more than 3,000 entries in English and Hebrew covering communities from all over the world. The database includes information about communities that do not exist anymore, as well as about communities that are still vibrant today. The following has been extracted from the Beth Hatefutsoth database of Latvian towns and cities with Jewish inhabitants and history. The Latvia SIG gratefully acknowledges Beth Hatefutsoth, Dov Levin and Martha Lev Zion for making this database available to the Latvia SIG. Additional towns and cities will be included in future issues of this newsletter.

COMMUNITY NUMBER: 10515
COMMUNITY NAME: ABRENE

Abrene
(In Latvian: Jaunlatgale; and in German: Abrehmen or Neulatigalen).

A town in the Latgale region, Eastern Latvia, U.S.S.R.

In the past, Abrene was joined with the district of Pskov, and was called by the Russian name, Pitalovo. In the years 1920-40 it was part of independent Latvia. The town developed as a commercial center for the production of grains and linen.

In 1935 the community numbered 61, comprising 5% of the town's population.
The religious needs of the Jews were handled by a committee. A heder was founded, which was also used as a house of prayers with a holy ark and torah scroll. In the middle 1930's the Zionist youth organization, 'Herzlia', was active.

THE HOLOCAUST PERIOD

As a result of the Ribbentrop-Molotov accord signed in August 1939, between Germany and the U.S.S.R., the Red Army entered Latvia and in the summer of 1940 a Soviet regime was installed. On the outbreak of war between Germany and the U.S.S.R. (June 22, 1941), thousands of refugees who fled from the Germans passed through the town to the interior of Russia. The Jews of Abrene fled with them, and several of them were saved.
Only one Jew remained in the town.
A family, which hid in a neighboring village was discovered and murdered by the Germans in the first week of July 1941.
AIZPUUTE
(IN JEWISH SOURCES: HOZENPUT; IN GERMAN: MAZENPOT; IN
RUSSIAN: GAZENPOT).

THE SUB-DISTRICT TOWN IN THE KURZEME REGION (FORMERLY
KURLAND), SOUTH WEST LATVIA, U.S.S.R.

AIZPUUTE WAS ESTABLISHED AROUND AN ANCIENT ENCAMPMENT, AND AT
THE END OF THE 13TH CENTURY CAME UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE
TEUTONIC ORDER (A GERMAN ORDER OF CHRISTIAN KNIGHTS). FROM
1559 TO 1585 THE TOWN WAS UNDER DANISH RULE, UNTIL THE AREA
CAME UNDER POLISH DEPENDENCY. IN 1795 THERE WAS THE THIRD
PARTITION OF POLAND AND THE AREA CAME UNDER RUSSIAN CONTROL.
FROM 1817 THE LAWS OF KURLAND WERE IN FORCE IN THE PLACE.
DURING THE YEARS 1910-40, AIZPUUTE WAS PART OF INDEPENDENT
LATVIA.

JEWS BEGAN TO COME TO AIZPUUTE FROM LITHUANIA AND EAST
PRUSSIA IN THE 16TH CENTURY, AND ESTABLISHED ONE OF THE
FIRST COMMUNITIES IN KURLAND. A HOUSE OF PRAYERS WAS STARTED
IN 1708.

IN 1750 JEWS WERE LEGALLY PERMITTED TO SETTLE IN THE TOWN,
AND A YEAR LATER THEY WERE ALLOWED TO BUILD A SYNAGOGUE. IN
1760, THE FIRST RABBI BEGAN TO OFFICIATE IN THE COMMUNITY.
RABBI LEVY HORBITZ. A 'TALMUD TORAH' SCHOOL AND A 'MISHNAH'
SOCIETY WERE ESTABLISHED. A HEVRA KADISHA BEGAN OPERATIONS
IN 1763.

IN 1800 THERE WERE 678 JEWS IN THE PLACE.
THE COMMUNITY BUILT A BATH HOUSE WITH MIKVEH (RITUAL BATH)
AND FOUNDED BENEVOLENT AND CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS, WHICH
INCLUDED A WELFARE SOCIETY AND A BIKKUR CHOLIM (SOCIETY FOR
HELP TO THE SICK).

IN 1835 THERE WERE 1,599 JEWS IN THE TOWN, WHICH WAS THE
MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION. FROM 1840 THE NUMBER DWINDLED
WITH THE DEPARTURE OF 96 FAMILIES TO FARMING AREAS IN
SOUTHERN RUSSIA, AND AS A CONSEQUENCE OF A CHOLERA EPIDEMIC
IN 1848.

IN 1861 THERE WERE THREE HOUSES OF PRAYERS, A SYNAGOGUE AND
TWO MINYANIM IN THE TOWN.

IN 1897 THE COMMUNITY NUMBERED 1,170.
AT THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY, IN ADDITION TO THE HADARIM
AND TALMUD TORAH, THERE WERE TWO SCHOOLS FOR JEWISH PUPILS
ONE A STATE SCHOOL, AND THE OTHER PRIVATE. IN THE JEWISH
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AT THE BEGINNING
WAS GERMAN. HEBREW BECAME THE LANGUAGE USED FROM 1927.
DURING THIS PERIOD TORAH WAS STUDIED AT THE OLD SYNAGOGUE,
UNTIL THE 1930S, WHEN A TALMUD TORAH WAS REOPNED.
AFTER WORLD WAR I A COMMUNITY COUNCIL WAS ELECTED. IT
FOUNDED SEVERAL CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS WHICH INCLUDED: A
SOCIETY TO HELP INDIGENT VISITORS, FUNDS FOR BUTCHERS AND
BENEVOLENT WORKERS, AND A WOMEN'S SOCIETY.
DURING THE TWENTIES A CULTURAL SOCIETY WAS FOUND, THE
"KULTUR VEREIN", as well as a DRAMA CIRCLE, BOOKS AND NEWSPAPERS IN HEBREW WERE RECEIVED FROM ERETZ ISRAEL. A WOMEN'S SOCIETY OF AGUDAT ISRAEL, "BAYTA" WHICH WAS STARTED IN 1939, CARRIED OUT CHARITABLE ACTS.

THE FIRST JEWS IN THE TOWN MADE A LIVING IN COMMERCE, SELLING USED CLOTHING, AND AS AGENTS. IN 1783 THE JEWISH MERCHANTS WERE OBLIGED TO JOIN THE MERCHANTS GUILD. SEVERAL OF THEM BECAME VERY WEALTHY. AMONG JEWISH OWNED ENTERPRISES WERE A SOFT DRINKS FACTORY AND A LUMBER MILL, WORKSHOPS MANUFACTURING FOOTWEAR, HEADGEAR, METALWORK AND FURS. THERE WERE ALSO TINSMITHS AND BUTCHERS. AMONG MEMBERS OF THE FREE PROFESSIONS WERE DOCTORS, DENTISTS AND ADVOCATES. A JEWISH OWNED BANK OPERATED ON SUNDAYS.

ALREADY UNDER THE POLISH REGIME, JEWS WERE GRANTED THE RIGHT TO VOTE FOR MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS, AGAINST PAYMENT OF TAXES OWED BY THEM. DURING THE PERIOD OF LATVIAN INDEPENDENCE JEWS WERE ELECTED TO THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL AND ONE OF THEM WAS DEPUTY MAYOR.


AFTER WORLD WAR I THE ZIONIST IDEA WON SUPPORT AND A CULTURAL BODY WAS FOUNDED TO SPREAD KNOWLEDGE OF THE HEBREW LANGUAGE AND OF ZIONISM.

THERE WERE BRANCHES OF THE ZIONIST SOCIALIST PARTY, THE GENERAL ZIONISTS AND THE REVISIONIST ZIONIST PARTY. ZIONIST YOUTH MOVEMENTS, SUCH AS HACHSHARA HA'TSAIR, BETAR AND BORCHOU WERE ACTIVE. PIONEERING YOUTH RECEIVED HACHSHARA (AGRICULTURAL TRAINING) FROM FARMERS IN THE AREA. THE BUND HAD SOME SUPPORTERS AMONG THE COMMUNITY.

IN 1933, SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS WERE FORMED, AS WELL AS A JEWISH SCOUTS TROOP. A FOOTBALL TEAM AND ORCHESTRA OPERATED UNDER MACABI PATRONAGE.

IN 1934 LATVIA BECAME A DICTATORSHIP, AND SOCIALIST AND ZIONIST ACTIVITIES BECAME LESS EFFECTIVE. DURING THESE YEARS SOME 40 PIONEERS FROM THE TOWN WENT ON ALIYAH TO ERETZ ISRAEL. THE FINANCING OF THEIR ALIYAH CAME FROM THE EARNINGS OF THE DRAMA CIRCLE WHICH PUT ON PERFORMANCES.

ON THE EVE OF WORLD WAR II, THE COMMUNITY NUMBERED BETWEEN 600 AND 700.

THE HOLOCAUST PERIOD

COMMUNITY NUMBER: 10517
COMMUNITY NAME: AIZPuE

WE were nationalized and community institutions were closed down. Wealthy Jews and those suspected of not being loyal to the regime were exiled to Siberia. Young Jews were conscripted into the army, and most of them were killed in action.

Following the outbreak of war between Germany and the U.S.S.R. on June 22, 1941, a number of the Jewish inhabitants succeeded in escaping to central Russia.

Even before the capture of the town by the Germans, local fascists began murdering Jews. After the German conquest, at the end of June and beginning of July 1941, the Jews were ordered to wear a yellow patch and do forced labor.

The destruction of the Jewish community was carried out in stages. On July 24, 36 Jews were shot near the cemetery, after having been declared leftist and property owners. On October 27 of that year the Jews of the town were assembled in a large building, which served as a ghetto, and taken through the synagogue to the forest near the railway station of the town, Kavini. There they were murdered. 386 Jews were taken that day to be killed, and the town was declared 'Judenfrei' - free of Jews. One Jew of the town was saved, having been hidden by Christians.

A number of Jews, who returned to the town after the war, were shot by Latvians who opposed the Soviet regime. In 1973 a memorial was erected, on which was inscribed 'in memory of the victims of fascism'.
Latvia SIG Membership Questionnaire

NAME:.......................................................... PHONE:................................................
ADDRESS:.................................................. FAX:...................................................
CITY:.................................................STATE/PROVINCE:..........................
ZIP/POSTAL CODE:.....................
COUNTRY (if other than U.S.):.........................
E-mail address:..............................

Whom are you researching? (Latvian cities only) Please use location names/spellings as found in Where Once We Walked.

NAME:.......................................................... LOCATION:.................................
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Bibliographical or archival sources used in your Latvian genealogical research:

Information on Latvian Jewish communities, history of Jewish presence, current status, contacts:

Cemeteries, travel experiences, etc:

Suggested newsletter topics:

Translation skills: Hebrew, Latvian, Russian, Yiddish, Other (specify)

I would be willing to volunteer for the following activities:

Please return your completed questionnaire, along with a check for U.S. $20 (U.S. and Canada, $30 for overseas members) payable to Latvia SIG, to:

Latvia SIG
5450 Whitley Park Terrace, #901
Bethesda, MD 20814-2061