



**THE SER-CHARLAP FAMILY  
NEWSLETTER**

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Tammuz 5758; July 1998

**ZAREBY KOSCIELNIE IN 1938**

*This article, dated February 1, 1938 was adapted from the files of the Zaromber Israel Aid Society, Records 1926-1965 held by the YIVO Institute, YIVO File #(RG965). Zareby Koscielnie's Jewish population was close knit and a great many were members of various branches of the Ser-Charlap family.*

After the death of the Polish leader Joseph Pilsudski, the situation of the Jewish population of Poland deteriorated rapidly. The most visible form of anti-Semitism was an economic boycott applied by large sections of the public against Jewish enterprise. This boycott had been approved by the courts, dignitaries of the Catholic Church, and the government. The head of the Catholic Church, Cardinal Hlond, declared in 1936, "One does well to prefer his own kind in commercial dealings and to avoid Jewish stores and Jewish stalls in the market." The government expressed the purposes of the boycott as not only to assist "real" Poles to compete in petty commerce, but to force Polish Jews to emigrate. By 1937, the Polish Union of Physicians adopted an "Aryan" resolution reducing the number of Jews in their profession with the aim of excluding them entirely. A conglomerate of Polish professional unions stated, "A Pole supports a Pole. Depriving the Jews of earning money means they will be forced to leave Poland. This is the only radical solution of the Jewish question. With the utmost forcefulness and with the deepest conviction of the necessity of self-defense, we urge all Christians not to sell to Jews any land or houses, nor to buy from Jewish stores, nor to employ Jewish lawyers, physicians, engineers, architects, artists, or any other professional men." The universities were centers of anti-Semitism and limited the dwindling number of Jewish students to so-called "ghetto benches" (standing room at the rear of lecture halls). By 1938, the government was seizing Jewish businesses. Among the important enterprises that were nationalized was the Shereshevsky Tobacco Works in Grodno, a major employer of Jewish workers and owned by members of the Charlap family.

[Excerpt adapted from the reference files] *The town of Zareby Koscielnie has 250 Jewish families. The nearest railway station is but 3 km away but Zareby (Zaromb) has no good roads which would connect it with the surrounding towns. Zaromb was therefore always in a precarious economic position. The markets in the town are not very important to the regional economy; still they form the chief base of livelihood for the local Jewish population. That population is a target for the NARA (National Radical Party) which considers it to be made up of "hostile non-Poles." NARA has attained great influence in the Bialystok District (including Zaromb) and they have been waging an uninterrupted terror campaign against the Jews since the Spring of 1937. Their gangs are composed of the local criminals and young disenchanted peasants. They have attacked our merchants stalls in the market and owing to this terror, Jewish stall owners do not show up on market days any more. Whereas several months ago, the market was almost completely Jewish with hardly a Christian stall, today the situation is reversed. The terror is not only in Zareby Koscielnie but throughout the region. In surrounding towns as well, scores of Jewish peddlers, tradesmen, and artisans have lost their livelihood. For the time being, it seems that the terror has abated in other parts of the Bialystok District, but around Zaromb it continues with strengthened fury. This unsafe situation has affected even those businesses which do not depend on market trade. For example, there are 15-20 furriers in the town. Last year, they received on credit the pelts they needed. Now, however, the credit has dried up because there is*

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## ZAROMB (cont. from p.1)

*too much danger. The four local windmills have lost much of their earnings; the farmers are not bringing in much grain. And the mills have repeatedly been raided by Naramen. Jewish businessmen are desperately in need of credit to reestablish themselves, especially the furriers and the small hosiery manufacturers.*

*What can we do to improve the economic situation? There exist in Zaromb two hosiery workshops which were established in 1924 and 1927. Until recently, these workshops had, for some reason, been able to avoid the worst effects of the boycott. They even sold to non-Jewish merchants. During peak season they employ six workers each. If they could get more credit, a greater number of workers would be employed. The furriers are another story. They simply cannot get capital and are being forced into menial farm labor just to survive. Jews own some land which is suitable for a brick factory. At present bricks are brought in from Malkinia. It is believed that locally produced bricks would have a ready market. There is also a completely fitted cotton and wool factory. Once it operated by using recirculated materials but it closed down as this process proved unprofitable. But raw cotton may be available if credit can be obtained and the factory might start producing again. There are also Jewish oil mills in Zaromb. The principal business was pressing oil from the seeds that local farmers would bring in. Now, the Poles established a non-Jewish mill and the farmers have ceased bringing any seeds to the Jews. The Jewish mills could still be busy if they were able to buy seeds. The pressed oil could then be marketed on their own account. But all this business activity depends on outside help. There is little hope of getting credit in the current atmosphere. Hence we must appeal to the Joint Distribution Committee.*

For many years the Joint Distribution Committee, supported largely with funds from America, had sent large sums to Poland for the aid of Polish Jewry. The relief thus extended mitigated Jewish suffering and provoked Polish nationalists to demand that it be repressed as it would strengthen Jewish influence. This struggle gave way to greater tragedy one year later with the Nazi invasion.

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**THE SER-CHARLAP FAMILY NEWSLETTER** is published quarterly. We encourage submittal of news items, essays, poems, and historical articles.

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## FAMILY COAT OF ARMS

There have been persistent rumors that the Charlap family had an ancient coat of arms that had been handed down through the centuries. Memoirs of various ancestors recorded, more than once, that letters had been stamped with a seal bearing the family crest. We have received communication from several family members indicating that, in their youth, they remembered hearing of a family coat of arms. But no one has been able to describe a physical representation of that coat of arms, except that at the top was a crowned Tablets of the Law.

We have confirmed that such a coat of arms did exist and was used extensively by our ancestors during their centuries in Spain and Portugal. A scholarly essay published by the Theological Institute of Israel (Yeshiva Rosh Pinah), dated 1944, deals with the early history of the Ibn Yahya family in Iberia. The Ibn Yahyas, of course, were the immediate antecedents of the Charlaps and Don Yahya families. Many in the family still bear these honored names. The author of this piece, A. C. De Barros Basto (Ben-Rosh) describes the shield:

*. . . This old Hebrew family used a coat of arms divided by a shovel on the right of which is a lion with a palm leaf in one paw. On the left of the shield is a lion with claws open and legs spread wide. Between the legs the eagle's tail shows, also spread wide like a fan or flower.*

The symbols on our coat of arms indicate various aspects our family's history and destiny. The eagle is a symbol of strength; the lion also indicates strength but is the symbol of the tribe of Judah; the palm leaf represents the agriculture and beauty of Eretz Yisrael; the shovel is a symbol that we are to be part of the rebuilding of our homeland of Eretz Yisrael; the Tablets of the Law represent the Ten Commandments and our family's adherence to our traditions and religion; the crown atop the Tablets indicates the supremacy of G-d's Law and also our descent from King David.

It is our aim to restore this beautifully described coat of arms so that every family member will have it in their position as a reminder of our glorious past and our responsibilities for the future.

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## OF RIGHTEOUS ANCESTORS

*Judaism insists that man has an inborn impulse to virtue which can overcome all temptation to sin; an impulse immeasurably strengthened through the merit of the fathers (Zechuth Aboth) which is accounted unto their children as righteousness. That man is best able to advance on the road to moral perfection who starts with the accumulated spiritual heritage of righteous ancestors.*

- S. Levy, 1905

## THE ALTERNATIVE

by Yedidya Atlas

*Yedidya Atlas is a Senior Correspondent for Arutz-7 and comments on geopolitical and geostrategic affairs in the Middle East. This article was originally broadcast on Arutz-7 Israel National Radio on 29 Sivan 5758/June 23, 1998. It is reprinted with permission. Among the services of Arutz-7, a project of Bet-El Yeshiva Center, Israel, is Arutz-7 Educational Radio and Arutz-7 News Service. To subscribe free to Arutz-7 News Service:*

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In this article:

1. No Choice?
2. Clinton Pressure, No U.S. Pressure
3. Palestinian Violence Will Not Cease
4. Stripped of Security
5. Netanyahu or Netanyahu

### 1. No Choice?

Pick up almost any Israeli newspaper today, and invariably there will be a slew of articles pointing out that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has no choice but to pursue the course of further unilateral territorial concessions to Arafat and the P.A. No choice because the Americans are pressuring us. No choice because the Palestinian Arabs will resort to violence, or rather, they will continue to use violence, terrorism et al as an acceptable tool of negotiation. No choice because to cease with our unilateral concessions to Arafat and the P.A. would bring an end to the Oslo peace process.

But, of course, we do have a choice.

### 2. Clinton Pressure, No U.S. Pressure

Despite a hyperactive left wing advocacy media in Israel, there is no real American pressure. Both houses of Congress are openly and loudly critical of their own embattled President - himself embroiled in personal, political, and legal scandals - and his blatantly Arabist State Department. Beyond constant public and private nudging, there is little the Clinton administration can do in the way of real pressure without the cooperation of the U.S. Congress. In fact, given the unusually overt support Mr. Netanyahu has received from the Republican majority in Congress, as well as from not a few Democrats - not to mention the overwhelming backing voiced by conservative Christian leaders and many top print media columnists and editorial writers - a cave-in to the empty threats of the Clinton-Albright crew would be a pointless slap in the face of all these American supporters. Moreover, Netanyahu's buckling to the Clinton-Albright ultimatum now, would probably guarantee that all this unprecedented out-on-a-limb support for Israel would disappear. You only have to knife the Americans in the back once to lose their support.

### 3. Palestinian Violence Will Not Cease

What makes the suggested Israeli policy of further territorial concessions even more incredible is the harsh reality that no Israeli security figure, from Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai on down, denies the claim that giving up an additional 13% of Judea and Samaria (the equivalent of 13 times the size of greater Tel Aviv) would cause a deterioration in the security situation. No one is claiming that Arafat would now: fight terrorism (his own organizations or Hamas); extradite wanted terrorist murderers to Israel (or the U.S.) For trial from their current safe haven in P.A. territory; cease his own, and other P.A. leaders' incitement to violence against Jews; change the Palestinian Covenant which calls for Israel's destruction and all the other things upon which the Oslo accords were predicated and to which Arafat and his gang committed and have yet to fulfill.

### 4. Stripped of Security

The much vaunted Oslo accords together with Mr. Netanyahu's Hebron accord are very much like the legendary Emperor's new clothes. No one wants to publicly admit that Israeli national security has been stripped naked by this series of defective agreements. Aside from the accords' initial faulty premise, it is beyond comprehension how even a quasi-rational and objective human being can maintain that Israel must continue to carry out tangible concessions in the face of utter non-compliance by Arafat and the P.L.O./P.A. There is an old adage: "It takes two to make peace, but only one to make war." Our ongoing national give-away in the face of negative reciprocity by the Palestinian Arabs should bring us to

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## THE ALTERNATIVE (cont. from p. 3)

the realization that the Oslo process was seriously flawed from its inception, and that we have lost our sense of national purpose - something we can ill afford to do.

### 5. Netanyahu or Netanyahu

Prime Minister Netanyahu, we are told by his political colleagues, justifies his pursuing a course of further withdrawal, by claiming in effect that he is the lesser of two evils. What's the alternative, Mr. Netanyahu maintains to those coalition members who threaten to topple his government should he unilaterally implement any withdrawal, that Ehud Barak become Prime Minister and give away even more to Arafat?

The true alternative for a weak-willed Binyamin Netanyahu - prepared to unilaterally abandon further parts of the Land of Israel, endanger Jewish lives and violate his voters' trust - is a determined Binyamin Netanyahu who will choose the responsible course: no further withdrawals (especially with no reciprocity), prevent the isolation of Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria, and keep his word to his supporters. Thus he will continue to be Prime Minister to the end of this current term and be reelected for another four years.

*We remind our readers that we welcome all shades of opinion from our friends and relatives. The Newsletter is your vehicle for expressing your ideas and communicating to the family.*

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## BIRTHS

**David Elan Kuhr** (11031,Pl.163) was born on April 2, 1998. He is the first child for Saul (1142) and Karen (8542) and the 4th grandchild of Anna (1135) and the late Mort (1131) Kuhr. Mort's father Isaac David (678) was born in Ciechanowiec and settled in Philadelphia after arriving in the U.S. in 1914. Mort's grandparents were Mattis Kuhr (672) and Shayna Parczewski (671), cousins, and both members of different branches of our family. The new baby resides in Haydenville, MA where his dad is in the paper business.

**Nimrod Zilberman** (14043,Pl.40) was born in Israel on March 16, the first child of Claudio (11028) and Dalit (11025). Dalit's parents are Ehud (11023) and Yael (9900) Pessach who now have three grandchildren. Yael's father was Amnon Charlap (3314) and her grandfather was the famous Zionist Ephraim Zvi Charlap (3228,Pl.26), rabbi, tobacco merchant, farmer, pioneer and builder, a founder of Rehovoth, Israel. Yael, following in his footsteps, is extremely conscious of her roots and has been of immense help in delving into the history of our family.

**Dovev Moshe Zonnenshain** (14054,Pl.233) was born in Israel on Nov. 3, 1997, the second child for Uri (7832) and Joanne (Yael) (4676). Dovev is the fourth grandchild for David (4673) and Beryl (4672) Cohen of Netanya, Israel. Joanne was born in Manchester, U.K. The family stems from the Smolarczyks of Ciechanowiec, Poland. Velvel Smolarczyk (4218), born ca 1878, left the old country to settle in Manchester. Like many other Smolarczyks, he assumed the name of Greenfield. His daughter, Leah Olsberg (4220) was the mother of Beryl Cohen.

## MARRIAGES

**Lihl Charlap** (11210,Pl.40) was wed to **Nimrod Paltter** (14044) in Israel on April 2. Nimrod is the son of Eldad and Salda Paltter. Lihl's father, Uri Charlap (9902) is the son of Amnon (3314) and grandson of Ephraim Zvi Charlap (3228).[see Births].

**Melanie Hope Cooper** (2529,Pl.151) was married in Evanston, IL on Sept. 21, 1997 to **Daniel Scott Zimmerman** (14042) of Lincolnwood, IL. Daniel, an M.D. who has completed his residency in internal medicine, has been awarded a fellowship in communicable diseases. Melanie, an R.N. is the daughter of Roger Cooper (4268) and Eunice Kur (4278). Roger and Eunice are distant cousins, both belonging to different branches of our family tree. Eunice's father was Jack Kur (4151), the son of Meyer Cohen (Kur) (2718) who was born in Nur, Poland and settled in Kansas City, MO. Roger's great-grandfather, Yaacov Kopyto, also left Nur to settle in Kansas City where he became Jacob Cooper (6612).

**David Morris Krantz** (2707,Pl.224), son of Harry (2699) and Miriam (2702) was married to **Lisa Beth Pemstein** (14055) in Boston, MA on Nov. 8, 1997. Lisa is a native of Boston. David, who hails from the Kansas City area, is in the tour business in Boston. Harry Krantz was born in Lasowa, Kosow, Poland and came to America as a child, the family settling in Kansas City. His paternal grandmother was Golda Fefferkrantz (2620), daughter of Itche Smolarczyk (2614) and Dinah Rivka Kwiatek (2615) of Ciechanowiec, Poland.

**Saul Kuhr** (1142,Pl.163) and **Karen Sue Hirsch** (8542) were married in Northampton, MA on Aug. 31, 1997. Karen, raised on Long Island, NY, is the daughter of Beverly and Joel Hirsch. She had been Director of Medical Records at Cabrini Medical Center in Manhattan. Saul is in the paper business. [see Births].

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## RENOWNED SCHOLAR OF LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE

*This article is largely drawn from a piece by Peggy Goetz that appeared in the Supplement to Times Orange County. The subject of the article, Seymour Menton (55,Pl.102) has written for B'rayshit in the past. His "The Listener's Revenge" appeared in Vol. 6, no. 3 and "The Unlucky Window Trimmer" in vol. 8, no. 1.*

Seymour (Sender) Menton is the oldest son of Minnie Sahr Menton (40,Pl.102), one of eight children of Isaac "Max" Sahr (7) and Esther Abramowitz (8). Of the eight children, six survived to adulthood, all girls. Max Sahr's real name was Yitzhak Isaac Ser, one of ten children of Sender Ser (1,Pl.14) of Nur. Seymour is named for his great-grandfather.

In October 1997, Seymour traveled to Guatemala where he was awarded the highest literary honor given by this Central American country, the Order of Miguel Angel Asturias. He is an authority on magic realism in literature and was the only person in the United States who was allowed to read the extensive collection of literature of the Cuban Revolution as the volumes arrived at the Library of Congress. His writings are avidly read in Mexico as well, but in America his reputation is largely confined to scholars of Hispanic literature.

Seymour, who is now in his 50th year of teaching, is the founding chairman of the Foreign Language Department of the University of California, Irvine. He joined the university at the start in 1965 and still teaches courses in Spanish and Portuguese. Officially he's Research Professor Emeritus but he's more often on campus than not, teaching, writing, and doing research. He speaks and writes fluently in Spanish and Portuguese, languages in which many of his academic books and creative stories are published. He also communicates in German, Hebrew, French, Yiddish, Italian, and Czech. (Did we leave any out?)

Seymour grew up in the Bronx, New York when it was mostly Jewish, Irish, and Italian. It was an unlikely origin for a noted Spanish and Portuguese scholar. But he loved languages and while studying for his master's degree at the Universidad Nacional de Mexico, he began teaching in Guanajuato, a small mountainous town west of Mexico City. Here was this 21 year old veteran of the US Navy and the New York City streets teaching a group of rural Mexican teachers ranging in age from 16 to 70. Seymour feels fortunate to have had the opportunity of teaching in many diverse environments. In addition to UCI, he spent 11 years at the University of Kansas, Lawrence and two years at Dartmouth in Hanover, New Hampshire. While studying for his Ph.D. at New York University, he taught in what is now called the South Bronx in a school which was a paradigm of the Blackboard Jungle. There, he was involved in one of the country's first "English as a second language" program. In addition, he has taught literature and humanities in Greece, Morocco, West Africa, Turkey, and throughout Latin America.

The honor presented at the Presidential Palace in Guatemala City was in recognition of Seymour's contribution to the study of Guatemalan literature. He is the author of a critical history of the Guatemalan novel in 1960 and updated it significantly in 1985. He also has taught in Guatemala and has visited the country for extensive periods at least a dozen times.

In 1975 he published a book about the fiction that came out of the Cuban Revolution. These works started appearing about 1959. When trade with Cuba became illegal in 1961, the University of Havana continued to send new publications to the Library of Congress. For some 10 years the Library sent these books to Seymour for review. He's probably the only American to have read the entire collection. Ironically, Cuba is one of the few Latin American countries he hasn't visited or lived in. He believes the Castro regime may have classified him as an enemy and he could not enter the country.

Seymour's interest in magic realism, a mixture of fantasy and reality, which is characteristic of many contemporary novels, was stirred through writers such as Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. He has published his own treatise on the subject relating magic realism in art and literature. In the past decade he has done his own creative writing - some autobiographical pieces and short works of fiction.

Guatemala is not the first country to honor him. A few years ago he received a high award from the government of Venezuela. Actually, he has been receiving awards all his life; he was Phi Beta Kappa at City College of New York, salutatorian of his graduating class from De Witt Clinton High School in the Bronx, and most prestigious of all, was recipient of the Creston Criteria Awards at Creston Junior High School, an institution attended by many of our Bronx relatives.

Seymour and his wife Cathy live close by the U of C campus in Irvine, California. Besides his scholarly activities, Seymour's other passion is sports. He is an avid tennis player and has even been known to play softball with such well-known teams as the Faculty Fossils.

## MARRIAGES (cont. from p. 4)

**Scott Schell** (12343,Pl.280) was wed to **Madeline Rapp** (14296) in Sept. 1997. Madeline is an M.D. and Scott an attorney. He is the son of Bailey Schell (12324) and grandson of Boris Schell (Schelevsky) (12046). Boris, who was born in Szczuczyn, Poland, immigrated to the USA in 1924 and settled in Boston, MA. The Schelevsky name was assumed several generations earlier, the original name being Charlap. The family traces back to Rabbi Ze'ev Charlap (3146,Pl.7), Rosh Yeshiva in Tykocin, Poland.

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## LETTERS

Through my professional activities in the Jewish community, I received a letter via e-mail which the family will find of interest. It shows that anti-Semitism is still very much alive and could break out into virulent forms.

An article has been circulating on the world wide web entitled "Are the Jews Still Neanderthals?" Poorly written, it doesn't expressly state that we are sub-human, but its appearance in a respected publication offered by a major corporation should set off alarms. A little background: *Slate* is a magazine that the Microsoft Corporation publishes on-line. The subject article discusses the "secret" origins of the Jewish people. The graphic on the front page of the web site has a picture of a Jew lifting his kippa, and finding horns, becomes angry and crushes them back down.

The article goes on to describe all kinds of "theories" about the Jewish people - we're really Neanderthals, we arrived from outer space, we're descendants of the devil, etc. The fact that this type of vulgar anti-Semitism exists is nothing new. What is surprising and disquieting is that it appeared in *Slate*. Microsoft is a household name and a Fortune 100 company. *Slate* is owned and operated by Microsoft. Some of my colleagues have contacted numerous American and international newspapers, but to date only the Jerusalem Post and Jerusalem Report have responded. Perhaps if more people object Microsoft will take remedial action.

- Deborah M. Peretz (71,Pl.102)  
Stony Brook, NY

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Regarding your article "For Whom the Bell Tolls" concerning Yankel Rosenbaum (13147,Pl.202): The Jewish War Veterans was involved in the protest of the handling of the murder of Yankel. I, as a past County Commander of the JWV and as National Action Chairman, attended a protest meeting with Lubavitch leaders. The meeting was held at Lubavitch headquarters on Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn and we then marched through the

neighborhood to show support. We paused to say Kaddish at the very spot that the heinous murder took place.

I might add another incident that occurred in 1978. We had learned that there was trouble between the Lubavitch community and Father Dougherty and that Jews might be attacked on a Sunday morning. I was then County Commander and I and my junior officers of the JWV went to Lubavitch headquarters at 7 A.M that morning to offer our help. We told them that 200 JWV members would mass on Eastern Parkway. Let them dare go after the JWV. The Lubavitch leaders told us that they were not looking for trouble and that they had requested their members to stay in their homes that morning. In that way, the opposition would have no one to fight with. Still, there were many Jews in the streets that morning and, as it turned out, that thwarted the plans of the anti-Semites.

I agree with your premise that more Jews should be involved when our rights are threatened.

- Morris Sier (474,Pl.134)  
Floral Park, NY

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We were saddened to read about young Yankel Rosenbaum killed in New York. I remember reading about the incident before, but the fact that he belonged to our family struck us.

With regard to the article "The Disgrace of Lithuania," many times I have thought about the history of the Jews in Lithuania, Poland, and Russia. I know that the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas in the 14th century invited Jews of Germany to come to Lithuania to develop the crafts industry, merchantry, and develop trade. He issued an official document recognizing and guaranteeing the rights of the newcomers. Being aware of the beginning of the Jewish presence puts later developments into perspective. Lithuania is my native country and I would like to add some details about the situation there. My father-in-law, Yosef Levinsonas (5780,Pl.241), has recently finished his work *The Book of Sorrow*, an album of photographs dealing with the genocide of Lithuanian Jewry during World War II. Natalie's (6447) father has completed a tremendous project and not only the book. Under his initiative the Lithuanian government passed a law obliging local authorities to set up monuments at some 200 sites of massacres of Jews. These monuments have been established under the supervision of Yosef. He organized the project and inspected the results. You can not begin to imagine how difficult it was for him, physically and politically. He had to struggle for every "inch" with the Lithuanians and it was exhausting traveling to so many sites to insure that they were properly established. We are very proud of him.

- Ron Magen (6451,Pl.241)  
Hadera, Israel

## THE FIGHTING JEW

According to the legendary writer Damon Runyon, "Sam Dreben was the bravest, the gentlest, the courtliest man I ever knew. But beneath the velvet of his demeanor was the iron of a warrior soul. They called him 'The Fighting Jew.'" Nevertheless, no more unlikely hero ever arrived on the American scene. Short and squat and speaking with a guttural voice, he hardly evoked the Gary Cooper image. He was a refugee from Czarist Russia, where the pogroms had taught him how to face his enemies and how to fight back. Landing in New York at the age of 18, this penniless youth faced the hard task of adjusting to life in America and started out working at a variety of menial jobs. Yet, he was fascinated with the prospects ahead of him.

For years he had been charmed by the shiny brass buttons of the military, even though his only contact with them had been with the hated Cossacks. In his mid-teens he had run away to Germany but found no opportunity under the iron rule of Otto von Bismarck and returned to his family. That family, which was a branch of the Lapin/Charlap clan, had a long history of rabbinic scholarship. But Sam found the Russian government's oppressive policies, the church's anti-Semitism, and the savagery of the peasants too much to take. He made the decision to leave.

His first stop was England where he worked for a year to save the minimum amount needed for steerage fare on a steamer headed for America. After a stay in New York, he headed for Philadelphia where he took a stopgap job in an uncle's tailor shop. Within a few weeks he enlisted in the army and was shipped to the Philippines where the U.S. was fighting off an insurrection in the wake of the Spanish-American War. There he finally found his brass buttons. In the Philippine campaign, Sam embarked on a military career that included three hitches in the army, one of which involved a tour of duty in China during the Boxer Rebellion. And it was in the Philippines that he drew the attention of a man who was to become a dear personal friend and admirer, then Captain John J. "Black Jack" Pershing.

During one of his enlistments, Sam learned to be a machine gunner, then a highly sought profession. Concluding a lengthy military career with the U.S. Army, Sam journeyed to Latin America to become a soldier of fortune. He put his machine gunning skills to work in a number of revolutions for or against established authority. As a member of Pancho Villa's celebrated Golden Guards, he was deemed by Villa as the only American he trusted. Yet, after Villa's forces raided Columbus, New Mexico, Sam switched sides. President Wilson had tapped now General "Black Jack" Pershing to mount a punitive attack on Villa. Sam Dreben served as his chief scout and Pershing's admiration for his old friend was amplified because of Sam's service during the campaign. Sam fought under ten different flags and would have added one more as a volunteer helping Japan in her war against the despised Russians. But 1905 Japan was very insular and refused his help, so Sam disgustedly peeled potatoes all the way back to San Francisco to pay for his fare.

In El Paso, Texas, the only real home he had ever known after departing Russia, Sam made and lost a fortune in mining stocks. Once again he turned to the military. With the advent of World War I he enlisted in a local outfit and quickly made first sergeant. He was one of the first Yankee troops to land in France and go into battle against the Germans. It was at St. Etienne that Sam Dreben's reputation soared even further. A German machine gun nest had been keeping the American troops from getting out of the trenches and advancing. Artillery was unsuccessful in destroying the German position. Dreben sized up the situation and on his own decided to take action. He zig-zagged his way alone across no-man's land and made it to the enemy post. He killed 23 of the 40 Germans there and destroyed the facility. He received the Distinguished Service Cross for his heroism. His valorous service in Europe was also recognized by allied governments. He was awarded the highest French medal, the Croix de Guerre and the Medaille Militaire. His foreign service in Europe concluded in a Paris bar where he knocked down a supercilious Russian grand duke.

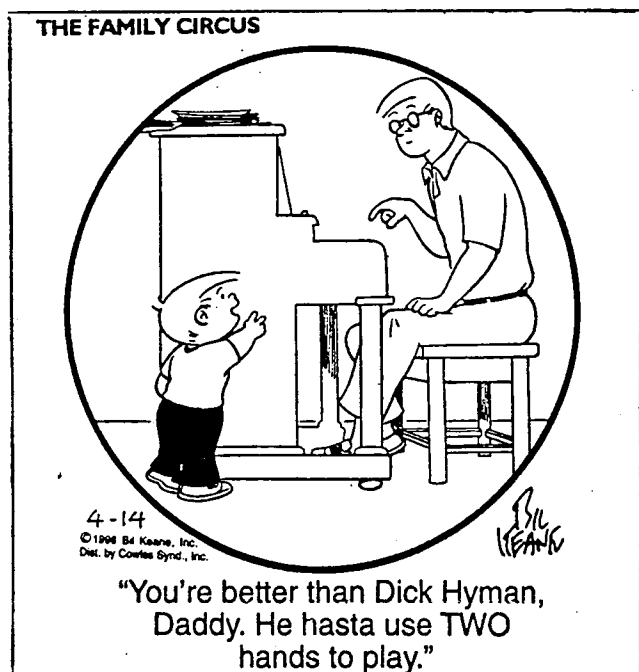
Returning to the United States, Sam found his family and business badly disrupted. This did not stop him from seeking high adventure across the Rio Grande in Juarez, Mexico. Slightly wounded in that conflict, he moved to California. A physician, whose professional skills have to be questioned, treated Sam with an injection that proved fatal. This wildly challenging life of adventure ended at age 46. Sam Dreben's passing was a loss keenly felt. The State Legislature in Austin, Texas adjourned in his honor and the flag over the Capitol was lowered half-way in honor of Texas' greatest hero of World War I. Art Liebson, correspondent for Time/Life wrote a book about this hero's life entitled *Sam Dreben: The Fighting Jew* published by Westernlore Press, Tucson, AZ. And Damon Runyon wrote a poem, *The Fighting Jew* to his friend Sam, ending it with:

... thank G-d, Almighty,  
We will always have a few  
Like Dreben,  
A Jew.

*Some of the material for this article was obtained from Art Liebson's book on Sam Dreben and from Jewish Heroes of America.*

## A MUSICAL MOMENT

The following cartoon had been sent in by several family members. Syndicated, it appeared in the Atlantic Journal and Kansas City Star.



Dick Hyman (3716,Pl.8) is the distinguished pianist and composer, son of Joseph Charlap Hyman (3714), Executive Director of the Joint Distribution Committee, and grandson of Abraham Chaim Charlap (3712), noted Hebrew and Yiddish author.

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## OBITUARIES

**Samuel Ezring** (590,Pl.153) died on June 21. Sam was born in 1908 in Kielce Guberniya, Poland. His wife Esther (549) survives him. Esther's mother was Chava Sarah Cohen (545), the daughter of Baruch Pasternak (504) and Kayla Kur (503) of Nur, Poland.

**Angela Heard** (11257,Pl.45) died earlier this year at the age of 43. She was the mate of David Wolfson (8054) and a resident of England. She is survived by David and their son Daniel (8065).

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## TRIP TO EASTERN EUROPE

The family tour of our ancestral towns in Poland will take place during the first half of August. Some two dozen relatives will fly to Warsaw and then visit Zaromb, Ciechanowiec, Suwalk, Bialystok, Tykocin, et al, all towns which were home to various branches of the Ser-Charlap family. Then on to Cracow, Budapest, and Prague.

## OF BUDOWLAS, CHARLAPS & LAPINS

In the last issue of this publication we printed a chart showing the common ancestry of the modern branches of our family. Some people have questioned why their family names were omitted from the chart. That is because this chart goes back to the early 1700s and some of the family names emerged later through marriages into the family. Two examples of such marriages involve the Lapin family and the Budowla/Budovitch family. In both cases two siblings of each family married into the Charlap family. For the Lapins this occurred ca 1830 when Israel Betzalel Charlap (3181,Pl.7) took as bride Shayna Frume Lapin (3190). At about the same time Shayna Frume's brother, Israel Moshe Fishel Lapin (3189) married Israel Betzalel's sister, Sarah Fraidel Charlap (3180). About 30 years later, Yankel Budowla (9383,Pl.81) of Baranowicze, now Belarus married into the Charlap family. His brother Shmuel (9555) married Chaya Zlote Charlap (9556), a sister of Yankel's wife. The Budowla-Charlap marriages resulted in the Budovitch family which eventually settled in Saint John and Fredericton, New Brunswick. Both the Lapin-Charlap marriages and the Budowla-Charlap marriages gave rise to vast, distinguished families. All of these trace back to David Charlap (4082,Pl.3) shown on the chart in the last issue. Everyone on the family tree shares a common descent from Charlaps and/or Ibn Yahyas.

There is most likely an even closer relationship between the Lapin, Budowla, and Charlap families. Family lore has it that these marriages were arranged within the family and that the mates were cousins before the betrothals. The Lapin-Charlap marriages established the family presence in Grodno Guberniya. It is probable that Lapin-Charlap unions occurred earlier a little further northwest in Suwalk Guberniya and in Lithuania. Shayna Frume Lapin and Israel Moshe Fishel Lapin are believed to be children of Pinchas Lapin of Kretinga, Kovno Guberniya, Lithuania, or children of a brother of Pinchas. If it is true that our known Charlap-Lapin marriages were between cousins, then Pinchas Lapin must have had Charlap ancestry or was married to a Charlap. We are now investigating these fascinating possibilities together with Louise Lapin Haines (no stranger to these pages) of Los Angeles and Bruno Carmon of Beersheva, Israel. Bruno was born in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, managed to survive the harsh years of World War II and made aliyah in 1950. He served in the Israel Air Force and later studied for his Ph.D. in chemistry at Hebrew University. He was a prominent researcher at the Weizmann Institute and with the Israeli Atomic Energy Commission. He is married to Natalie Rahmilevitch, granddaughter of the well known dermatologist and Jewish community leader, Dr. Abel Abba Lapin of Kovno.

## ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SUWALK AND ENVIRONS

*Suwalk is one of the ancestral homes of our family. The city itself, and the towns of Suwalk Guberniya, were home to many generations of Charlaps and Don Yahyas. The following excerpts are from the Suwalk Yiskor Book which has been translated to English and is now being edited in preparation for publication. The original book, largely in Yiddish, was edited by the late Berl Kagan (Kahan) and appeared in 1961 under the auspices of the Suwalk & Vicinity Relief Committee of New York.*

From the Introduction:

Everything depends on luck, even the location of a city. If Suwalk had been founded some ten miles farther north, in Lithuania proper, its role and influence on Jewish affairs would have been immeasurably greater. In Poland, with its millions of people, Suwalk was insignificant. In meagerly populated Lithuania, it would have been a major hub. For the rapidly growing Jewish communities of Poland Suwalk was just another town; for the much smaller Jewish communities of Lithuania it would have been a spiritual center. Moreover, for the Poles, Suwalk was an appendage. They had no intentions of ceding it to anyone, yet they did not regard it as one hundred percent Polish. Lithuania coveted it even though it was always somewhat foreign to them. So there sat Suwalk half Polish and half Lithuanian. And there lived its Jews in a triple diaspora, a nationalism neither wholly Jewish, wholly Polish, nor wholly Lithuanian. The half Polish, half Lithuanian character of Jewish life in the Suwalk area was especially evident in their customs, an amalgam of the two peoples they lived among. It was also reflected in their Yiddish pronunciation.

Suwalk's Jews lived in a border town and the border put its stamp on them. Border inhabitants hate borders; people who are everyday witnesses to artificial national barriers want to see them eradicated. Border inhabitants are less provincial than others; they see the world beyond their own society. Border dwellers tend to be stronger, more energetic, more pioneering - and the Jews of Suwalk were a tribe of pioneers.

Jews from Suwalk and the surrounding area were pioneers in the *Haskalah* (Enlightenment) movement. They were early emigres from tsarist oppression. They experimented in agriculture and were early *halutzim* (pioneers) in *Eretz Yisrael*. They were among the first in *Hibat Tsiyon* (Lovers of Zion) movement. In America they helped establish the Yiddish and Hebrew press. In the early 1880s the impetus for Jewish day schools in America came from Suwalki landsleit.

The Jews of Suwalk were a singular tribe. During their lifetimes, those close to them did not notice their peculiar qualities; others did not appreciate them. Let the words of this book serve as a true testament, *hesed shel emet* (a last act of kindness), not only for the martyrs of Suwalk and the Jewish settlements around it, but also for the holiness that radiated from them, as it did from every vanished Jewish settlement in Eastern Europe. That holiness which permeated their lives and shown as a beacon, illuminating their deeds and infusing the superb cultural treasure of the Jewish people.

From the Preface:

Jewish Suwalk is erased. The Jewish towns around it are wiped out and the Jewish life that was lived there is extinguished, along with the lives of all the thousands of Jewish communities in Eastern Europe.

Shall the memory of Jewish Suwalk go up in smoke, as did its Jews?

Suwalk - the city of our dreams, the city of our youth, the city of our parents and ancestors, the city of our prayers and of our songs - shall it disappear forever into oblivion without leaving a trace?

Jews were not accustomed to put up iron and stone monuments to their past. Jews were concerned, however, that their past be remembered. They transmitted their spiritual heritage from generation to generation, a guarantee of the eternity of Israel. As we are told in *Pirke Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers), "Moses received the Torah at Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua and Joshua to the Elders and the Elders to the Prophets and the Prophets to the men of the Great Assembly."

Our beloved city has been destroyed by wicked men whose evil is unmatched in the annals of human history. They wished to destroy not only the Jewish body, but also to uproot forever the Jewish spirit. Our revenge and our reply must be: We are here and we continue!

In our memorial book we give expression to the last breath and cry of pain of our holy martyrs, our parents, our brothers and sisters, our dearest and most beloved, who were thrown into the gas chambers, into the deep pits, burned, shot, smothered; their last prayers and screams cut off and silenced by the Nazi executioners. This memorial book is meant to perpetuate their unfinished prayers. Their lives were cut short by the murderers before they could complete their call: Hear oh Israel . . . All of us will say the *kaddish* by means of this memorial book:

*Yisgadal v'yiskadash sh'may rabo . . .*

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