

Latvia SIG

July 2008
Volume 12, Issue 3



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President's Report



The IAGS annual conference in Chicago will be an exciting event in the Jewish genealogical calendar and offers a number of presentations of interest to Latvia SIG members. It is to be held August 17-22, 2008 at the Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile. The conference site can be accessed by logging onto <http://www.chicago2008.org/>

We will have our customary SIG luncheon and conduct our annual meeting at the conference. Please contact me or Donald Hirschorn, our Vice-President, with ideas you may have for issues you might like discussed at our annual meeting. If you are interested in standing for a Latvia SIG office please contact me.

We are pleased that this year as a result of our endeavors the IAGS will feature five presentations specifically related to Latvia. Dr. Max Michelson and Prof. Ruven Ferber will each give two presentations and I will give one.

The events are as follows.

- 1) The History of the Riga Jewish Community by Dr. Michelson on Sunday morning (9.45 am – 11 am) 17th August, in the Denver Room.
- 2) Names Project: the Fate of Latvian Jewish Community by Prof. Ferber on Tuesday morning (8:15 am – 9:30 am), Aug 19, 2008 in the Lincolnshire 2 Room.
- 3) The Latvia SIG luncheon with the business meeting following on Tuesday (12:30 pm – 2:00 pm), August 19, 2008 in the McHenry Room.
- 4) Latvian Genealogical Websites: Past, Present and the Impact of Social Interaction Networks by Henry Blumberg on Tuesday afternoon (2:00 pm – 3:30 pm), Aug 19, 2008 in the O'Hare Room.

5) A Web Site List of Latvian Jewry Prior to WWII by Prof. Ferber on

Tuesday, (3:30 pm-4:45 pm), Aug 19, 2008 in the O'Hare Room.

6) Jewish Life in Pre-World War 1 Courland by Max Michelson on Wednesday (2:00 pm – 3:30 pm), 20th August 2008 in the O'Hare Room.

Further details about our program are given below.

The History of the Riga Jewish Community

This presentation on Sunday morning by Dr. Max Michelson is entitled: *The History of the Riga Jewish Community*. Max is the author of the book, *City of Life, City of Death, Memories of Riga*. It describes his family history and his experiences during the Holocaust. He grew up in Riga and is a survivor of the Holocaust. He came to the USA in 1947 and earned a B.E.E. from the City College of New York and a Ph.D. in Physics from Boston University. Max has been active in the Jewish Community in Framingham, Massachusetts, and now lives with his wife Julie in a retirement community in Newton, MA.

In the synopsis of his presentation he states that he will review the early settlement of the Jews, who were excluded for most of its early years. Under Czarist rule, it remained outside the Pale of Settlement, but eventually Jews were permitted to settle there in 1843. In the late 19th century Jews flocked there from Courland and the Pale, determined to share in the financial opportunities offered by its burgeoning economic development. After the Russian revolution, Riga became an important cultural and social center for East European Jewry, but it never regained its peak Jewish population of pre World War I.

Jewish Life in Pre-World War 1 Courland

Dr. Michelson's second presentation on Wednesday will relate to Courland and is entitled: *Jewish Life in Pre-World War 1 Courland*.

In an overview of his talk he states that he will trace the history of the Jews in Courland from the time they were first admitted in 1585. While the

local nobility exploited and protected the Jews, they were used as administrators and were purveyors of necessities. However city-dwelling German burghers and craftsmen viewed the Jews as competitors and constantly clamored for their expulsion. The repeated expulsions were never enforced, and by payments of significant sums for protection money, the expulsions were regularly rescinded. Courland, he points out, was outside the Pale of Settlement. However, only Jews who were born in Courland were allowed to remain there and the conditions for Jews in Courland were significantly better than those in the Pale of Settlement.

Prof. Ruven Ferber of the Center for Judaic Studies

Another of our distinguished speakers will be Prof. Ruven Ferber. Born in Riga his family settled in Latvia at the end of 18th century. He is a full professor in physics in the University of Latvia, as well as Head of the Board of the Center for Judaic Studies, founded by him in 1998 at the same university.

He is head of the project "Jews in Latvia: Names and Fate, 1941-1945". He organized the Riga International Conferences series "Jews in a Changing World" (1995-2006) and edited 5 books of proceedings; authored above 15 papers in Jewish history and thought. Chairing joint projects on Holocaust studies with Yad Vashem, Task Force International, Claims Conference, etc.

Establishment of Center for Judaic Studies

On July 15, 1998 for the first time in the history of the Republic of Latvia, a Center for Judaic Studies was established at the University of Latvia. When the Center was officially opened on January 19th, 1999, after the successful work of the Center during the first semester, the ceremony caused great interest amongst the Latvian society. More than 20 foreign diplomats, members of parliament and government participated in the event that was addressed by the vice Prime Minister of Latvia, the Ambassador of Israel in Baltic States, the Chief Rabbi of Riga and Latvia and other distinguished personalities.

The Center was established as a separate unit at the University of Latvia, under direct auspices of the Rector. The Center is governed by an elected Board with Prof. Ruven Ferber as its head.

Names Project: the Fate of Latvian Jewish Community

Prof. Ferber's first presentation will be on Tuesday. The title of his presentation is: Names Project: the Fate of Latvian Jewish Community.

His paper will commence with a short introduction to the history of Jews in the region from the 16th century till today and it will also focus on the recovery of the names and fate of the prior-WW II Latvian Jewish community in the framework of the ongoing NAMES project. The website is: <http://names.lu.lv/>.

Since only about 25% of victim's names are known in the Yad Vashem database, alternative ways have been used based on archival data. The list now yields a full memorial list of about 93,400 names of prior-WW II Latvian Jews. The all-sources based search of their destiny in 1941-1945, including the assistance of descendants, will help recover more victims' names.

A Web Site List of Latvian Jewry Prior to WWII

The second presentation by Prof. Ferber will be at the Latvia SIG meeting on Tuesday and is titled: *A Web Site List of Latvian Jewry Prior to WWII*.

In a brief description of his paper he states that it will present the details of the web site listing names of the Latvian Jewish community on the eve of World War II. The list was compiled using a wide range of archival sources in Latvia and abroad. The 1935 census forms the basis of the list which is corroborated by a variety of pre-war material including inhabitants lists of 1939-1940, house lists, passports, business directories and records, birth, marriage and death records for 1935-1941 which will supplement the list with persons born at that time and will allow the exclusion from the list of persons who died during this period.

Latvian Genealogical Websites: Past, Present and the Impact of Social Interaction Networks

I am slotted for Tuesday, at 2.00 pm also in the O'Hare Room and will be presenting a talk entitled: Latvian Genealogical Websites: Past, Present and the Impact of Social Interaction Networks.

My presentation will be illustrated by Power Point and hopefully will provide an overview of a number of Latvian genealogical websites ranging from custom data bases to hosted solutions, to personal websites as well as the new frontier of world wide social interaction networks such as Facebook. It will also examine the benefits of the enhanced exchange of information, the rewards that flow from the intergenerational communication and the risks of giving up rights to data and images.

Trip to Latvia and Lithuania

I plan with my wife, Marcia and our eldest son, Jonathan, to travel to Latvia in May 2008 to do further research and spend some time with the wonderful family that I have discovered there and the friends that I have made since starting my genealogical quest. From Latvia we will be joining up with additional family members to travel to ancestral shtetls in Lithuania.

Support for Nomination of Howard Margol

As President of the Latvia SIG and also from a personal perspective, I was very pleased to support the nomination of Howard Margol by the JGS of Tampa Bay for the 2008 IAJGS Lifetime Achievement.

I did so being aware of the outstanding contribution he has made to Jewish genealogy in general and particularly to Lithuanian Jewish Genealogy. His work has also had a significant impact on Latvian genealogy as research related to either Latvia or Lithuania impacts on the other. He has willingly shared the wealth of information he has acquired over the years with all of us interested in Lithuanian and Latvian genealogy and for that we owe him a debt of gratitude.

On a personal note, I have been the recipient of

his willingness to share and impart knowledge and as a result my own involvement in Jewish genealogy has deepened and I, in turn, have been able to make my own contribution, albeit a far smaller and less significant one.

Membership dues are continuing and our membership is increasing. These dues help us with the invaluable work of our SIG. If you have not yet sent your membership fees please renew as soon as possible by sending your cheque to Mike Getz or by using PayPal. For the convenience of members we will now accept, in addition to the 1 year membership at \$25, a 2 year membership at \$50 and a 3 year membership at \$75. The cost of membership covers the production of the newsletter and also many of the other expenses of the SIG.

Again thanks to Barry Shay, our editor, who has produced yet another splendid edition of our newsletter. There are a number of past copies on the website for easy reference.

All the best and with SIG's greetings.

Henry Blumberg
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Editor's Comments

First, let me apologize for producing only three issues of the Latvia SIG newsletter for the 2007/2008 membership year. As many of you know, I had total knee replacement surgery on 28 April and complications caused me to require an additional surgical procedure called "manipulation" on 29 May. Now I can finally sit at my computer without my knee swelling, which allows me to get back to publishing the SIG newsletter. I guess I was a bit too optimistic when I thought I'd be back at the computer by mid-May. So this issue will be the last for this membership year.

As you know, the Latvia SIG holds its annual meeting in July at the IAJGS conference and this meeting also marks the beginning of the new membership year. Although the IAJGS conference falls in August this year, the 2008/2009 membership year began on 1 July 2008 and ends on 30 June 2009. Our president, Henry Blumberg,

has been coordinating this year's SIG activities and a number of events of interest to Latvian SIGGERS are planned, as Henry indicated in his President's Report.

Henry recently returned from an incredible trip to Latvia and Lithuania where he attended the launch of the *Names and Fates* project in Riga. As a representative of the Latvia SIG, he also spoke to the attendees and distinguished guests. I am very happy to include Henry's account of the launch of the project along with his speech to the attendees in this issue.

Jacob Gorfinkel continues to add to his earlier chronicle with his interpretation of the events that defined the Holocaust in Latvia. Much of the material is based on available historical references, which are too numerous to include in the newsletter. I am trying to organize the references and will include them in a subsequent issue. The conclusions and interpretations raised in the article represent Jacob's historical view and do not necessarily represent those of the Latvia SIG.

I am happy to include Part 1 of another testimony based on interviews conducted at the Center for Judaic Studies, University of Latvia. Hanna Ferber talks about her life in Jelgava, her education and work experiences as well as the fate of her family members. The remainder Hanna's testimony will appear in future issues of the newsletter.

Given the current interest in DNA testing for genealogy research, I am happy to include the article by Judy Simon in which she describes her efforts in verifying her family's origin. As Judy points out, her discovery that there are descendants of Sephardic Jews in Eastern Europe raises the issue of the extent to which Ashkenazi Jews have Sephardic roots.

As many of you know, we now offer the newsletter in hard copy or as a PDF file to paid members of the SIG. If you have not done so already, please let me know your preference when you renew your membership. Since the PDF version contains color photographs and usually runs about 20 to 30 pages, I would only recommend this version to those of you who have wide-band

(cable, DSL, fiber, etc.) access to the Internet.

Please remember that the yearly membership has now ended so please rejoin or renew your membership in the SIG. Details are included later in this issue and can be found on the Latvia SIG website.

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Launch of Names and Fates Project by Henry Blumberg

On July 2, 2008 the *Names and Fates Project* was launched at the University of Latvia. This was an occasion of great significance to Latvians, Latvian Jewry and their descendants world-wide. I was privileged to attend and to be invited to speak.

The project was officially opened by the president of Latvia, Valdis Zatlers, the rector of the University of Latvia, Professor Mārcis Auziņš, and Professor Ruvin Ferber, chairman and project leader and head of the Board of the Centre for Judaic Studies.

Among the speakers were Professor Aivars Stranga, head of the Department of Latvian History; Mr. Margers Vestermanis, director of the Museum and Documentation Centre *Ebreji Latvijā* [Jews in Latvia]; Rabbi Mordechai Glazman; Mr. Boris Maftsir, manager, The Shoah Victim's Names Recovery Project in the FSU; Mr. Benjamin Kaem of the Council of the Jewish Communities of Latvia and Henry Blumberg, president of the Latvia Special Interest Group.

Among the many guests who were present: Irina Veinberga, chief archivist and department head of the Methodology and Data Analysis department of the Latvian State Historical Archives; Rita Bogdanova and Lena Polovceva also of the Latvian State Historical Archives, Constance Whippman, a coordinator and sponsor of the project and former coordinator of the All-Latvia Database of the Latvia SIG with her daughter Ruth Whippman both of the United Kingdom; Gita Umanovska, executive director of the Jewish



Elena Shpungina, Constance Whippman, Henry Blumberg, Irina Veinberga, Rita Bogdanova, Lena Polovceva and Ruvim Ferber

Taken at the conclusion of the launch of the project.

Community of Latvia; Ilya Lensky of the Jewish Museum Latvia and Aleksandra Lurje, archivist at the Jewish Museum; Bella Blumberg, a Holocaust survivor living in Riga and born in Liepaja; Elena Shpungina, a Latvian guide in Riga with special expertise of Jewish ancestral and heritage sites.

The website of the project states that the project attempts to investigate, identify and record the fate of Latvian Jewry in the Holocaust and in Holocaust related events and is divided into three stages:

Stage 1: create a list of the names of the Latvian Jewish community other than Liepaja, (see the

project *Jews in Liepaja, Latvia 1941-1945*) on the eve of the war, using a wide range of archival sources both in Latvia and abroad. The 1935 census forms the basis of the list which can be corroborated by a variety of pre-war material including inhabitants lists of 1939-1940, house lists, passports, business directories and records, birth, marriage and death records for 1935-1941 which will supplement the list with persons born at that time and will allow the exclusion from the list of persons who died during this period of time.

Stage 2: identify each member of a community

a) On the basis of documents of the Soviet State Extraordinary Commission for Ascertaining and

Investigating the Crimes Committed by the German-Fascist Invaders and their Accomplices - these documents in microfilms are held in the U. S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. and at the Yad Vashem in Israel,

b) From the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names,

c) Documents of the concentration camps Kaiserwald, Buchenwald, etc, and also materials from the museum "Jews in Latvia."

The lists of deportees on June 14, 1941 issued by the Latvian State Historical Archives and also the lists of evacuated families (part of the list is accessible on the webpage of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington) enable the exclusion of these Jews from the number of victims of the Holocaust.

The interest in Holocaust studies has increased since Latvia became independent and the articles of leading researchers in the editions of the Commission of Historians for 2003-2006 are the best testimonies to that fact. A significant contribution to establishing the fate of the Jews during the war was the persistent work of some local history re-



President of Latvia, Valdis Zatlers, speaking at the launch of the project.

searchers who compiled detailed lists of Jews who had perished in the Holocaust in some small villages. Many memoirs of Shoah survivors were published during the past few years. These are all extremely valuable sources used working on the

project.

The approach developed in the project of Professor Edward Anders of those who were living in Latvia in 1940-1941 but who cannot be traced as survivors or have not previously been recorded as victims and are likely to have been potential victims of the Holocaust, can be considered as the indirect approach, which is complementary to the direct approach in identifying victims of the Holocaust. The disadvantage of the indirect method is that it will inevitably include some of the living among the dead, e.g., refugees who fled to the USSR, prisoners omitted from the camp records, etc.

Stage 3 gives the survivors an opportunity to examine the list and submit reliable information about the fate of their relatives and friends during the war.

For more information about the project consult the website: <http://names.lu.lv/en.html>

Henry Blumberg's presentation at the launch of *Names and Fates Project*

Mr. President, the rector of the Latvian University, Professor Ruvin Ferber and other honored guests.

It is a privilege to be present here today on this auspicious occasion and bring greetings to the *Names and Fates Project* from the Latvian Special Interest Group.

As the President of the Latvia SIG, which focuses on Jewish genealogical research in Latvia, we congratulate you on the *Names and Fates Project*, which we know will be an invaluable resource to the people of Latvia as well as researchers internationally interested in genealogy.

Your project investigates, identifies and records the fate of Latvian Jewry of the Holocaust. It is important to acknowledge the work of Professor Ruvin Ferber and three dedicated volunteers who have contributed immeasurably to this huge task. So much is owed by so many to so few.

As a result of the atrocities committed during the holocaust, families were dismembered or obliterated.

ated. This project enables a literal re-membering and assists in a virtual reconnection of families and communities. The Latvian *Names and Fates Project* is a model for other countries and their communities.

I have been personally enriched by this work. My father tried for many years to reconnect with family after 1945 through the Red Cross. He was unsuccessful. With the use of new technology I decided in 2000 to fulfill his wish to find out what had happened to family members in the hope of finding some still alive. Unbeknown to my father, nearly all of his family had been murdered in Liepaja and Grobina or sent to Siberia where they perished.

This process of trying to reconnect the few threads that remained entailed considerable database research, as well as enlisting the help of the Latvian archives, attending conferences on Jewish genealogy and visits to Latvia. In addition to having learnt something about the fate of those who perished, after years of diligent research, I was very fortunate to discover and connect with extended family members in places as far-a-field for us as Riga, California, Vancouver, South Africa, Israel and Ireland; nearly all of the families were descendants of those who had left Latvia before the Second World War.

From the outset of the research I have shared the process with my whole family. This visit to Latvia has been especially meaningful as my wife and the oldest of our four sons accompanied me.

For my son who has never visited Latvia before, the power of the narratives of two surviving family members living in Riga as well as meeting Ruven Ferber and the archivists touched him in a way that was quite unexpected.

We were all born in South Africa and have been Canadian citizens for almost three decades and my son always thought of himself as not only Canadian but also part of the South African diaspora. However after only two or three days in this country the work you are doing has created a relationship that is in some ways even more interesting because it is unexpected.

After our two year old granddaughter, Sasha Bella, passed away we were asked by our daughter-in-law to bring some pebbles back with us on a trip to South Africa as she said: "Sasha had never been able to travel anywhere." In the Jewish tradition it is customary when visiting a grave to leave a pebble on the headstone and so we brought some pebbles from Robben Island where Nelson Mandela had spent over two decades. When I saw my son walking on the beach at Liepaja last week picking up some pebbles I was very moved by what he was doing. He was reconnecting the past of her former Liepaja family with himself and with Sasha.

The research of the databases and the *Names and Fates Project* have provided a base and a beginning that reconnects the next generation and makes them aware that they are getting a rich and important legacy in learning about the lives of their ancestors.

In the modern political economy we are all the sum of our networks. This genealogical work impacts on so many levels. It is deeply meaningful to the families who have rediscovered their own history as I have seen in the case of our family. Latvia has a diaspora that in a sense does not even know it is a diaspora. The dialectic between the Latvians and those of Latvian ancestry and the expanding Latvian diaspora is exciting.

The work of preserving history, creating memorials, creating museums and networking and creating this project has ripples beyond Latvia genealogy has become more than providing names and dates but about a passion for sharing real Latvian history and the *Names and Fates Project* in a very meaningful way contributes to that sharing.

I congratulate you and wish you well in your significant work.

The Holocaust in Latvia: An Essay in Historical Interpretation

**By
Jacob Gorfinkel**

Part II – Anti-Semitism in the Republic of Latvia

Prior to World War I, 190,000 Jews lived in Latvia and during the war, many Jews were exiled to the Russian interior while others fled the country. By 1920, the Jewish population had declined to 79,644. After a peace treaty was signed between the Soviet Union and the Latvian Republic on August 11, 1920, Jewish refugees began to return to the Latvia and, by 1925, 95,479 Jews lived in the republic, the largest number since November 1918 when Latvia gained its independence from Russia.

The Role of Jews in the Renewal and Development of the National Economy

The 95,000 Jews in Latvia were less than 5 percent of the total population, but Jewish capitalists and entrepreneurs played a significant role in the renewal and development of Latvia's national economy. Having just returned from exile, Jewish entrepreneurs began establishing banks, crediting companies and co-operatives. The Riga International Bank, the Liepāja Traders' Bank, the Private Joint-Stock Bank of Latvia, the Riga Traders' Bank and the Northern Bank were particularly successful. They were the beginning of the development of Latvia's banking system. In 1924 six banks, all founded by Jews, held 60% of all capital deposited in Latvia's banks. The Latvian-Jewish Association of Credit Unions was established; an organization that united 21 savings and loan banks. In the early 1920s, over the course of two years, Latvian-Jewish financiers, manufacturers and traders received 30 million lats in currency grants sent from the USA. This enabled the investment of capital in the establishment of new manufacturing companies and in the modernization of existing plants, particularly in the timber industry, as well as in rubber, textiles, paper, leather, tobacco, matches, flour and yeast and in the importing of crude oil and coal.

Jews also had a significant impact on the development of Latvia's credit system. In 1935, Jews comprised 10.2% of the people employed in credit institutions and 15.4% of those employed in insurance companies. According to the noteworthy Latvian economist A. Ceihners, in 1933 20.2% of Latvia's industrial enterprises, 28.5% of all shops, and 48.6% of 1st- and 2nd-class trade facilities belonged to Jews. In 1935, Jews held 36% of the share capital of joint-stock companies, and the proportion of Jewish public taxpayers (with an income of more than 2000 lats per year) was: 32.2% in industry, 47.9% in trade, and 22.5% in housing management.

Anti-Semitic prejudices and views grew stronger beginning in 1930 when Latvia was affected by the world economic crisis. The financial situation of many Latvians worsened, their small businesses went bankrupt, and the country witnessed mass unemployment. The Jewish population also suffered from the crisis, although the businessmen of Jewish origin displayed more stability. They were saved by better opportunities to receive foreign credits, and their capital reserves were also larger. On the whole, Latvia's national economy benefited from this. However, anti-Semitic propagandists declared that contrary to Latvians the Jews themselves benefited from the crisis and were thus deepening it by causing misery and poverty.

Though initially a democratic state, the growing popularity of fascism in Western Europe soon took hold. On May 15, 1934, Prime Minister Karlis Ulmanis staged a *coup*, taking control of the government and deporting opposition leaders to concentration camps. The new totalitarian state under the dictatorship of Ulmanis was influenced by Nazi Germany. With the Fascist *coup* came a severe decline in the status of Latvian Jews. All Jewish political organizations were forbidden, secular Yiddish schools were closed, and Hebrew schools' curriculums were screened. The new government made efforts to nationalize the economy, with negative consequences for Jews. The government assumed control of the grain trade, taking away the Jews' main source of employment, favored Latvian enterprises over Jewish ones, levied heavy taxes on the community, and made it difficult for Jews to obtain credit. A se-

ries of government policies left the Jews in a precarious position, forcing many into small trade, peddling, and bartering. Anti-Semitism was rampant in the streets and in economic life. Ulmanis' authoritarian state relied on the bureaucracy, the military and the defense league Aizsargi.

From : Anti-Semitism in Latvia - - Riga, May 27, 1940

The following is from an American embassy report on anti-Semitism in Latvia, dated May 27, 1940, and signed by John C. Wiley.

I have the honor to report that anti-Semitism appears to have been adopted as the policy of the Latvian Government. No official pronouncement on the subject has been made and officially the existence of such a policy is denied. In private conversation, high officials of the Government do not, however, deny that such a policy is being pursued

The application of anti-Semitism in Latvia is made very easy by the administrative technique of the country. Nearly everything is permitted but only on the basis of a special permit. If a Jew wishes to establish a business, dismiss or engage employees, move his residence, transfer his business premises, or perform any of the other innumerable functions of life or business, such a permit is usually withheld without explanation. In addition, under the pretext of recruiting additional labor for the land, Jewish households are being deprived of their servants under 50 years of age. There is, moreover, discrimination against Jewish lawyers, doctors and dentists. I am informed in this connection that no Jewish lawyers have been admitted to practice since the coup d'etat on May 15, 1934.

The imposition of taxes on Jewish business is described as confiscatory and many Jewish industries are prevented from obtaining sufficient raw materials, while Latvian and state own competitors receive ample stocks. In a subsequent dispatch I shall endeavor to assemble statistical data with regard to the extent to which Jewish property interests have been affected by Latvia's "cold pogrom"

The leading anti-Semites are said to be President Ulmanis, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Vilhelms Munters, and M. Alfreds Berzins, the Minister of Public Relations.

Pērkonkrusts (Thunder Cross) - a Latvian radical nationalist organization

Pērkonkrusts, was a Latvian radical nationalist organization active in the 1930s. The pro-fascist xenophobic and anti-Semitic organization "Ugunskrusts" was founded (with about 2000 members) in 1931–1932. In 1933 it was renamed Pērkonkrusts. The core of the organization was formed by former members of the National Club and anti-Semitically disposed staff members and students of the University of Latvia. Gustavs Celmiņš, a fanatic adherent of nationalistic totalitarian order and an anti-Semite, became the leader of the organization. The program of Pērkonkrusts foresaw the forcing out of Jews from Latvia by creating an atmosphere and conditions that would pressure them to emigrate. From 1933 Pērkonkrusts was also influenced by A. Hitler's anti-Semitic policy in Germany. With its slogan "Latvia for the Latvians," the Thunder Cross wished to place all political and economic control of their country in the hands of native Latvians. As a result, these extreme nationalists rejected the section of the Latvian Constitution that gave national minorities cultural autonomy. In its glorification of Latvia, the Thunder Cross's call for simplicity and purity even went so far as to suggest a Latvian religion. By 1934, Perkonkrusts is estimated to have had between 5,000 and 6,000 members, although the organization maintained that it had more. The term Thunder Cross means swastika, which was used as a symbol of the organization.

Former members of Ulmanis' defense league, Latvian police and soldiers, as well as former members of the Thunder Cross, created self-defense squadrons under Nazi occupation. These squadrons, headquartered in Riga, were used to search, arrest, and murder civilian minority populations, including Jews and Soviet sympathizers. In 1941, former leader of the Thunder Cross, Celmin, now a Nazi official, encouraged Latvians to join a security team led by Viktor Arajs, the leader of the Riga police. Many former Thunder

Cross members joined what became known as the Arajs Commando, a unit responsible for the extermination of thousands of Jews and Communist party members. In the team's first week, it burned a Riga synagogue along with 300 Jewish refugees from Lithuania inside.

Part III – One year of Soviet Occupation 1940 - 1941

When World War II broke out in 1939, the Soviet Union forced Latvia to sign a treaty allowing the Soviet army to use the country for its war effort.

On June 16, 1940, threatening an invasion, the Soviet Union issued an ultimatum demanding that the government be replaced and that an unlimited number of Soviet troops be admitted. Knowing that the Red Army had entered Lithuania a day before, and that its troops were massed along the eastern border and mindful of the Soviet military bases in Western Latvia, the government acceded to the demands, and Soviet troops occupied the country on June 17. Just after the Red Army crossed the Latvian border, the fearsome Soviet proconsul Andrei Vyshinsky arrived in Riga. Vyshinsky had been the prosecutor at the infamous Moscow trials of 1935-1938. In Riga he implemented the Sovietization of Latvia: the installment of a puppet government, mock elections, the deportation of the president, and finally, outright annexation.

On August 5, 1940, following mock parliamentary elections, Latvia was annexed into the USSR. The year following, August 1940 to June 1941, is known as the Year of Terror in Latvia during which the USSR security agencies committed serious injustice against thousands of Latvians. During the process of Sovietization of Latvia, Latvian Jews soon came to feel the effect of this bulldozer, and not just in the nationalization of industrial and commercial enterprises, which affected all inhabitants. All non-communist Jewish organizations were banned, all "reactionary" Jewish books in public libraries, reading rooms, and clubs were confiscated, all Jewish schools had to change from Hebrew to Yiddish, and Max Schatz-Anin's newspaper *Kamf* and journal *Ufboj* carried out a vicious and slanderous campaign against rabbis and the Jewish faith. If such blas-

phemy had appeared in gentile papers, it would have been immediately labeled blatant anti-Semitism. Zionists, especially those active in the rightist Betar organization, were arrested and deported starting in the summer and fall of 1940.

In general, the Jewish population supported the Soviet regime in Latvia (a reaction to the anti-Semitism of Karlis Ulmanis' regime) Many Jews believed that Bolshevism in 1940 would be something different, something more moderate than in 1919, and that the Nazi threat would be fully eliminated with the arrival of the Red Army.

In 1940 the left-wing Jews actively participated in the formation of the Soviet administrative apparatus. Jews were appointed as employees of commissariats, managers of nationalized enterprises, functionaries of the Party and Soviet bodies and political workers. However, there were few Jews among the leading staff of the occupation regime. Out of the 100 members of the so-called "People's Saeima," which voted for the incorporation of Latvia into the USSR, there were only two Jews. Out of the 35 members in the Central Committee of the CPL there was only one Jew, but there were no Jews among the puppet People's Commissars of Soviet Latvia. Among top officials was the Jew Semion Shustin, Deputy Commissar of Internal Affairs of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (LSSR), and Commissar of the State Security of the LSSR since April 1941, who was sent to Latvia from the USSR to head persecutions. This odious person had no connection with the Latvian Jews. He was a cynical careerist, who had turned his back to his nationality and advanced himself in 1937. The conspicuous position of the Jews in the new regime and its political and administrative apparatus caused the Latvians to identify the whole of the Jewish community with the hated Soviet regime, which had been imposed upon them by the Red Army

These facts were used one year later by Latvian pro-Nazi propaganda to blame Jews for all crimes performed by NKVD and Soviet Regime in Latvia and calling Latvians to take revenge. Many Latvians believed that only Germany could give them back a free and independent Latvia.

Who Killed the Jews of Latvia?

When the German's invaded Latvia in June, 1941, they hoped that the local population, after having lived the past year under communism, would rise against the local Jews in "spontaneous" pogroms. Reinhard Heydrich, who at this time was the Nazi official in charge of the killing of European Jews, had issued orders on June 29, 1941 to SS-Brigadeführer Walther Stahlecker, head of Einsatzgruppe A, to encourage the Latvians to kill Jews .

Having experienced Soviet atrocities, which included mass arrests, deportations and executions, Latvians almost universally hailed the German forces as liberators and in the early days of the German occupation thousands of Latvians actually volunteered to fight Communism, which Latvian pro-Nazi propaganda equated with Jewishness. In the first weeks after the Russians had been driven out, groups of Latvians, filled with bitter hatred, roamed through Riga and provincial cities and towns hunting down Jews and communists.

While the Germans were motivated by their policies of rabid anti-Semitism and genocide, the Latvians were prepared to do their "dirty work" in return for immediate and future reward.

Propaganda was used to spread the Nazi's message of hate resulting in the Latvians hatred of the Jews. It was strong enough to have lead them into a killing frenzy. Nazi propaganda brain washed thousands of Latvians, added fuel to the hatred already present in the Latvian society and helped justify their actions. Ordinary Latvians willingly participated in the mass slaughter of Jews or prevented their hiding or escape. The Latvians saw the Jews being humiliated, corralled through the city, gathered in ghettos and sent off to die horrible deaths. Why did they carry out the orders with such barbaric brutality? "They made old men perform antics before they shot them. They beat prisoners to death without reason. When Jews could not be taken unawares, they hunted them through the forest with great ingenuity and persistence. They did all these things even when no German supervising officer was looking, wholly on their own initiative.". Does this sound like the actions

of unwilling participants? They sound like the actions of malicious people driven by hatred of those they abused and killed, the actions of those who willing and eagerly took part in the genocide. Latvians had participated in these barbaric executions not just as eyewitnesses, but also as participants – executioners, hoping to gain the new invaders' favor

These outbreaks of violence were organized and coordinated by Latvian officers Lt. Col. Volde-mārs Veiss, Lt. Col. Roberts Osis, Karlis Lobe, and Viktor Arajs and others who were in charge of Latvian "self-defense" units. Latvians, of course, didn't think of themselves as monsters rather as "Latvian patriots."

There is a claim that the Latvians were following German orders and were forced to commit these crimes against the Jews. The fact remains, however, that the Latvians had the opportunity to decline to participate in the killing of Jews. We don't know of a single case in the history of the Holocaust, that a Latvian was killed, sent to a concentration camp, or punished in any serious way for refusing to kill Jews.

An Interview with Hanna Ferber, Part 1

Recorded December 18, 2001

Interviewed by Svetlana Kovalchuk

Translated from Russian to English by Inga Long

I don't know how I should say this. I haven't seen any of my grandmothers and grandfathers. I remember that grandmother Zheniya Hercenberg who was absolutely deaf, was living in Jelgava in an old folks home, which her sons were paying for. She died and was buried in Jelgava in the Jewish cemetery. There are no documents left. My parents got married in 1906, in Liepaja. My father's native place is Piltene – not far from Liepaja; his parents are also from the same place. My mother was born in Gulbene, not far from Liepaja.

My father, Adolph Hecenberg, was born in 1880. In 1914, when WWI started, he was deported to Glazov, province of Vyatsk (in Russia). Why? He never found out. But my mother was born in 1884 and was left alone with three children. In 1914 my brother was six, my sister was four and

the youngest brother was two. In Jelgava (before 1918 it was called Mitava) a law was issued that all Jews have to leave Jelgava in 48 hours. (It was not correct – the law was issued in 1915 at the end of May – beginning of June, right before the German occupation of the territory of modern Latvia. It is possible, that Adolph Hercenberg was deported to Glazov as a result of this law, since the Tzar's government was afraid of the sympathetic feeling towards Germans among Jews – edit.) Everybody who used to live in Jelgava knew about this law. They brought a little ship at the convergence of the Lielupe and Driksna rivers; all the Jews with their children went there. My mother with three little children made a packet with the most necessary things and went to the ship where they were taken to Riga. Her brother lived in St. Petersburg at that time.

My mother's name was Feike Ite, maiden name Kutisker, but we called her Feike. The fact that she is Ite we learned from her brother, who left for Palestine in 1926 and lived there until 1989. My mother was taken to St. Petersburg and from there they let her go to Glazov. In 1917 the Board of Workers and Farmers allowed them to return to Mitava, Jelgava. And they returned. And I was born in 1919.

My older brother was Boris, in old – Hebrew Bor, I would say that was a bear. He was born on February 26th, 1908 in the city of Liepaja (before 1918 called Libava – edit.) These documents I received from him later.

My sister was born in 1910. Her name was Gita, she was born on February 2nd, in Jelgava.

My youngest brother was Isaak, they also called him Isaak Meier. He was born in April 10th, 1912 in Jelgava.

My oldest brother Boris started to attend the school in Glazova, where he was studying until 1917. That was a Russian school. He learned Russian for the rest of his life. When they returned to Jelgava, they send him to the German gymnasium. He graduated in 1926. He was 18 at that time. How he learned Hebrew, I don't know. In 1926 he and his friend Shura Davidson left for Palestine. They had enough money to get to Ber-

lin, where there was an uncle – Igo Kutisker, who used to live in St. Petersburg. My brother sold his stamp collection there and went to Palestine.

In Jelgava we lived very modestly. My father either had a little shop there (I don't remember that) or commivoyager [?]. I remember commivoyager. Sometimes there was a job, sometimes there wasn't. My mother stayed at home and it seemed she owned some place where people who came to Jelgava could have a meal. It wasn't busy. That's how we lived.

Our family wasn't orthodox. Yes, on Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur my parents attended synagogue. During Passover we didn't eat bread. My father used to say: "I can eat the pork outside the house." At home we didn't have pork, but there wasn't kosher food as there should have been – milk dishes, meat dishes. To follow everything in an orthodox manner was very difficult. When my daughter and I came to Israel in 1989 to visit my daughter – in law, she didn't allow my daughter to wash dishes. My daughter-in-law used to say: "You will mess up everything! You will mix the milk dishes with the meat dishes!" I know all those rules. I attended the synagogue in Jelgava with my parents. There was a huge synagogue in Jelgava. In the school we learned Hebrew every day – it was a dead language at that time, just like Latin. We were studying the basics of the religion. I couldn't speak, but now I know the words. I say: "They can't buy and sell me in Hebrew." Thus I know many words. But can I speak Yiddish? Yes!

My brother left for Palestine in 1926, there he married a the girl from Riga; her name was Sonya Harlev – and she also was from "Betar" (short from "Brit – Trumpeldor" – Union named after Yosif Trumpeldor - military Zionist youth organization, founded in Riga in 1923 – edit.) and she was an activist there. He met her only in Palestine, but my father was working with this Sonya Liven (Sonya's maiden name was Liven, Harlev was her husband's name – see further in the text – edit.) at the Lancman in Riga, she was a book-keeper. My father knew his daughter-in-law to be.

Afterwards her position was taken by her sister

Roza. When my brother got married, Roza with her mother – frau Liven came to visit us in Jelgava, to introduce themselves. My brother's son was born in 1933; his name was Raffi. My brother changed his own name and surname in 1929. Instead of Hercenberg he became Harlev, Har – means a mountain, lev – means a heart probably. And because of that it is very important to me that there is left some memory about the surname Hercenberg. I respect the family of Harlev very much, their son Raffi and their daughter Gila. Jews don't give the names of those who died in the Holocaust; instead of Gita my brother gave the name Gila. Gila means joy, so there would be the joy in our family. Gila was born in 1945. He wrote me once that he went to work for the municipality in Tel Aviv as a sanitary inspector. I had to show them a document about graduating the real gymnasium – he knew Latin and Greek. My father also graduated the same real gymnasium. But I don't know what languages my father knew. Raffi has three children – Tamar, Yair (means the Light), Yair Isaak because my youngest brother died in the War. They couldn't use his name. Gila's oldest son was Yuval (died in a car accident), she had three daughters, twins and a daughter Efrat. She married Eli Shani. They live in Israel.

I have to say that my brother and I corresponded all the time. When we evacuated to Russia, I knew his last name by heart. Maybe it was because I knew English. From Kirov I sent a card to my brother in Palestine. I wrote that my parents and I have evacuated. Already in the train they told us that we are not fugitives but evacuees. Then I learned that my brother found many people from Jelgava through the Red Cross. But not us. People from Jelgava got scared when they got letters from Palestine. It was almost a crime. He couldn't find us. He got my card after the death of our father. And he started to help us regularly sending packages, food. I remember, there was grease in the metal cans, it was a vegetable oil. Kosher. He sent us sugar pills. In 1944 he even sent us matzah! But until 1943 my mother baked matzah herself. Once he sent all of us season shoes. Then for the first time in our lives on Passover we were invited to the head of the hospital Rozovskoi. He had army food. He

brought some small piece of meat. And we made side dishes.

My full name is Hanna, now my last name is Ferber. I got married on November 9th in 1945 to Simon Ferber. I was born on September 16th in 1919. At that time Bermont's army was leaving Jelgava. As my mother was telling me, I almost was born in the basement because of the shooting. I was the fourth child in our family. I was going to Jewish Elementary School in Jelgava and for two years to Jelgava Secondary School. In 1939 they closed Jelgava Secondary School. Since my father was always working in Riga's companies, he was a commivoyager. My youngest brother also didn't have a job in Jelgava and in 1936 we moved to Riga. My father's brother – Eduard Hercenberg was living there.

My father had two brothers – Eduard and Gustav. Gustav lived in Tallinn. I applied to the Jewish gymnasium named after Ice Rauhverger. Why did I go to that school? Because the subjects at school were in Latvian. But in Jelgava all the subjects were in German. My first language was German. In 1939 I graduated from Rauhverger's school and applied to English College. English College was the highest educational institution at that time. We learned pretty good English at the school and I didn't have to study it additionally. I passed the test and started to study. It was located in the building where the Mathematic faculty of the University of Latvia is today – 29 Rainis Blvd. At that time college was the highest education, but nowadays it is only secondary education. At that time I could speak English fluently, I was even thinking in English. The college had wonderful teachers – they knew the language excellently – they all were English. Twice a year – on Christmas and during the summer holidays – they went to England. At the College we didn't speak in any other language. We even had a penalty system for words, and non-English pronunciations. They all got married to local girls. I studied there for three years, passed the test for the third year and the War started.

At the time when I was studying I was also working. College started at 4pm. My friend helped me to get a job on the wheel lubricant factory whose owner was Gandler. They were making

that lubricant from smelly herring. The owner's children – retarded son and daughters were in charge of commerce. Irbe Yulia. There was a deliveryman there, who didn't know a single word in Russian, but was swearing in Russian! Unbelievable! And when the owner was telling him "I saw you again in the pub, you were standing next to the pub!". He said "It wasn't my fault, it was the horse's fault. It gets some piece of bread there and therefore it is not passing by the pub". And I started to work as a clerk there for 50 Lats. It was smelly there. I couldn't go to college in those clothes. After I got home, I washed and then went to College. Classes were until 7 – 8pm.

During the evacuation I was trying to study, I entered to the Institute in Kirov. I had no idea that it was a pedagogical Institute. I came to the Institute, started to talk to some person in German and was very satisfied since I couldn't speak Russian. I showed them my grade sheet from the college, which they couldn't read. I entered the third year of the English faculty.

How I was listening the lectures!!! Teachers were talking in Russian, but I was writing it down with Latin letters! I couldn't study! There was a teacher from Leningrad, who spoke to me, and even took me with her to the lunch and gave me almost a half of her food so I could talk to her in English. But my studies ended very soon – the institute was transferred to Yaransk, 250 km away from Kirov. There was no railroad there. At that time people who were in charge of the meat industry were evacuated from Moscow. They needed the building where the institute used to be. My father, who was deported during WWI to the North, said: "Darling, did we leave Riga so we could get caught by Germans here? We don't know how far Germans will reach. We will not leave together with the Institute". They offered to take my parents with me and promised to give my father a job, but my father refused.

The institute left and I started to look for a job since during the war they were prosecuting if someone wasn't working. I had to work. Not knowing the Russian I went to the sewing shop – Kirov clothing. They were fixing military clothing and also sewing some, too. They took me to

sew the buttons and make the buttonholes. But I was doing that job very badly – I have never filled the plan. I didn't understand what the plan was and what I had to do. I was always the last on the list and they were scolding me. There were professional tailors working there and the climate was like among the tailors. I wasn't learning Russian among them. They all were talking in the local dialect. In the office there was one Jewish woman working who spoke to me, understood and said "You will be an accountant. Somehow you will write the checks and I will teach you how to make a graphs so you won't have to work as a tailor." Tailors were working in two shifts, 12 hours in each shift. I started to work as an accountant. I was working well. Yes, and that woman in the very beginning said to me: "Anechka (friendly name for Anna – edit.), you can't be my friend. I would love to be your friend. My daughter Anna's father is Trotskyite (follower of Trotsky – edit), therefore my mother, my daughter and I were deported to Kirov as the family of the Trotskyite. Don't hang out with me – it is dangerous for you."

I was working in that shop until I received notice to come to the military office. I came there and they told me that I have to attend signaling classes. I was telling them I don't speak Russian and I don't know how they will teach me. They were forming the group of signalers to send them to the back of the front. My father died of lung cancer in Kirov at that time in 1942 and was buried there. We didn't know that in Kirov there was a corner in the cemetery for Jews. There was a piece of the forest and that's where we buried my father – in March of 1942. It was very cold – -30 deg C, but I had very high temperature +40 deg C. I was ill at that time. My friend Luba Mencovskaya, who lived with us, and my sister-in-law Sonya – my youngest brother Isaak's wife, went to bury my father. At that time Luba was working at the military Hospital and they gave her a sled and made a coffin. They all went there and put my father into the coffin. My mother and I were alone.

At that time Latvia's representatives in Kirov, was led by Karlis Pugo – father of Boris Pugo (in 1991 during the August attempted turnaround he was a Minister of Internal affairs of USSR – edit.)

Karlis Pugo was a very nice person, he hosted us very nicely. He was outraged about one thing – why everybody who had an appointment with him was dressed like a bum, but I was dressed nicely. In Kirov I contracted tuberculosis and he gave me warm footwear to use.

(To be continued.)

Ashkenazi Jews with Sephardic Roots by **Judy Simon**

What was for years a mystery in my Ashkenazi Jewish family has become a knowable reality, thanks to DNA testing. My maternal grandfather, Saia Brozgol, always said we were Marranos (a term which is considered derogatory today and has been replaced by the preferred terms conversos, crypto-Jews or anusim). It was a story that was carried from generation to generation for 500 years, that our family left Spain during the Inquisition. Could it be true? My mother would say that Grandpa has dark skin, maybe his family was Mediterranean, but that was all we had to go on, not very convincing. We have records of my grandfather's family in Rezekne, Latvia as far back as the mid 18th century. Believing that we were from Spain, several cousins of my grandfather's in Rezekne moved "back" to Spain, to Barcelona, around 1909; at the time my grandfather immigrated to the US from Rezekne. For years we had contact with these Spanish cousins but still, this was not proof that any of us were of Sephardic ancestry.

I kept mentioning our possible Sephardic connection in the Jewish Genealogy community, mostly among Ashkenazi Jews, and surprisingly I met several other Ashkenazi Jews who also had an oral history of having Sephardic roots, among them Schelly Talalay Dardashti. It soon became apparent to us that we aren't the only Eastern European Jews with Sephardic roots; Ashkenazi families with an oral history of having Sephardic roots were coming out of the woodwork. We encountered Ashkenazi families with recent ancestry in Eastern, Western and Central Europe who have Spanish or Portuguese surnames, an oral history of having Sephardic ancestors, or some other indicator of Sephardic heritage such as a

family tradition of naming their children after a living grandfather or being a carrier of a genetic disease found mostly in the Mediterranean. Their Sephardic ancestry has not been verifiable through archival records. We wanted to find out if DNA analysis can provide support of a Sephardic ancestry among Ashkenazi Jews having these Sephardic indicators.

Since it was my maternal grandfather's father's father's... father's line that was purported to be Sephardic, I had to find a male along that line to have his Y-DNA tested. Y-DNA is passed along from father to son, relatively unchanged over the generations, except for occasional mutations. Females don't have Y-DNA; therefore in order to test whether my grandfather's paternal line is Sephardic, it must be a male on the unbroken father-to-son chain who has his DNA tested. This is the same father-to-son chain along which the surname passes. Many Sephardim in Iberia already had surnames in the fourteenth century and if they left Spain after the expulsion, their surnames may or may not have traveled with them. Some Sephardim changed their surnames during the Inquisition to hide their Jewish ancestry, and some may have lost their surnames altogether, particularly if they assimilated into Ashkenazi culture, where surnames weren't adopted until much later. However, there is evidence that at least some of the Ashkenazi Jews with Sephardic roots retained their Sephardic surname. In our case, we are not sure whether the surname Brozgol migrated with my ancestors from Spain to Latvia. Broz was a surname that was documented to have been used by both Sephardim and conversos in the Navarra region of Spain during the 14th and 15th centuries and it is possible that my ancestors could have brought it with them, adding the suffix "gale," (meaning "land of") in Latvian. Alternatively, there is a village in Latvia near Rezekne called Berzgale (land of the birches) and the name Brozgol could have been taken from this village.

Fortunately, I have a cousin on my grandfather's direct male line; my grandfather had one son who had one son, and this cousin agreed to have his Y-DNA tested. After what seemed like an interminable wait, we got his results back and discovered that most of his Y-DNA matches were Ash-

kenazi Jews from villages near my grandfather's, in the region of Eastern Europe where the borders of Latvia, Belarus and Lithuania meet. But not all his matches were Ashkenazi. There were two Spanish names among his list of Y-DNA matches: one from Mexico and one from Texas. I contacted each of these men whose Y-DNA was so precious to me, and found that they were perplexed that their Y-DNA matched that of Ashkenazi Jews. They each had clues that they might be descendants of converso families and expected to find Sephardim among their matches, but Ashkenazim? My family's oral history solved their puzzle. Their matches weren't of Ashkenazi ancestry after all, but Ashkenazi Jews with Sephardic roots. Of the cluster of Ashkenazi Jews who matched my cousin, not one of them had any idea they had Sephardic roots on their paternal line; DNA testing revealed that their paternal ancestors were Sephardim before arriving in Eastern Europe. One wonders how many more Ashkenazi Jews have Sephardic roots of which they are unaware.

Encouraged by the evidence that there are descendants of Sephardic Jews in Eastern Europe, Schelly and I started the Iberian Ashkenaz Y-DNA project at Family Tree DNA. Since its inception on March 1, 2007, we have accrued 45 project members, each of whom is from an Ashkenazi Jewish family and has an indicator of Sephardic roots- an oral history, an Iberian surname, a Sephardic family custom, or an occurrence of a Mediterranean inherited disease. As of January 27, 2008, Sephardic or converso Y-DNA matches have been found in the Family Tree DNA database for roughly two-thirds of the project members. Considering that the FTDNA database includes many more Ashkenazi DNA samples than Sephardic and converso samples, confirmation of this magnitude of oral histories that have been carried for 500 years is astounding. As more and more Sephardim and descendants of conversos get their DNA tested, more of the Iberian Ashkenaz project members might find DNA support for their oral history too.

The project is on-going and we expect the number of members to increase over time. At this time, we don't have enough information to estimate what proportion of Ashkenazi Jews have

Sephardic roots, but it is likely to be a larger proportion than many of us imagined. As the field of genetic genealogy grows, we may be able to map our ancestors' journey throughout the Diaspora. Might we be able to tell if our ancestors traveled from the Near East along the Mediterranean, from Italy through France and Germany into Eastern Europe, forming the group of Jews we know today as Ashkenazim? Or might they have traveled from the Near East along the Mediterranean to Spain and Portugal, becoming the group we call Sephardim, and then scattered all over the world-including Ashkenazi Eastern Europe-as a result of the Inquisition?

If you have recent Ashkenazi ancestry and have reason to believe that your ancestors could have been Sephardic, we would be delighted for you to join the Iberian Ashkenaz Y-DNA project. If you are not a male on the direct male line that is assumed to be Sephardic, then you can ask a male in your family who is on that direct line to be tested. Please see our project website at Family Tree DNA for more information: <http://www.familytreedna.com/public/IberianSurnamesofAshkenaz/>

If you or a family member would like to join the project, you can order a DNA kit through JewishGen using the following order form: http://www.familytreedna.com/surname_det.aspx?group=EEIJH Please contact Judy Simon (heyjude0701@gmail.com) if you have any questions.

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This is a reminder to kindly renew your subscription to the Latvia SIG. Our subscription year runs from 1 July 2008 through 30 June 2009. As previously mentioned, dues may be paid for multiple years. Yearly fees are US \$25 for the US and Canada, and \$35 (bankable in the US) from elsewhere. If you wish to renew your membership for multiple years, the first year will be \$25 (\$35 outside North America) and \$20 (\$30 outside North America) for each subsequent year. Please make your check payable to Latvia SIG and mail it to:

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

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Bibliographical or archival sources used in your Latvian genealogical research:

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