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President’s Report

I’d like to wish all of you a very Happy New Year as we start the new membership year of the Latvia SIG. The new membership year actually began in July and this year it corresponded with the very successful Latvia SIG meetings at the IAJGS conference in Los Angeles. Henry Blumberg has done a very nice job with his critique of the IAJGS conference, while highlighting some of the SIG’s events as well and so I’ll try not to repeat too much of what Henry has written.

This year’s IAJGS conference attracted more than 40 attendees to the SIG luncheon and meeting, which I think may be a record. About half of the attendees were from California and many of them were attending their first conference. Of those in attendance, some have become new dues-paying members of the SIG and we hope more will join in the next few weeks.

Since the Latvia SIG meets only once a year at the IAJGS conferences, we try to summarize the previous year’s activities and also present issues that need to be addressed. As far as I am concerned, the most important function of the SIG is to identify and pursue projects that help and support the membership in their genealogical research. Generally, the success of these projects depends on the amount of effort that is applied in terms of manpower and funding. Over the years there has been a small number of volunteers who have supported these projects, and some of these same volunteers have helped fund the projects as well. Funds are also obtained from SIG dues and contributions from donors. As a general rule, we do not charge fees to access any of the material made available by the SIG. Following is a brief description of the projects reviewed at the meeting.

Dvinsk Census Records – Arlene Beare has been the point person with the Latvia State Historical Archives (LSHA) on this for a number of years and the progress has been slow. It has gotten even slower now that Latvia has severe economic problems. The data was supposed to be finished by this summer but, as Arlene discussed, the archivists have delayed it further. We now have sufficient funds to pay for the completed data, but actually transferring the funds to the LSHA from the Dvinsk census fund at JewishGen seems to be a very slow process.

Dvinsk Voters Lists – This is a project that Constance Whippman has worked on and Arlene reported on at the meeting, although without much discussion. Constance has provided the Duma 3 lists for 1907 for Dvinsk, Rezekne, and Ludza. Arlene has the data and we need to get the data and upload it to the SIG website.

Radaraksti Records – These are the records that Christine Usdin is transliterating into English and need to be compiled into JewishGen compatible Excel spreadsheets. Although Christine continues to do a remarkable job in transliterating the data, the efforts to develop compatible Excel files for these records have been slowed dramatically. Volunteers are urgently needed to help with this process.

Shvetlinks – This is a project that requires SIG members interested in a particular shtetl to actually develop a mini-website for that shtetl that will be hosted by JewishGen. There are numerous shvetlinks on JewishGen and a number for Latvia as well. One of the best is the one that Bruce Dumes did for Vishki. We need volunteers interested in a particular shtetl to come forth, but have not been successful.

Latvian Jewish Soldiers – This is a database I found a couple of years ago and have been getting it translated into English. It is not large enough to upload to JewishGen, but should be uploaded to the SIG website. It is almost complete, but the volunteer who was doing most of the translations is no longer available. A volunteer is needed.

Dvinsk Cemetery Records – Mike Getz has these records and they need to be translated from Hebrew to English. Volunteers are needed.

Testimony Translations – The original testimonies in Russian were paid for by the SIG and Ar-
lene in 2000/2001. I have used two or three translators, at low cost, to translate the material into English and I publish them in the newsletter as they become available. For what we can afford to pay, it is difficult to find translators. Please contact me if you have recommendations for translators.

**Additional Material** – Mike Getz has material that needs to be translated, including the following:

- A History and Review of the Kurlander Young Members Association with a membership list.
- Latvian Telephone Book of 1939
- Dvinsk – Rise and Decline of a Town
- Survivor Testimonies – mostly translated with family details, photographs
- Jekabpils/Krustpils (30)
- Daugavpils (25)
- Rezekne (24)

Other topics discussed at the meeting included:

**Membership:** - The 2009/2010 membership year was quite successful with 100 paid U.S. members and 20 non-U.S. members. It is always difficult to solicit members to renew their membership so we hope that if you have not yet renewed yours, please do so after reading the newsletter.

**Newsletter:** - We continue to publish four newsletters per year, although three were published for the 2009/2010 membership year. Currently about half the membership receives the newsletter in hard copy and the other half as a PDF attachment to an e-mail. As always, it is difficult to convince members to submit articles for publication and the editor would be happy to hear from any of you if you have something of interest to write about.

**Website:** - The website needs updating and we hope that our new webpage editor, Marion Werle along with our webmaster, Bruce Dumes will undertake that effort shortly. I know that members have expressed opinions about both the content and format of the website, so please submit your ideas to either Marion or Bruce.

**Listserve Moderator:** - Elsebeth Paikin had been the Latvia SIG’s wonderful listserv moderator for many years but for the last two years JewishGen has provided an interim moderator. I am now happy to announce that this largely anonymous position has been filled. Debra MacLaughlan (better known as D.) who is also Bruce Dumes’ wife, has taken over these duties and we are all very happy to welcome her.

**Financial:** - Mike Getz presented the Treasurer’s Report, which included the following:

The Latvia SIG bank balance as of July 1, 2010 was $3,240.

**Income:**

Subscriptions, membership fees and gifts: $2,380

**Expenditures:**

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**JewishGen Funds:** In 2010 we established two funds at JewishGen, one for the Dvinsk Census project and the other a Speaker’s Fund to help subsidize the cost of invited speakers to attend the IAJGS conferences. In addition there is a Latvia SIG general fund at JewishGen. These funds can only be appropriated for official SIG projects approved by JewishGen. Donations from members and non-members comprise all Latvia SIG funds under JewishGen.

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Election:

Of course the election of Latvia SIG officers or board members, if you prefer, coincides with the annual SIG meeting at the IAJGS conferences. This year was no exception and the slate of newly elected SIG officers follow:

President: Barry Shay, bbshay@starpower.net
Vice President: Michael Eliastamm, elia-stamm@aol.com
Treasurer: Mike Getz, mikegetz005@comcast.net
Newsletter Editor: Barry Shay, bbshay@starpower.net
Webmaster: Bruce Dumes, brucedumes@dumes.net
Webpage Editor: Marion Werle, werle@linkline.com
Membership: Ann Getlan, anneg11@cs.com
Special Projects: Henry Blumberg, henry@blumbergs.ca

President Emeritus: Henry Blumberg, henry@blumbergs.ca
Listserve Moderator: D.L. MacLaughlan-Dumes, dmac@physics.ucla.edu

An important officer of the Latvia SIG is the database coordinator. Arlene Beare has held this position for a number of years and she plans to “retire” from that position after the Dvinsk census project is completed. The most important database effort that the SIG is currently pursuing is completing the Radaraksti records project. This project entails converting the database that Christine Usdin has been developing into JewishGen Excel compatible files, verifying the correctness of the data and then uploading the files to JewishGen, where the database will become part of the JewishGen Latvia Database.

The Latvia SIG is seeking volunteers who are somewhat proficient in using Excel to assist in converting the files and a project leader who will take responsibility for completing the project. This project has the backing of JewishGen and their database experts will provide assistance if required. The tables that Christine has developed can easily be copied and pasted into Excel spreadsheets in the format specified by JewishGen. Once transferred to Excel spreadsheets, the data must be checked for correctness before uploading to JewishGen. Please contact me if you are interested in working on this very important project.

Finally, I’d like to remind those of you who have not renewed your membership for 2010/2011 that the new membership year began on 1 July and goes through 30 June 2011. Membership fees and payment details can be found on page 21 or on the Latvia SIG website, http://www.jewishgen.org/Latvia/. Thanks for your continued support and we look forward to an exciting new year.

Barry Shay
President, Latvia SIG
bbshay@starpower.net

Editor’s Comments

I’d like to thank long-time members of the Latvia SIG, Henry Blumberg and Rochelle Kaplan for providing their perspectives of the IAJGS conference in Los Angeles this past July. While Henry writes about Latvia and Latvia SIG related activities as well as some general comments about the conference, Rochelle provides material that she found especially interesting and that should be useful to anyone doing Jewish genealogical research.

Many of you are interested in the documentary that SIG member Mitch Leiber is producing, and I have provided the latest update. Rumbula’s Echo promises to be a remarkable film that will add significantly to the body of knowledge surrounding the tragedy of Rumbula. Please visit the Rumbula’s Echo website: http://www.rumbulasecho.org/ to keep up to date on the progress.

I have included the accounts of two events that were scheduled to occur within days of each other in Riga. One is Steps for Life, a march that occurred on 4 July, the Holocaust Memorial day in Latvia, to memorialize the thousands of Jews who were murdered throughout Latvia and the other, a planned march on 1 July to celebrate the anniver-
sary of the Nazi invasion of Latvia. Yes, such thoughts are still prevalent in Latvia.

We have been following the progress of the effort to build a memorial to the Jews of Bauska for the last five or six years and the project has now reached its most critical stage. I have summarized the events leading up to a final decision on the project, which is yet to be made. SIG member, Yehudi Gaffen is one of the leaders in this effort and is scheduled to meet with authorities in Bauska on 14 October. Hopefully, I will be able to report positive results in the next issue of the newsletter.

Over the last few years I have been publishing English translations of testimonies of Latvian Jewish Holocaust survivors and I am happy to say that the testimony of Zalman Yoffe is included in this issue. The testimony includes Yoffe’s account of his deportation to Siberia and his return to Latvia as well as details of his family’s fate during the war years.

Barry Shay
Editor, Latvia SIG
bbshay@starpower.net

The 2010 IAJGS Conference: A Perspective by Henry Blumberg

The IAJGS Conference held from the 11 to 16 July was a success. The location was the new JW Marriott Hotel, part of the new L.A. LIVE entertainment district in downtown Los Angeles. This 879-room hotel opened in February 2010 and is an attractive venue.

The conference attracted over 1,050 attendees from 15 countries and 38 states and claims to have had 40% first time attendees. IAJGS conferences always entail an enormous amount of work for the volunteers whose city offer to be the host for the year. In this respect we all owe the conference co-chairs Sandy Malek, Lois Rosen, Pamela Weisberger as well as the conference committee and the JGSLA a debt of gratitude for all their hard work.

While I believe that the conference was a success, it “lacked the polish of recent conferences,” according to Gary Mokotoff, writing in the July issue of 2010 Avotaynu. He pointed out that the Genealogical Society of Los Angeles elected not to use the expertise of the sponsor of the event, the IAJGS, and decided to do it alone. Among the concerns he raised was that the vendor area was placed in a space that did not attract traffic. Furthermore, at the entrance to the vendor area the first booths seen were of vendors selling dresses and costume jewelry. As a result, says Mokotoff, vendor sales were significantly down from last year.

This year’s 280 page conference booklet was smaller and much easier to handle than that provided in earlier years but many attendees felt the type was too small and there were errors in the program. Furthermore while there were many very interesting lectures, movies, workshops and entertainment events there were topics that did not add much to the genealogical content of the program. By way of example there were two talks relating to the Tallit. The first was The Tallit – From Planning to Creation – An Emotional High and another talk entitled: How to Create a Talit: A hands-on and History Workshop

For me, the most enjoyable part of these IAGS conferences is meeting the attendees and renewing relationships. In addition it was very worthwhile to meet leaders of other SIGs and JGSs. Among the regular attendees were Howard Margol, the doyen of Lithuanian genealogy; Rolf Lederer, a Canadian genealogy stalwart of many decades, Saul Issroff of the SA SIG, Warren Blatt of JewishGen, and Michael Goldstein of the IAJGS. Attendees at this conference included all six past presidents of the Latvia SIG, namely Mike Getz, Arlene Beare, Marion Werle, Barry Shay, Martha Lev-Zion and, of course, myself.

Then there are the new faces that expand the range of genealogical friendships. Most of my significant genealogical breakthroughs have come from the chance meeting of fellow researchers, some who turn out to be extended family members. For me, that has been the most exciting and interesting aspect of attending the conferences.
At the business meeting Barry Shay was elected president and Dr. Michael Eliastamm was elected vice-president. Mike Getz remains the treasurer and Marion Werle accepted the position of web page editor and Bruce Dumes agreed to continue as the webmaster. I accepted the position of director of special projects and was also bestowed with the title of President Emeritus, although I feel that I am too young for such a title!

For the first time ever, all six past presidents of the Latvia SIG attended the conference and the luncheon.

A JewishGen SIG coordinators meeting, chaired by Vivian Kahn the JewishGen VP for SIG affairs was held at the conference. To the best of my knowledge it was the first meeting where all the SIG coordinators were invited to meet with JewishGen officials to discuss common concerns. The agenda included JewishGen project approval procedures, and project management and accounting procedures. It was apparent from the discussion that there are a number of issues to be resolved in the relationship between the SIGs and JewishGen.

There were a number of Latvia-specific events scheduled at the conference including the much anticipated presentation by Christine Usdin. Unfortunately, illness in her family prevented Christine from attending but Martha Lev-Zion, Bruce Dumes and Barry Shay presented material on her behalf.

In the synopsis to her presentation Christine Usdin notes that while the Latvian State Historical Archives (LSHA) in Riga has made available online thousands of registers of births, marriages, divorces and deaths for many shtetls in Latvia that are extremely useful for genealogists and researchers, they are nevertheless handwritten in Russian and much of it is illegible.

She first began translating the records for Vishki and as she became more proficient she began
translating the records of Dvinsk and then Rezekne. Her goal is to translate the records of all 28 shtetls. With the help of Bruce Dumes, webmaster of the Latvia SIG, she plans to convert the completed transliterations to a database suitable for uploading to JewishGen.

The 2012 conference, hosted by Le Cercle de Généalogie Juive, will be held in Paris, France, July 15-18, 2012, at the Marriott Rive Gauche Hotel. The 2013 and 2014 conferences are planned for Boston and Jerusalem, respectively.

Hope to see you at the conference in Washington next year.

Within and Beyond the Pale: Jews in the Russian Empire
By Rochelle Kaplan

Benjamin Nathans, the Ronald Lauder Associate Professor of History at Penn, was my new favorite discovery at the IAJGS Convention held in Los Angeles. I attended his talk, Within and Beyond the Pale: Jews in the Russian Empire. He has written three books, one in Russian; his work, Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia, won the Koret Prize in Jewish History, the Vucinich Prize in Russian, Eurasian and East European Studies and the Lincoln Prize in Russian History. He is working on translating the memoirs of Russian historian Simon Dubnov and is a consultant for the Museum of Russian Jewish History, slated to open in Moscow in 2012.

His talk focused on answering the key question, “When and where did Jews begin as a modern people?” Citing their lack of a centralized, rationalized state and territorial integrity (due to their long exile and dispersion), Nathans posits that possible answers include: the U.S. with its new rules of citizenship, the USSR post-1917, Israel in 1948 and Western Europe in the age of emancipation. He omits Eastern Europe.

The 1897 Revision (Census) List in the Russian Empire noted that of 100 million people, 5.2 million self-identified as Jews, with 97% of these speaking Yiddish as their native tongue. Jews were the fifth largest nationality, after the Russians (47% of the population), Ukrainians, White Russians and Poles. The Jews of the Russian Empire were a larger population than all other Jews in Europe. There were fifteen western provinces which were part of the empire. Jews had been expelled starting in the twelfth century from elsewhere but the Kingdoms of Poland and Lithuania,
and the Ottoman Empire were hospitable to Jews, as was Amsterdam. The Russian Empire conquered Poland/Lithuania and so gained the Jews; they’d much prefer annexation without Jews.

Nathans muses that the Jews of the Russian Empire were so fertile because of their better hygiene and so had lower infant mortality rates. The professor cited the 3 Ps important to studying these five million Jews: poverty (a great source of Yiddish humor), pogroms and the Pale. Nathans quoted these Yiddish sayings:

When a poor Jew eats a chicken, either he or the chicken is sick.

Don’t throw out the dirty water until we have clean water.

Sleep faster; we need the pillows.

Pogroms, not necessarily directed at Jews, came in three waves:

March, 1881-1883 in Ukaterinabrod, spreading to the Southern Pale. The spark was the assassination of Alexander II by a terrorist bomb in St. Petersburg a few weeks before Passover by a group seeking freedom. Gessa Gelfman, a member of the group, was Jewish. The mix of theology, assassination and timing was toxic. At the time, the Russian economy was in transition; this was twenty years after the end of servitude. Forty one Jews lost their lives although Belarussians also died. This was a wake-up call.

1905-1906. The first Russian Revolution occurred in 1905. Reactionary forces believed the Jews were responsible for the revolution since there was a high proportion of Jews and leaders involved. Jews were largely urban and in commerce; reactionary forces were largely rural and agrarian. There were thousands of casualties. The Russian government was not responsible for the pogroms but the perception was that it was. The empire was too big to govern.

1919.- By then there were two revolutions and disaster in WWI. In the ensuing civil war, Jews were thought to be on the side of revolution. In independent Ukraine, 100,000 Jewish lives were lost. This was a dress rehearsal for the Holocaust.

In the Pale itself, specific Czarist policies were associated with the Jewish elites. The emancipation movement generally moved from west to east, beginning in Alsace, then Germany, to Austria-Hungary, Russia, Romania, and the Ottoman Empire. Upheavals occurred in each of these countries. Russia lost the Crimean War to the British and French. Other factors cited by Nathans were Russian State ambitions, the influence of Chaskalah (the Jewish enlightenment) and the rise of a new class of wealthy Jewish entrepreneurs in Czarist Russia. Jews began as tax farmers to the Czar; they were hired to collect taxes and got a cut of what was collected. The Czars in the 1850s-1860s embarked on a series of modernizations and reforms; they peacefully emancipated more than forty million serfs. Wealthy Jews realized reform was in the air and harnessed the forces of Chaskalah to change the curriculum and occupational profile. Some Jews were put into one of four categories and given the rights of non-Jews. The top level was merchants of the first guild. The next level was Jewish higher education graduates. Below them were Jewish artisans who were in short supply in the Russian Empire outside the Pale and finally, Jewish Army veterans who had served the full twenty-five year term. A letter from Baron Ginsberg in 1856 gave a blueprint for the emancipation of Jews; it was signed by twelve merchants. As a result of this change, thousands of Jews settled in St. Petersburg and Moscow. In 1897, 314,000 Jews lived outside the Pale, with 40,000 in St. Petersburg and likely another 40,000 there illegally.

There were three streams of immigration: the 2.5 million Jews who left Eastern Europe for America, Canada and other places, those who went to Ottoman Palestine (today Israel and the Middle East), and the Jews of the Pale who moved east in Russia and Central Asia.

By the 1880s, 15% of the students in higher education in the Russian Empire were Jews. Among these, 25% were women. In Russia at the time, only five million of the 100 million population were in higher education. Jews were the most urbanized group in the empire, in places like Odessa, Kiev, Warsaw, Moscow and St. Petersburg. More Jews studied in universities than in yeshivas. One third of the lawyers in 1900 in
Russia were Jewish, and Jews dominated private banking and railroads. In the 1905 Duma (legislature), 12 Jews were elected.

The results of this selective integration were mixed. Although many Jews got ahead, the divide was increased between the haves and have-nots. This increasing stratification led to the creation of the Bund in the 1890s. And there was a backlash. By the 1890s, quotas were instituted in the legal and medical professions and in higher education, although they were not rigorously enforced. The poor either migrated or stayed.

In response to questions, Nathans said the system ended in which wealthy landowners like the Radziwells hired Jews to manage their estates, which led to bad faith between the serfs and Jews. Jews then had to find new roles. He noted that a quarter of the Jewish population at the beginning of the 20th century emigrated from the Pale between 1880 and 1924. Those who left the Pale to go east, didn’t go the U.S. Those who didn’t benefit from the selective integration went south or west. Regarding a question about how this affected the Hasidic world, the professor noted that later Hasidism has not been studied, partly because the archive of the Lubovicher Movement in NY is difficult to access. Also, may Hasidim qualified under selective integration, but they went to yeshivas, not to universities. Nor were they army vets; instead they were salesmen and artisans.

Of the 5.2 million Jews in the empire, in both the Polish Kingdom and the Pale, between 500,000 and 600,000 were in the Kingdom of Poland. In Warsaw in 1900 resided 150,000 Jews. The same reforms that applied under the Czars applied to Polish Jews. Jews who served as tax gatherers or managers easily became entrepreneurs. There was a heavy tax on the sale of alcohol and Jews were heavily involved in that industry.

I learned much from Nathan’s lively talk.

**Sherlock Cohn**

*By* Rochelle Kaplan

Ansel Adams wrote, “We look at photos; we seldom look into them.” Ava Cohn cited Adams in her interesting and potentially useful talk at the IAJGS conference: *Clued-In: Case Studies from Sherlock Cohn - The Photo Genealogist.* Ms. Cohn uses heirloom photographs and a multidisciplinary background to date and interpret photos. With a theater arts background, she maintains an extensive library of primary and secondary-source costume references. Critical to her methodology are the 3 Ds: date, determine age and document.

Cohn debunked five common myths in dealing with historical photos. The first comes from folks who say, “I know these people; I don’t need to know anything else.” Cohn counsels: Stop looking; start seeing! She demonstrated by showing an old photo from Stushuna, not far from Minsk (identified by photography studio marker on back of photo).

A cabinet card, this was posed in a studio. The striped pattern in the clothing was typical of Turkish Jews; the kippah of Lithuanian Jews. More research is required.

Cohn mentioned the six periods of immigration to the US, specific cultural and religious practices and personal choice each factors in clothing and hairstyles. How much did immigrants wish to assimilate?

Myth 2 is that one can date a photo by looking at it. Myth 3 is the belief that our female ancestors didn’t wear fashionable clothes in Europe. From the 1880s to the 1960s, fashions changed a lot. And folks dressed up for photographs, especially studio photos. One has to look at economic status and location in Europe. In larger cities, women wore the latest fashions. Even poorer women had access to newspaper ads and articles and could fashion latest styles with their sewing machines or by hand. And certainly, middle class and wealthy Jews could buy the latest style clothing. I know from hearing stories from my mom about her very poor family on the Lower East Side of NY that her mother fashioned amazing caped velvet coats for her children out of old drapes! One incredibly detailed slide Ms. Cohn showed was of a Russian dressmaker’s pattern from 1905. It looked like one of those mazes from Highlights magazine or the fractal hallucinations of a psy-
chotic on LSD. The Czar said Jews should dress like their Christian counterparts and banned shaved heads and scarves, leading to the sheitel (wig in Yiddish).

There is also the issue of faked photos, most recently disclosed in scholarship on Roman Vishniak, who attempted to garner sympathy for Jews by posing his portraits.

Many women were un-corseted. In America, women could transform themselves, and blend in with the mainstream via clothes. There were no hard and fast rules on this. Cohn showed a 1913 ad in De Froyen Velt from Chicago, the equivalent of the Ladies’ Home Journal.

Myth 4 is that it is impossible to date photos of men because they were not style conscious. Actually, London was the fashion capital for men and Paris for women and many men, if not dandies or metrosexuals, still followed fashion trends. Myth 5 is that with a fashion book, one can date photos. Yes, this can help, but one needs other sources and one should also look at facial hair and hair styles for clues- as well as other genealogical records for confirmation of hypotheses regarding date and place of the photo.

Cohn jokingly quipped about a sixth myth, that photo genealogists are clairvoyant. Use documents and family information to help identify photographs.

Cohn answered a question about postcards. She said these were largely German and created prior to WWI. Stamps or postage marks can help with identification. She said she asks four questions of her clients (1) Where did you get the photo? Where was it taken? (Age, birthdates, age progression). (2) Who is in the photo? (To commemorate an event; to keep relatives elsewhere informed? (4) Why was it taken? Why analyze photos? They can overcome brick walls, clarify family stories, confirm which records are correct and which are not, tell us more about the subjects’ lives and provide enjoyment.
Vincent Brook, author of “Driven to Darkness: Jewish Émigré Directors and the Rise of Film Noir” presented on a topic with which his family was, at least, peripherally involved. The Hollywood film industry was founded by a group of immigrant Ostjuden (Eastern European Jews), who headed most significant American film studios. A second influx of Westjudische (German/Austrian Jewish) film directors fled the Nazis and came to America in the 1930s. Many of these played an important role in the emergence of “film noir”. The contrasting ethnic origins of the two groups, East and West, and their differing backgrounds, led to their particular contributions to American cinema. Brook argues that the Émigré Westjuden, working for Ostjudische studio heads whom they would have been inclined to look at with disdain in Europe, were primed for the dark themes and visual style of film noir. A stunning collection of visuals enhanced Brook’s talk.

Brook, a “Valley Boy,” was raised on a chicken farm in Van Nuys, California. His father, Rudy Bruch, had been a lawyer, emigrating from Germany just prior to World War II. In California, he Americanized his name and became gardener to the stars: Peter Lorre, Robert Ryan, Cornel Wilde, Judy Garland and Vincent Minelli and the director Fritz Lang. Vincent Brook’s mom had an affair with Alexander Granach, a silent film star. She had salons for fellow émigrés, and worked as a masseuse. In Germany, she had been a gymnast instructor. The salon émigrés, known as “Der Gruppe” included doctors, lawyers and their wives; the salons were called “Weimar by the Sea.” Other salonieres were Marta Feuchtwanger and Salka Viertel.

Studio heads and executives Zukor, Laemmle, Fox, Sarnoff, Mayer and Schenk came from Russia and Hungary. The Warner brothers, Selznick and Goldwyn came from Poland and Ukraine. Harry Cohn, Loew and Marcus were German Jews. The studio heads were insultingly called moguls, derived from Mongol- considered uncouth and ruthless. Henry Ford said that motion pictures were controlled by Jews. Zukor (originally Cukor) had been a furrier; Louis B. Mayer (Meier) had gone from the scrap metal business to motion picture distributor. He formed MGM with Loew. Carl Laemmle started the star system. He also signed 1000 affidavits for 1000 Jews from his hometown, Laupheim, Germany.

In the 1930s, German Jews filled the creative ranks of Hollywood, driven from Germany by the Nazis. They were primed for film noir, which often featured an ambivalent protagonist and femme fatale. Earlier, in the 1920s, European film directors were recruited to come to Hollywood; this first wave included Lubitsch, DuPont, Wyler, Vidor, Curtiz and Viertel. The 1930s émigrés shared Ford’s disdain for the studio mogul. Billy Wilder quipped, “We went from Adolf Hitler to Adolph Zukor.” He also said, “We didn’t come because we were invited; we came to save our lives.” The two Wilders, by the way, never went to college, and their father was denied Austrian citizenship. Edgar Ulmer wore a Jewish star in an orphanage and also never attended college. Otto Preminger was an upper class Galician whose father refused to renounce his religion and still rose to become attorney general.

The moguls wished to lift the movies from their gutter association. The term flix comes from flickas, derived from horses, and derogatory. Fox wanted to reduce foreign competition and boost domestic production. Mayer wanted to make more respectable movies; he was the least inclined toward film noir. Max Ophuls changed his surname from Oppenheim so as not to stain the family name. Fritz Lang’s M, from 1931, was cited as an example of Jewish degenerate art. Lang himself was half Jewish, half Catholic. (Brook digressed here about Lang, whose first wife was Jewish and who perhaps knew of her husband’s affair with another woman. Did he kill his wife? He was never charged.) The moguls were generally raised as secular Jews, and almost all wed non-Jews (Brooks called this shiks-appeal), although the Warner boys were raised Jewish.

Film noir classics include Double Indemnity, Laura, Lost Weekend, and Woman in the Win-
dow. They were often low budget and provided decent returns on investment. Brooks states that the films served as an anodyne for their experience. Some themes that emerged in the 1930s and 1940s were effeminate males, home fatale, antilynching, the housebreaker who wreaks havoc, and survivor guilt. In their films high cultural aspirations mixed with low cultural demands. The lurid lighting was both economical and served the story line. The émigrés exorcised their demons and had jobs; the moguls got social cache.

Rumbula’s Echo Update
by
Mitch Lieber

On August 5, Rumbula’s Echo completed its USA East-West shoot, which took place over 8 days. This trip took us from our Chicago base to Washington D.C., Monsey, NY; Manhattan, NY; the San Francisco area and Las Vegas to film survivor interviews. The true stories we heard were amazing and compelling and are essential parts of the larger story told in the documentary.

I deeply appreciate that the survivors graciously welcomed the five of us with a van load of equipment into their homes, and spent hours reliving very painful memories in order to make Rumbula’s Echo

Progress and the Numbers Rumbula’s Echo now has about 70% of originally budgeted filming complete. This includes:

42+ hours of footage

22 interviews with survivors, the rescued, escapees, activists from Soviet times, leaders of the modern Jewish community in Latvia, non-Jewish Latvians speaking about Holocaust issues, etc.

Interviews with all three main characters in Rumbula’s Echo – at least one full day with each

Footage of the modern Jewish community which includes two Latvian Jewish schools, Riga’s recently refurbished synagogue, Latvia’s Jewish community center, several Latvian Jewish community events and six Holocaust memorial sites

The film has 28 editing time lines for different sections of the documentary and has 35 minutes of edited material that is somewhere between rough cut and fine cut. The editing and post-production phase of work is already underway

Last Newsletter

Just in case you didn't see our last newsletter (winter-spring), contact me at: mitchell.lieber@luminescencemedia.org.

A new newsletter, featuring stories and photos from this recent shoot will be prepared later this year. The list of major donors, hotels and restaurants who helped make this most recent filming trip possible with contributions (or steep discounts on services) follows my signature.

Thank you for all that you have done to help Rumbula's Echo to get this far. The international effort behind this documentary is enabling it to break new ground in Holocaust films, tell an important story for the first time and preserve it for history.

Please go to: http://www.rumbulasecho.org/news.shtml for additional information about Rumbula’s Echo.

Shamir Updates

Steps for Life 2010

On July 4, 2010 - the Holocaust Memorial day in Latvia - more than 500 people participated in the memorial march Steps for Life. The event was organized by the religious community "Shamir" in co-operation with World Congress of Russian Jewry and Jewish Community Council of Europe. Members of Jewish communities of Latvia, diplomats, delegations from Germany, Israel and USA, "Maccabi" members and Riga inhabitants participated in the event. They walked from the Old Jewish cemetery through the Riga ghetto area to the Big Choral Synagogue memorial and burnt candles there in memory of the Jews who were killed.

More than 70,000 Latvian Jews were killed in Latvia in the Holocaust. The flourishing Jewish community was exterminated, more than 20,000 Jews from Western Europe were deported to Lat-
via and were also killed. This tragedy can't be forgotten.

**Program Details:**

9:45 Gathering on the Old Jewish Cemetery (corner of Lomonosova and Ebreju str.)

10:00 Memorial Prayer on the Old Jewish Cemetery at the monument. Great Frankfurt Synagogue cantor Boruch Meyer Chauskin.

10:30 Walking along Ludzas street to former Judenrat, now Habad Jewish School, Lachplesha 141.

11:15 Walking to the Great Choral Synagogue Memorial, Gogol Street

Please visit the website: [http://www.shamir.lv/en](http://www.shamir.lv/en) for more information concerning contributing historical information as well as financial support or contact Rabbi Menachem Barkahan, shamir@apollo.lv.

**Latvian March to Mark Nazi Invasion Condemned and Then Prevented**

(excerpted from JTA dispatches)

Latvian leaders and international Jewish groups condemned a scheduled march in Riga on July 1, 2010 to mark the anniversary of the Nazi invasion of Latvia. A Latvian district court ruled that a small group of ultra-rightists could for the first time since World War II celebrate the Nazi occupation of the country, overturning a Riga City Council ban on the event. Latvian Prime Minister Valdis Dombrovskis and Foreign Minister Aivars
Ronis said in a joint statement the day before the scheduled event that they were upset by the ruling and that "freedom of expression cannot extend to Nazi propaganda."

Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, scheduled to visit Latvia on July 4 for a commemoration of the genocide of Riga's Jews, condemned the proposed march. The Anti-Defamation League in a statement Wednesday also condemned the march. Abraham Foxman, the ADL's national director, pointed out that the Nazi invasion of Latvia 69 years ago led to the murder of 90,000 Latvians, including 70,000 Latvian Jews and 2,000 Roma.

"To celebrate this anniversary and present the Nazis as the 'liberators' of Latvia is the height of insensitivity to the victims of Nazism in Latvia and across Europe," Foxman wrote.

"We appreciate the statement of Latvia’s prime minister and the foreign ministry condemning this event. However, we are concerned that this incident is part of a larger trend among nationalists in the Baltics and elsewhere in Eastern Europe to equate the Nazi genocide with the repression and crimes of the Communists."

Efraim Zuroff, director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Israel, also criticized the march.

"To celebrate the anniversary of the Nazi invasion of Riga on July 1 is to celebrate the mass murder of all those victimized by the Nazis in Latvia -- primarily Jews, but also Communists, Gypsies and the mentally ill," Zuroff said in a statement. Advocates on behalf of Jews in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States & Eurasia also condemned the march and called on Latvian officials to respond.

Thankfully, the Latvian police prevented the scheduled march from taking place. On July 1, police called in the organizer of the march, Uldis Freimanis, for questioning. Under Latvian law a political march cannot take place without the main organizer being present.

On July 1, a group of 20 to 50 people, mostly older, laid flowers at the city's Freedom Monument, also called the Latvian Occupation Museum, in a small ceremony, Reuters reported.

Latvian President Valdis Zatlers issued a strong statement against the planned demonstration, calling it "a mockery of the country's independence."

Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman arrived on July 3 to commemorate the genocide of Riga's Jews.

**Bauska Update**

*(Based on information provided to me by Evelyn Waldstein, Jehuda Feitelson, and Yehudi Gaffen, Ed.)*

For a number of years, the Latvia SIG has been following the progress of a memorial being built to honor the Jews murdered in Bauska during the Holocaust. (See Volume 9, Issue 3, June 2005 of the Latvia SIG newsletter.) Designed by the well-known Riga architect Sergei Rizh, who also designed the monument at Rumbula, the memorial will have the form of a large broken Magen David. Nearby, there will be black marble stones bearing the names of Jewish families who lived in Bauska before the war, most of whom lost their lives in the Holocaust. The headings will be in English and Latvian, and there will also be a short inscription in Hebrew.

The memorial was supposed to occupy the empty plot of land on which the Bauska synagogue stood before it was destroyed. However, approval for the project was difficult to obtain because a member of the Riga Duma owned the lease for the plot and refused to relinquish his rights. In the face of heavy pressure from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the owner finally relented and in July 2007, the Association of Jewish Communities in Latvia leased a small plot of land at Rigas iela 35, the site of the old synagogue, for the purpose of erecting the memorial. The following spring the Bauska Duma asked the association to prepare a detailed technical plan for building the memorial, which Rizh, the architect, did. Then the Bauska District Construction Board, at that point headed by a new officer, rejected the plan because the land in question is in a “mixed residential and commercial construction area.” The association appealed the decision.
In July 2010, in response to the appeal, the Bauska Duma repealed the decision by the Bauska District Construction Board and ordered the board to issue a new administrative act. However, the head of the board, who had rejected the original plan, is still in charge of the approval process. He recently met with Rizh and said that he does not feel the memorial is appropriate in its current form. He suggested that he may approve a memorial if it were placed in the basement of a new building on that site, but feels that an ideal location for the memorial is at the Jewish cemetery. The cemetery is in an obscure and difficult to reach location. Yehudi Gaffen will meet with the chairman of the Duma in Bauska in October, where he will try to ascertain the real reason for the impasse and will push for approval of the original plan. We all wish him well.

An Interview with Zalman Yoffe
Recorded May 4, 2000
Interview conducted by Ayna Antane
Center for Judaic Studies, University of Latvia
Transcribed by Aivars Vidjups
Corrected and edited by Ayna Antane
Translated by Sofia Kagna and Viktor Popow

Zalman Yoffe

Z.Y. My father was born in Indra (Indra parish is an administrative unit of the Kraslava municipality in Latvia), my mother was born in Preili (Preili is one of the oldest towns in Latvia. According to the town’s registry, in 1935 Preili’s population counted 1,662 people. About 50.97% of them were Jewish. After World War II only about 1,000 remained in Preili.). Father was in trade and he also was a landlord and that is why he was sent to exile. (Here it means the family was one of the well-to-do either upper or middle class families that were labeled, “alien elements to the working people society of laborers and peasants,” by the Soviet power. After independent Baltic republics (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia) were forcefully annexed by the Soviet Union (based on the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement with Nazi Germany that divided Eastern Europe and Baltic countries between the Soviets and the Germans), the “alien elements” of Baltic republics were put on cattle trains and relocated to Siberia for their “reeducation” into the new society). My mother was helping my father in the store and at home. In 1937 I was serving military duty in the 9th infantry regiment. After finishing military service I went to study and graduated with a degree in economics. After that I helped my father at the store. On the 14th of June, 1941 at 3 in the morning we were told that we were going to exile and they gave us half an hour to gather our stuff. My father was sent to the labor camps in Vyatka (Kirov (Russian: Киров), formerly known as Vyatka and Khlynov, is a city in the North-West European part of Russia on the west of the Ural Mountains), and my mother and I were sent in exile to Siberia. For the first three days we were transported in the same train car with women, later we were kept apart: men and women separately. When I was in Siberia, at first I worked at a timber-felling site. The next year they needed somebody who could write because everyone who could write was drafted into the army, so I became an accounting clerk. I was then sent to Igarka (Igarka (Russian: Игара) is a middle-size town in Krasnoyarsk Krai in Russia. It is located about 100 miles above the Arctic Circle) from Yeniseysk (Yeniseysk, also Eniseisk (Russian: Енисейск), is also a middle-size town in Krasnoyarsk Krai in Russia. It is situated on the bank of the Yenisey River, one of the huge Siberian rivers), no, to Dzerzhinsk (Dzerzhinsk (Russian: Дзержинск) is a city in Nizhny Novgorod region in Russia. The city is located about 250 miles east of Moscow), then to Yeniseysk, but not right away. And later I was sent from...
Yeniseysk to Igarka. In Igarka I was already working as an accountant. Then I was transferred to Yeniseysk again, then to Igarka, and finally to Krasnoyarsk (Krasnoyarsk (Russian: Красноярск) is a bigger city in comparison to others previously mentioned. It is the administrative center of Krasnoyarsk Kray in Russia and is located on the Yenisey River. Krasnoyarsk is also one of the main points of the Trans-Siberian Railway).

Later on they probably needed specialists in Latvia, I was working in the fishing industry at that time, and the Ministry in Moscow sent me to Latvia. In Latvia, at first I worked at the Fishing Industry Trust, and later at “Rigapromstroy” (Riga’s Department of Industrial Construction) as a head of the department of economics. I retired in 1989. Here, in this community (Riga’s Jewish Religious Community – editor’s comment) at first I was a Deputy Chair of the Board, and later became the Chairman of the Board.

A.A. Could you tell us more about your ancestors? You told me that your father was born in Indra. Do you remember in what year?

Z.Y. My father? My father was born in 1891.

A.A. And your mother?

Z.Y. My mother was born maybe in 1893, maybe…

A.A. Did they survive the exile?

Z.Y. My father died in the labor camp – in March of 1942 in Vyatka camp. My mother died later in Riga.

A.A. When did your mother die?

Z.Y. She died in 1962.

A.A. And where was your mother exiled?

Z.Y. She was in exile together with me.

A.A. And all those times when you were sent from one place to another she was there with you?

Z.Y. Yes.

A.A. And in 1945 you were able to return from exile together?

Z.Y. We were apart for only one year. She was not with me in Igarka, she stayed behind in Yeniseysk, no, I believe she stayed in Dzerzhinsk.

A.A. And she returned together with you to Riga in 1945?

Z.Y. Yes.

A.A. Do you remember anything about your grandparents, even if you know about them from the words of your parents? For example, your father’s parents, who lived in Indra – do you remember their names?

Z.Y. Yes, I remember. My father’s parents: Chaim, last name the same, Yoffe, and mother’s name was Sara, or Sora.

A.A. Did they have any other children, besides your father?

Z.Y. Yes, they had children. I do not remember everyone’s names. There was Yeysakh Yoffe, then there was Dora, the next one was Genya, and I do not remember anybody else.

A.A. And your father…

Z.Y. Yes.

A.A. And what about the parents of your mother?

Z.Y. My mother’s parents lived in Preili. Her father’s name was Shneir Zalman Kopylov, and her mother’s name was Sara.

A.A. Did they have any other children?

Z.Y. Yes, they had other children. There were Aba, Eliyahu, Yakov, then there were daughters: Chaya, and there was one more daughter… What was her name…? – Maryasha. There were more children, but I do not remember their names.

A.A. What did your father’s parents, who lived in Indra, do for a living?
Z.Y. They did, I do not remember what was the name for it; they had an inn, or a tavern.

A.A. And what did your grandfather and grandmother from your mother’s side do, those who lived in Preili?

Z.Y. You understand, my mother’s father, Shneir Zalman, was shot to death. There were some robbers on the highway. He was an Orthodox Jew; he spent all his time in synagogue. And my mother’s mother, his wife, she had a little store, like a grocery store.

A.A. And your grandfather and grandmother from your mother’s side do, those who lived in Preili?

Z.Y. You understand, my mother’s father, Shneir Zalman, was shot to death. There were some robbers on the highway. He was an Orthodox Jew; he spent all his time in synagogue. And my mother’s mother, his wife, she had a little store, like a grocery store.

A.A. And your grandparents got married and moved to Rezekne? (Rezekne (Latvian: Rēzekne) is the main city located in the Eastern Latvia region named Latgalia. Rezekne is situated about 150 miles on the east of Riga and also very close (40 miles) to the border between Latvia and Russia) How did it happen?

Z.Y. We need here to go back to my mother’s parents. Reiza was my mother’s sister. My father’s brother, Peysakh, lived in Rezekne and had a leather store. My mother’s sister, Reiza Poroz, at that time lived in Rezekne too.

A.A. Excuse me, what was her last name?

Z.Y. Reiza Poroz. She has a leather-tanning shop. They knew each other (Reiza and Peysakh). And my mother came to visit her in Rezekne, where my father was at that time staying with his brother – that was how they met.

A.A. So since then they lived in Rezekne?

Z.Y. Yes.

A.A. You told me that your parents had their own store. What kind of store was it and where was it located? What did your parents do after the wedding?

Z.Y. It was a leather store.

A.A. Did they have their own store or did they own it together with your father’s brother?

Z.Y. They had their own store.

A.A. Could you tell me what was the (socio-economic) level of life of your family at that time?

Z.Y. It was pretty good.

A.A. What do you remember from your family traditions? And what do you remember about the everyday life of your family?

Z.Y. What can I tell you about our everyday life... Well, we were Orthodox Jews. All of us were Orthodox Jews. My father went to synagogue every day. My mother was mostly at home. At home everything was Kosher. Nothing else was special... Everybody went to study at Heder, and I went to study there too. Everybody went to school, it was obligatory. Everybody finished secondary school. Then one of my brothers went to study in Jelgava (Jelgava is a small town which is located about 25 miles southwest of Riga), there was an Agricultural Academy in Jelgava (currently the Latvia University of Agriculture, which was founded in 1936), and his specialization was the timber industry. This is all. In 1940 I was drafted and served at the border. I was serving military duty in Ludza, at the border with Russia (Ludza is one of the oldest settlements in Latvia. The first mentioning of it can be found in Russian chronicles that date it somewhere in between 1173 and 1177. Ludza also belongs to Latgalia region of eastern Latvia). So I was drafted and served in Ludza.

A.A. Tell me please, what do you remember about how your brothers died?

Z.Y. I know that there was one blacksmith, his last name was Martsinkevich. There were some private lodgings, and he (the blacksmith) was supposed to attend to those lodgings. My brother just went outside of his house and was shot to death. Martsinkevich saw this happen, he told me about it when I returned from Siberia.

A.A. When did it happen? Do you remember the date?

Z.Y. I do not know the date, it happened either during the summer or fall of 1941. He was shot to death on the street. He (the blacksmith) told me that.
A.A. Could you tell me, do you have any documents left that concern any members of your family?

Z.Y. I only have documents about my exile. There it is written: (socially) “dangerous element.”

A.A. Yes, I see: It is written here: “dangerous element for the society” (Public enemy). You were forced to travel a long way from home!

Z.Y. And all this travelling was for free — in the train car for the cattle.

A.A. Do you remember anything from your parents telling you about their families: any family stories or legends?

Z.Y. I know from my mother's side that her father was shot to death on the road by the robbers.

A.A. There, in Preili?

Z.Y. Yes, in Preili, it happened on the road just entering the town of Preili.

A.A. They lived in Preili?

Z.Y. Yes, in Preili. They were travelling somewhere on business, and on the road, just outside of Preili, may be 5, 10 kilometers, they (the robbers) probably thought that they (the travelers) had a lot of money for the road with them. That was why he was shot and killed.

A.A. When did it happen? What year?

Z.Y. No, I do not remember this. I use to know, but now I do not remember.

A.A. So after this happened your grandmother’s life became harder. Did her relatives help her? You said that she had a small grocery store.

Z.Y. Her brothers worked too. However, they all were poor. What else can I tell you about my life? In Heder I studied under Rabbi Lubotsky, Chaim Lubotsky, Rabbi Chaim Lubotsky. There was another rabbi in Rezekne — Rabbi Dushevich, or more correctly, not Dushevich, but Dushovich. He later immigrated to America. I have heard that he became a Chief Rabbi in Chicago. There was one more rabbi in Rezekne, Rabbi Skaruto, Meisha Skaruto. Sometime ago his daughter was working as a secretary for the President of Israel. There was also Rabbi YaFin; he came to us later from Russia. He was exchanged for some kind of spy. I clearly remember that.

I was studying in Heder, and in school in Rezekne. And I also was engaged in sports together with my brothers.

A.A. About sports – what exactly did you do?

Z.Y. Football, tennis, bicycling.

A.A. At that time wasn’t it a very expensive sport (bicycling)?

Z.Y. Oh, yes!

A.A. What do you remember about the life of the Jewish Community in Rezekne?

Z.Y. Well, there were about five thousand Jews there. All of them were engaged in some kind of trade, or, well, there were several workshops: tailors, tailors, and shoemakers — craftsmen. As always, there were rich and there were poor.

A.A. Was this society for the most part Orthodox or not that much?

Z.Y. Most were Orthodox Jews. Maybe at home they did not observe all the customs, but every Saturday they went to synagogue. For example — I don’t exactly remember — there were probably 300 or 200 different shops (at that time in Rezekne), but on Saturday all of them were closed. Only two Jewish shops were open. One pharmacy shop was open and one shoe store was open. However, during Holidays even those shops were closed and their owners went to synagogue.

A.A. What do you remember about the everyday contacts with Russians and Latvians? Or did you live without any close contact with them?

Z.Y. We all lived together. And when I was a student, my best friends were Latvians. One year I lived together with a Latvian student. He studied for a law degree.
A.A. Where in Riga did you live while being a student?

Z.Y. In Riga I lived in many different places. It was fashionable to live in a different place every semester. I lived in nice rooms. One time I lived at the corner of Marijas and Avotu streets, another time I lived at 31 Elizabetes Street, I also lived on Paegles Street, on Lachplesh Street near Brivibas Street, then on Strelnicku... Every semester we changed our lodgings, the most time I spent in one place was a year.

A.A. Were there any circumstances that caused this?

Z.Y. There were no special circumstances, just interest. I lived with all the comforts: we were pretty well-off. I even had a telephone - at that time it was something extraordinary — I had a telephone at home. Oh, and I also lived on Sport Street.

A.A. What else can you tell me? When you returned from Siberia, did your mother live in Riga together with you? Did she work at that time or not?

Z.Y. Yes, my mother lived with me. In Siberia she had a heart attack and did not work after that.

A.A. What was your experience when you returned from exile?

Z.Y. When I returned from exile my uncle already lived here – my uncle from the father’s side. He lived at 50 Terbatas Street.

A.A. What was his name?

Z.Y. Tsemmakh. He was living in Riga when we returned and, at first, we lived with them.

A.A. How and where did you get your job?

Z.Y. We came with the directive from Moscow. And I started to work at the Fishing Industry Trust. Because there was a lack of specialists who knew the system, and I had already worked in that area, that is why I had permission — the directive to work and permission to live in Riga.

A.A. What do you know about your other relatives — your uncles and aunts? Did they survive or perish during the Holocaust?

Z.Y. Most of them died during Holocaust. The relatives Poroz... Their children remained here. It is from my mother’s side — the children of Reiza. One of them died in the war, and two others died during the Holocaust. Yakov’s son died too. He was a director of a gymnasium (specialized preparatory high school). He was the son of my mother’s brother Yakov.

A.A. Where was this gymnasium? Was it a Jewish gymnasium?

Z.Y. It was in Daugavpils, a Jewish gymnasium. Jews studied there, and also the Russians. He had got his higher education in Germany.

A.A. What was his name? Did he have any children?

Z.Y. His name was Kopylov. He had children. Yes. They all lived in Daugavpils.

A.A. And all of them died?

Z.Y. Yes, all of them. At the cemetery people saw the graves, and the dates on the gravestones did match. But I did not see it myself, I do not know for sure. There were others who died — the children of Reiza had died. Eliyahu (mother’s brother) had a daughter, his only daughter. She died during Holocaust too.

A.A. What was her name?

Z.Y. She was called Sara.

A.A. And did Eliyahu himself die too?

Z.Y. Eliyahu himself died during the Holocaust, along with his wife.

A.A. Did Yakov have any children?

Z.Y. Yes, Yakov had children, yes, he did. They all died, the whole family died.

A.A. Your mother had a sister, Chaya. What happened to her?
Z.Y. Chaya died.

A.A. And your mother’s other sister, Maryasha?

Z.Y. One of Maryasha’s sons died in the army (during the war), and another died in the Holocaust.

A.A. And what about Maryasha herself?

Z.Y. She died too. Maryasha and her husband both died during the Holocaust.

A.A. Tell me please about your uncles and aunts from your father’s side. Your uncle Peysakh?

Z.Y. Peysakh… He lived in Russia and then died.

A.A. Do you remember approximately when, what year did it happen?

Z.Y. No.

A.A. And your father’s sister Dora?

Z.Y. Dora was evacuated. One of Dora’s sons was serving in the army; he was a lieutenant. At one time he was a commandant of Tsesis (Tsesis (Latvian: Cēsis) is a town in Latvia that is located in the northern part of the Vidzeme central upland).

A.A. What was his name?

Z.Y. Aron Tsemakh was his name. Dora’s two other children now live in Israel.

A.A. Do you know their names?

Z.Y. Israel and Sara. They both live in Israel.

A.A. And your father’s sister Genya?

Z.Y. Genya — she lived in Russia. I do not know about her now — I am sure that she already died, but her children — one was killed in the war, on the front, and the other is in Israel now. But I do not remember their names.
Membership Fees

This is the first issue of the newsletter for the 2010/2011 membership year, so if you have not done so already, please renew your membership in the Latvia SIG. Dues may be paid for multiple years. Yearly fees are US $25 for the US and Canada. If you live outside of North America (NA), the fee is $35 (bankable in the US) if you prefer hard copy (HC) versions of the newsletter and $25 if you prefer PDF versions via e-mail. If you wish to renew your membership for multiple years, the first year will be $25 ($35 for HC outside NA/$25 for PDF) and $20 ($30 for HC outside NA/$20 for PDF) for each additional year. Please make checks payable to Latvia SIG and mail to:

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

You can also remit your payment through PayPal to: MikeGetz005@comcast.net. Directions for using PayPal can be found on the Latvia SIG website or follow the directions below:

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.

After reviewing the details of your payment, click the Send Money button. The Latvia SIG will immediately receive an e-mail explaining that it has received a payment from you through PayPal.

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) and include Family Finder information.

As always, the Latvia SIG is happy to accept additional payments to the SIG to help pay for expenses associated with projects and day-to-day activities, like testimony translations, reproduction and mailing costs, and database acquisitions. The SIG has now established two accounts on JewishGen to supplement the Latvia SIG general fund, also under JewishGen. Go to:


Donations to these accounts will be used to help fund the Dvinsk Census Project and the Speakers Bureau. Please note that you can also support these two worthy causes by contributing directly to the Latvia SIG as described above. Simply state which of the projects you wish to support along with your donation. For U.S. taxpayers, contributions to the SIG via JewishGen are tax deductible, whereas direct contributions to the SIG are not.
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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NAME:.............................................................................. LOCATION:................................

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)

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

Enter contact information in FF: Yes ____ No____

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