



AVOTAYNU

The International Review of Jewish Genealogy

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AVOTAYNU®

The International Review of Jewish Genealogy

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As I See I

Just when you think that all possible resources for Jewish genealogists must have been discovered and/or explored, other researchers—novices as well as experienced professionals—come along with additional news. Some truly unusual sources are described in this issue: vagaries of Polish-Jewish vital records, the reliability of rabbinic genealogies, Radzivil archives, new Israeli sources—including German-Jewish records in Jerusalem—and details of Jewish genealogical research in and around Boston, Massachusetts.

Many of those who listened to George Bolotenko's talk at the Washington seminar last summer were almost stunned by the implications of what he reported—700,000 individual 19th-century Jewish residents of czarist Russia recorded in indexed police files—all available at an archive in Moscow. Every reader with Russian ancestry must check this source. In scope, it is almost as good as finding a census for the entire Russian-Jewish population.

Sometimes though, despite all the stories about new resources, dead ends and brick walls accumulate. The temptation grows simply to give up the whole project. That is when other people's experiences—their successes and failures—can provide the inspiration to keep going. For that reason, for the final issue of each calendar year, AVOTAYNU invites readers to tell their personal stories. This time we learn how records of the Industrial Removal Organization (now at the American Jewish Historical Society) helped Fay Bussgang solve some family mysteries. We empathize with Linda Newman's frustrations and cheer her ultimate poignant successes as she persists logically through an initial series of frustrations. We travel in our armchairs with Daniel Dunn, Glenn Gorelick and David Lui while we think about whether or not to plan a trip to Central or Eastern Europe—maybe just after the 1997 Paris summer seminar. On the other hand, Lauren Davis demonstrates again that much can be accomplished through the mail or at Mormon libraries.

In this issue, Randy Daitch and Sheila Kieval each speak of "closing the circle," a reference to deceased members of their families. A circle closed for me recently, as well. The day of Yitzhak Rabin's funeral, while I was paying my respects at the Knesset in Jerusalem, my beloved father suffered a serious stroke. He died a month later.

Other events that happened during my father's final month made me think again that the "closed circle" really represents a link in the historical chain to which we all belong. While I was in Israel, a letter arrived at my house from the American Jewish Historical Society. In it was a photocopy of a 1907 postcard written (in Yiddish) by my father's father to the Industrial Removal Office in New York. I have been researching the Amdur line since 1977, but aside from a signature on his Declaration of Intent to Become a Citizen, this postcard is the first and only artifact anyone has from Gedalya Zeev Amdur. My grand-

(continued on page 51)

Beyond the Metrics: Records from the Russian Department of Police

by George Bolotenko

The following is excerpted from a talk given at the 14th Summer Seminar on Jewish Genealogy held in Washington, DC, June 25-29, 1995.

In my professional capacity as an archivist employed by the National Archives of Canada, I have visited Russia six times and Ukraine twice over the past several years. As a result, I have come to know archival officials, archivists and the archival holdings in their care. My purpose is to share with you what I know of recent changes in Russian archives, especially as they apply to genealogical research. I would like, moreover, to turn your attention away from the peripheries of the former Russian Empire and Soviet Union and toward its center—Moscow—where archives hold an almost boundless extent of genealogical information, unknown to most genealogists and used by very few.

Work and Writings About Genealogical Sources in Russia and Ukraine

Most genealogical work is based on vital records that document births and deaths (the so-called metrics) and marriages, etc. Roll and roster-type records are also utilized, providing information on taxation, immigration and other such phenomena. Block metrics and roster/rolls are perhaps the logical place to start genealogical research and are relatively easy records with which to work. However, beyond this first circle of vital records is a broader historical record of the past, preserved in Russian central archival institutions.

Most genealogical work also seems to be done at a local level—in a village or town where possible, perhaps in a county. Some research reaches the provincial level, but rarely has genealogical work been done on records in the central repositories in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Several reasons might account for this. Maybe it is harder to locate useful material in the far greater mass of records in the capitals, and perhaps people do not expect to locate records of genealogical utility in the central repositories.

Work in central repository records entails more than the language problem for ordinary researchers. One must also have a far more sophisticated knowledge of Russian history, a historical awareness of the evolution of Russian society over time, and of the governmental/administrative apparatus of the Russian Empire at different times. Only when armed with such information can the researcher have some notion of the type of record that might be located in the fonds of governmental institutions and organs and what records have genealogical utility. Records have far more meaning if understood in the context of their creation, i.e., who created them and for what purposes. This is a significant requirement for genealogi-

cal work, anywhere, at any level, at any time.

Genealogical research in the central archives is complicated by the fact that during the Soviet era, Russian archivists paid little heed to genealogy. It was perceived as not much more than a trite bourgeois concern—a waste of time—that detracted from the far more serious tasks of archivists. Perhaps even more to the point, it was often associated with heraldry, and both sub-disciplines were viewed with some suspicion as indicating a perhaps unhealthy interest in aristocracy. There was no small danger, at certain times in Soviet Russia, to anyone who could be perceived as having such an interest.

Hence, archival material of genealogical value was not readily identified for ease of access. This work is being done retrospectively now—especially since it is profitable, a very significant consideration now that archives have essentially been cast out of the small circle of centrally funded governmental agencies and, to a large degree, must pay their own way.

This change is reflected in other developments. For



George Bolotenko

example, a classic work on genealogy, published originally in 1906, was recently reprinted, and the Genealogical Society of St. Petersburg which has been founded, issues its own publications.

Finally, until quite recently, many of the records at the central level that have significant genealogical value were closed to the general public and to most researchers. In fact, the records described below have only recently been

made accessible to the average researcher. Until 1991, only the very occasional researcher received access, and this was limited only to a very minute number of such records, specifically defined, for which approval was sanctioned by both a higher institution and by the Ministry of the Interior (meaning, of course, approval by Communist Party political watchdogs).

These are some of the factors that account for the very marked non-use of central governmental records by genealogists working in Russia, both native and from abroad. It is precisely to these records that I wish to draw your attention and to the promise they hold for genealogical research. I will focus on the records of Fond 102, the Department of Police, located in the flagship archives of

Финкельштейнъ, Гершъ Абрамовъ, мѣщанинъ м. Стоцекъ, Венгровскаго уѣзда, Съдлецкой губ., 33 лѣтъ, вѣроисповѣданія іудейскаго, женатъ, жена и 3 малолѣтнихъ дѣтей проживаютъ въ г. Варшавѣ, имѣетъ отца Абрама и сестеръ: Хану, Мерлю, Хаю, Суру и Перлю. Привлеченъ, въ качествѣ обвиняемаго, при Варшавскомъ Губернскомъ Жандармскомъ Управленіи къ дознанію по дѣлу о сходкѣ прикащиковъ 10 Января 1904 г. въ г. Варшавѣ; состоялъ подъ особымъ надзоромъ полиціи въ Варшавѣ, откуда скрылся въ Декабрѣ 1904 г., по свѣдѣніямъ, въ Лондонъ.

Подчинить особому надзору полиціи, увѣдомивъ о семъ Департаментъ Полиціи и Начальника Варшавскаго Губернскаго Жандармскаго Управленія.

Part of the Police Files located at the State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF). Taken from a 1905 police circular, it is a genealogical gold mine for some researcher. It states, "Finkelshtein, Gersh Abramov, inhabitant of the town of Stotsek, Vengerskii county, Seletsk province, 33 years old, of the Jewish Confession, married with three small children and lives in the city of Warsaw, has a father,

Abram, and sisters; Khana, Merlia, Khaia, Sura and Perlia.

Summoned, as an accused, to the Warsaw Provincial Gendarme Administration, and investigated in the matter of an [illegal] assembly of shopkeepers held on 10 January 1904 in the city of Warsaw, fell under the special police surveillance in Warsaw, whence he fled into hiding in December of 1904, according to information, to London.

Russia, the State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF).

Extreme Utility of Central Institutional Records Especially the Department of Police Records

Following the collapse of the Communist order in 1991, Department of Police records in GARF (i.e., records created before 1917) were subjected to access review. By 1993, most of these police records were opened for research purposes. Thus, we have a completely unharvested, and extraordinarily rich, field of ripened crops awaiting the genealogist.

To understand why Department of Police records are so valuable, it is very important to be historical—that is to understand things, people and events in their own context and historical period. Our present concepts of police, and hence the type of record one could expect to be kept by a police agency, simply do not apply to these records. Russian Imperial police records are of another time, created by people living under different perceptions and values, with a very different mind-set from ours today.

Only in the context of historical awareness of the Russian police, in its own time and cultural matrix, can one understand the type of record it could have created in the execution of its mandated administrative tasks.

Philosophy and Mandate of Department of Police

The Department of Police was the capstone of the police structure of the Russian Empire, a constituent element of the Ministry of the Interior. It was charged with the following obligations:

- Political and criminal investigations at the highest levels;
- Preservation of the social and governmental system of the Empire;

- Preparation of legislation for, and instructions of, the Ministry of the Interior;

- Direction, coordination and control over the activity of police, gendarme, security and investigative organs;

- Struggle with revolutionary movement in the Empire;

- Supervision of investigations into political matters;

- Security of state borders and communications across them;

- Issuance of passports to Russian subjects and permissions of residence to foreigners to reside in Russia;

- Control over all activity connected with firearms and explosives;

- Supervision over all manner of cultural and educational activity, assuring that such activity fell within acceptable moral parameters;

- Preservation of morality in virtually all areas of life.

The broadness of these powers was the legacy of the philosophy of cameralism, the German variant of enlightened despotism, imported into Russia more or less in the time of Peter the Great at the end of the 17th century. It was a political philosophy that harmonized with the revolutionary reorientation in Western man's perception of self, God and the cosmos, best reflected in the work of Sir Isaac Newton. The universe was a finely tuned mechanism, wound up, machine-like, by God the Creator, after which God more or less withdrew from His creation and let it function according to fixed and immutable principles, i.e., natural laws.

Ruling princes were obligated, by virtue of their divine anointment, to improve their societies. This would justify absolute rule here on earth and would both enrich a prince's subjects (and consequently him) and make the state stronger and more secure in all respects. The secret to an improved society lay in enlightenment. Thinkers

could discern the natural laws that made society work and prescribe methods by which it could be improved. It was the prince's role to assure that these laws, and the regulations based on them, would enlighten their subjects and improve their lives.

To implement such an improvement for the better, princes required a whole array of officials, loosely called *fiscals*, to enlighten, educate and manage society; good wardship by enlightened officials working to better subjects' lots in all walks of life would benefit all. This, simplistically put, is the essence of the German notion of *Polizeistaat*, and it was adopted by Russian rulers. Hence, the great latitude given to—perhaps more correctly, the great burden imposed upon—the police.

Unfortunately, theory and practice never meshed, and the notions of true wardship never manifested themselves. The other side of the coin, though—police intervention into all areas of life—became the main feature of life in the Russian Empire.

We must see the Department of Police records in the context of this inherited philosophy. Given such a broad mandate, the department's records reflect life in the Russian Empire along the broadest of spectra. Thus, in Department of Police files, unlike in the far more limited western concept of police, we will find far, far more than strictly legal/investigative and administrative/operational types of records. We find life fully fleshed out reflected here.

Philosophy and legal mandate colored the nature of the records created by the Department of Police. Its administrative structure did so, also. Hence, it would be useful to look, even if briefly, at this matter.

STRUCTURE OF DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

Founding of the Department of Police

When it was first organized in 1880, the Department of Police had three structural subdivisions (*deloproizvodstva*) that we may loosely call sections. Over the years, the number grew to ten. The department at that time subsumed the archives (1846–80) of, and assumed the responsibilities for, the Third Section of His Imperial Majesty's Own Chancellery, the infamous *Gendarmerie* (political police) created by Nicholas I in 1826.

The following gives some idea of the tasks the various units of the Department of Police were charged with:

- The Fourth Section, reorganized in 1907, was responsible for workers' and peasants' movements and the political direction of social organizations and provincial and town administrations, as well as estate representative organs.
- The Fifth Section exercised supervision, open and secret, over suspect individuals and managed the exile system.
- The Seventh Section conducted, among other things, formal investigations at gendarme offices, prepared reports on revolutionary activity preparatory to arrests of individuals, and headed investigations into crimes against government.

Of these various subdivisions, the most significant for

genealogical purposes is the Third Section. From 1880 to 1898 this unit was called the "secret section." It managed the internal and external spy network and had supervision over, and investigation responsibility for, political parties and revolutionary and social movements. In 1898, because of the dramatic increase in revolutionary activity, the *Osobyi Otdel* (Extraordinary/special section) was separated from the Third Section. It received charge from the Third Section of the most important political investigatory functions in order to respond more efficiently to the revolutionary threat to the governmental-societal order. (And once organized openly, it lost the status of a secret unit.) The *Osobyi Otdel* received the following responsibilities: search for politically active individuals in Russia and abroad; internal and external secret agents; open surveillance of anti-government figures; secret monitoring of correspondence; monitoring political direction of students, workers and press; interdiction of revolutionary literature, and so forth. In the execution of its duties, the *Osobyi Otdel* created an extraordinary body of records remarkably rich in genealogical information.

Gendarmerie

In 1880, this agency became a component of the Department of Police, but there was never a comfortable mesh. As noted, the *Gendarmerie* had been founded in 1826 by Nicholas I following the Decembrist Rebellion in 1825. It came to be known as the Third Section of His Imperial Majesty's Own Chancellery.

The Third Section defended the governmental structure, exercised supervision and control over all aspects of the social and political life of the Empire, and monitored the functioning of government and all elective bodies. Its chief purposes were not only to do battle with social and revolutionary movements, but also to elevate society. A story, perhaps apocryphal, has it that when Count Bendorff, the first head of the Third Section, asked Emperor Nicholas what his responsibilities were, the emperor handed him a handkerchief and, in all seriousness and honesty, responded, "To wipe away the tears of my subjects." This was said fully in the context of the spirit of cameralism and wardship, discussed above.

The chief of the *Gendarmerie* was always nominated directly by the emperor. The unit's integration into the Department of Police in 1880 was intended to improve the overall efficiency of police work in the empire, especially in the struggle against terrorism and political dissidence. For a number of reasons, however, no true marriage of the *Gendarmerie* with its new master ever occurred.

The reform of 1880 did not touch the existing gendarme institutional structure; the connection occurred only at the very highest level. The *Gendarmerie* continued to draw its complement from military officers whose specific background ill prepared them to work with civilian police. Provincial gendarme chiefs were never subordinated, in statute or practice, to provincial governors; they answered only to their chief in the center.

Hence, no small confusion resulted, as both the governor (chief of all police forces in a given province) and gendarme provincial chief appeared as separate focuses of authority, both answering to the Ministry of the Interior.

Simply too established and set in its own ways, with a structure that had remained intact following 1880, and with only a formal subjugation of the gendarmes to a vice minister (an assistant to the minister of the Department of Police), the Gendarmerie maintained a recognizably distinct existence right through to 1917.

Okhrana

In the very early years of the 20th century, a third police element concerned with political and revolutionary movements crystallized. Because, in the estimation of government leaders, the Gendarmerie was not doing its job well, and the *Osobyi Otdel* was itself going through reorganization, police elements were detailed into units stationed in strategic regions—in the capitals of St. Petersburg and Moscow, and throughout the border areas, especially the western, southwestern and southern frontier provinces that included the Pale of Settlement where the vast majority of Russian Jews lived. The Okhrana took over hot pursuit and investigative/interrogation functions from the Gendarmerie, leaving it only general monitoring of public opinion. Not surprisingly, this police level also created records of extraordinary genealogical value to Jews, especially when one considers the fact that the Okhrana's personnel were stationed throughout the Pale.

Given the significant destruction of records at the local and provincial levels during World War I, the Revolution of 1917, the Civil War of 1918–21 and World War II, central records are all that much more valuable as a genealogical source. For genealogical purposes, we are lucky that cameralist philosophical principles underlay the work of the Russian police; given their broadest of mandates, many records or copies of records that might perhaps be construed as of a local nature were sent to the Department of Police archives and, thus, preserved to our time.

Types of Records Created By the Department of Police

Because Jews were heavily involved in the revolutionary movement in the Russian Empire, the Department of Police compiled a remarkably extensive body of records on Jews throughout the Pale of Settlement. In fact, the archivist-specialist responsible for the Department of Police fonds at GARF has suggested that as many as 70 percent of the one million or so names entered in the Department of Police card catalogue are Jewish. That is, GARF holds records on 700,000 Jews who lived in the Pale of Settlement during the late 19th and early 20th centuries!

When I was in Moscow several months ago, I had little time to search for the best examples of Department of Police records, but I took what came readily to hand. These likely are the average record types consisting of an

average level of information. I have subdivided police records at GARF into six types, an arbitrary typology that seems to reflect well the types of documents genealogists might find useful in their research.

1. *Printed Interrogations (Doznaniia)*—*Records of the Seventh Section and Gendarmes*. These documents consist of printed annual reviews, prepared by the Gendarmerie, which were records of their investigations into significant acts against government and actions taken by the gendarmes. The printed reviews were begun in 1880 and mailed out to all gendarme offices throughout the land to keep as a reference, so that gendarmes could keep each other informed of major players in anti-government activity. The documents consist of information on facts (actions) about individuals that brought them under investigation, citations of evidence (actions, letters, etc.), and measures taken by the gendarmes.

The reviews always start with some indication of what the individuals or groups were doing and provide a political background for the police interrogations of individuals. As a rule, the printed records of interrogation almost always provide at least names, activities, places and dates. More often than not they also give ages, religion, social estate and level of education achieved. At times, the record is in narrative form; at other times, it is a listing of individuals and various elements of identification of these individuals. Examples of information found in these files follow.

In a report from Minsk, the gendarmes report that on December 23, 1900, they uncovered a secret hat makers' association, consisting of Itska Iashgur, Hakhman Vaksler, Samuil Grif, Vigdor Gazenpud and Leibe Moishe Vernshtein. The report from the Kiev Provincial Gendarme Administration for 1900 lists dozens of names of people under surveillance. Many of the individuals noted are Jews. Several entries follow:

Bliumenfeld, Iosif Solomonovich, 37 years old, Jew, Rumanian subject, studied at the Richelieu Gymnasium, schooling incomplete because subjected to interrogation.

Kontorovich, neé Gorovits, Faniia Isaevna, 29 years old, Jewess, merchant's daughter, wife of an engineer-technician, self-taught (Fond 102, Opis 252, delo 22, pp. 61, 235, 237).

These printed reviews were terminated in 1905 and replaced by monthly lists, such as the very last document in this article.

2. *Intercepted Correspondence (Perliustratsii)*—*Records of the Osobyi Otdel*. *Perliustratsii* are letters copied by police officials. Until 1917 in Moscow and St. Petersburg, all major post offices through which all mail funneled had a "black [dark] office," where the letters of persons under surveillance were screened and, when necessary, translated and/or decoded and then copied for police tracking. Letters were steamed open, tracing paper placed over the original, and every mark, including signatures, traced out exactly as on the original.

Correspondence of individuals at all social levels was monitored. Correspondence of those prominent in all social movements or suspected of anti-government activity was intercepted and copied. Obviously, this included members of revolutionary parties of the left; it also included, however, representatives of right-wing parties and of centrist liberal parties. Thinkers, churchmen and professors, highly placed officials, gentry and aristocrats, even ministers and members of the Imperial family had their mail intercepted and copied.

Among perliustrated letters, very, very many were written by Jews, often to other Jews, about various concerns; they are a valuable genealogical source. An example is a letter written by Tsuka-Iankel' Srulev Belitskii to Srul Belitskii, in Drabnov, Poltava province, on August 1, 1911. In this letter, Belitskii writes that father is with him, that he is sending in his old passport for renewal to David Shul'man, in Zolotonozh, and asks Srul in the event that he gets the passport, to forward it on to Isaak Genin to hold for him. (Fond 102, Opis 265, delo 492, p. 20)

3. *Personal Files—Records of the Osobyi Otdel, Gendarmerie and the First Section.* In the course of their work, various police units built up hundreds of thousands of personal information files. They are wonderfully rich genealogical sources, as the following demonstrates. In a secret report of February 12, 1905, the Warsaw Chief of Police sent the following information to the Department of Police in St. Petersburg regarding the Department's request for information on Gersh Abramov Finkelstein, who, in December 1904, slipped out from under police

surveillance. On the basis of a letter to Finkelstein's wife that was intercepted by the police, we learn that Finkelstein is in London, where he is planning to migrate to America. On Finkelstein and his family the department amassed the following information:

Gersh Abramov Finkelstein was a registered inhabitant of the town of Stotsek, in Vengrovskii County of Sedletsk province. He was 33 years old and Jewish. He was married, and his wife and three young daughters resided in Warsaw. He had a father, Abram, and four sisters—Chana, Merl, Chaia and Perl. Finkelstein was interrogated by the Warsaw Provincial Gendarmerie in connection with an illegal assembly of shop clerks on January 10, 1904. He thus came under special police surveillance, which he evaded by a flight to London. (Fond 102, OO, Opis 5/1905, delo 6/pt.551, p. 2)

Finkelstein's file holds a clipping from a police circular of the Ministry of Internal Affairs that was issued for Finkelstein after he went on the lam. The GARF archivist responsible for Fond 102 indicated that there may be several hundred thousand such personal files based on Ministry of the Interior circulars from the 1870s through 1917. Not all have survived; some were culled out by police officials as files became dormant; files on individuals with surnames beginning with "A" and "B" were destroyed as police began to burn their records the day following the Bolshevik seizure of power. [But not all. Records on Amdur relatives of the editor held at GARF were retrieved by Anton Valdine in 1992—Ed.] These losses notwithstanding, there still remains a storehouse of precious genealogical gems on GARF's shelves.

Other personal files are not as detailed. For example, there is correspondence between the Gendarmerie and the Osobyi Otdel regarding Abram Gershonov Nikhamkin, an important figure in the Nikolaev group of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party in 1905. Nikhamkin was himself a registered inhabitant of the town of Kolyshansk. As an agitator, in a forest near Nikolaev, he had urged workers at mass meetings to go on strike and to arm themselves for insurrection against the czar's government. To this end, he prepared and disseminated Social Democratic proclamations. The investigation into his activities was halted by the czar's amnesty on October 21, 1905, to all rebels of the 1905 Revolution. (Fond 102, OO, Opis 6/1906, delo 910, p. 8) Obviously, Nikhamkin's record is not as detailed as the Finkelstein document, but it also has no small genealogical value.

4. *Pogrom-Related Material and Records; Revolution of 1905; Records of the Osobyi Otdel, Gendarmerie and Okhrana.* The predominant mass of pogrom records are located in Fond 102. The Department of Police always investigated all pogrom activities and prepared very full reports on such events. Obviously, pogrom records overflow with genealogical information.

There is, for example, the appeal of Miron Iakovlevich Mokhrik of Odessa, Aleksandrovskii police ward, living on

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Many talks on Jews, Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Finns, East and Central European Germans, multi-ethnic topics.

Some talks on Balts, Greeks, Hungarians, Romanians, Rusins, Russians, Croatians, Slovenians, Ukrainians, Mennonite.

JEWISH SPEAKERS INCLUDE

Robert Weiss, president, Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies

Dr. Bruce Kahn, president, Jewish Genealogical Society of Rochester

Harry Gutkin, president, Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada

William Wolpert, Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest

Videotape of talk by Arthur Kurzweil

For more details, write to:

Ed Brandt

Convention Chair

13 - 27th Ave. S. E.

Minneapolis, MN 55414-3101

Malaia Arnautskaia Street, residing in his own house, No. 15. During the Kishinev pogrom in 1903, a crowd trashed a house belonging to him in Kishinev at the intersection of Kupecheskaia and Fontanka. It destroyed all windows and doors in the structure; damage was estimated at 275 rubles. Moreover, Mohkrik had a cottage in the wine-growing area on the outskirts of Kishinev, as well as a large vineyard, with houses and cold cellars that held a large reserve of aged wine. The pogromists destroyed everything at a loss of 9,773 rubles. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of such files of Jews seeking redress for property and personal injury. (Fond 102, Opis 1903, delo 873/vol. 4, p. 82)

In another file, we find a record of the Kishinev Municipal Court session of May 17, 1903, in which Alter Shvartsman was charged with certain illegalities; his defense lawyer was Goldshtein. There is also a printed list of individuals representing claimants for damages at a session of the Odessa Provincial Court, Kishinev Section, holding a hearing in the matter of losses suffered during the anti-Jewish riots of April 6-7, 1903. The following are named: Morgulis, Mikhail Grigorevich; Gruzenberg, Oskar Osipovich; Pergament, Iosef Iakovlevich; Kalmanovich, Samuil Eremeevich; Goldshtein, Moisei Leontiev; Giller-son, Arnold Isidorovich; Bol'ze, Mark Isaakov; Grosman, Samuil Mikhailov, and others. (Fond 102, Opis 1903, delo 873/vol.4, pp. 120-1, 151-2)

Pogrom-related material does not deal only with the larger population centers. Following the Kishinev pogroms, investigations were ordered into these actions wherever any disturbance had occurred, including small and distant villages. One file, for example, holds information on an investigation into anti-Jewish disorders conducted by the Skvirsk county chief of rural police (*zemskii ispravnik*) in April 1903 in the village of Verbova. An anti-Jewish crowd had broken windows in the homes of two Jewish villagers, Pinkhas and Srul Zurakhov. Following this, the crowd, ignoring the exhortations of the organizers of the attack, dispersed and went home. (Fond 102, Opis 1903, delo 874, p. 73)

The existence of such records of investigation even in small villages and other locales suggests that roots can be traced back, in some instances, into the distant countryside.

In yet another document, the Okhrana (Security) chief of the Odessa district reported on his investigation into disorders at the Commercial College in Odessa in October 1905 during the 1905 Revolution. On October 14, Jewish students, especially someone named Faiga, had assembled and then moved to close down all other schools in Odessa. They broke windows, and by day's end, 35 schools had stopped operating. Of those who opposed the police, arrested were a dentist named Moisei Fronshtein and a student named Evgenii Pigarevich. (Fond 102, OO, Opis 5/1905, delo part 3/56, p. 4)

5. *Political Organizations—Records of the Osobyi Otdel and Gendarmerie.* Monitoring political activity was the overriding concern of the Department of Police. In the process,

its agencies created reports of various kinds on the political situation in Russia and on individuals disturbing the Empire's peace. There is, for example, a report for the city of Minsk, a general summation of political movements in 1904. In the Socialist Revolutionary (Peasant) Party, the Jews Kaminskii and Roza Simkhovich were very active. Many more Jews cleaved to the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party which also had close relations with the Bund. The report includes the names Bartsevich, Lerner, Julian Chapinskii, Iankel Okun, Solomon Levinson, Khaim Belenkii, Iosif Khalevo and Movsha Taubkin.

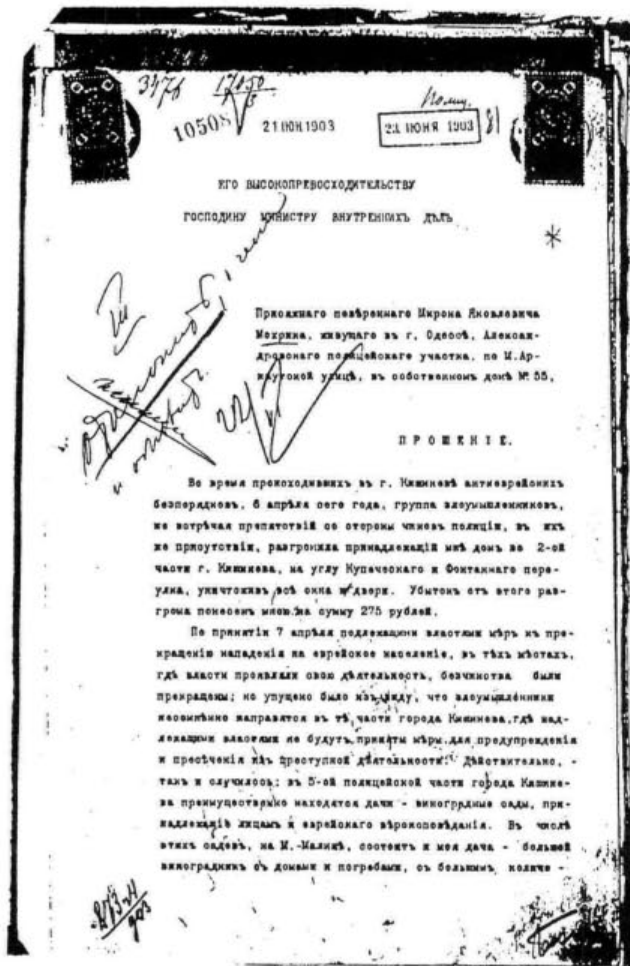
Even more names appear in the pages of the report devoted to the Bund: Moisei Borisov Gurevich, his wife Matilda (née Meichik), Isaak Frenkel, Khasiu Munvez, Lev Tsiperovich, Tsetsillia Shabad, Rosa Shabad, Khatskel Munvez, Dovida Rosenblum, Lev Rapoport, Ruvima Protas, Sora Levin, Faibish Lapkin, Iudelia Kazarnovskaia, Ita Kazarnovskii, Simkha Taubkin, Aron Kassel', Khaim Izrael, Mikhail Bilenkin, Shaia Belenkii, Mordukh Aksel-rod, Gdalia Birker, Samuil Berenshtein, Boris Uport and Abram Kotik. Brief reports exist also on the Poalei-Tzion (Zionist-Socialist Party), on the Organization of Pure Zionists, and on Jewish Self-Defense Circles.... (Fond 102, Opis 233/1905, delo 1800/33, pp. 14-17; Fond 102, Opis 1905, delo 1800/33, p. 19)

On the Bund generally are four boxes of card entries that refer to approximately 6,000 files in Fond 102 holding information on the organization. On Poalei-Tzion are another 1,000 reference cards, and another 1,000 or so on Zionists. Thus, GARF holds some thousands of files on Jewish political activity, many of them dealing with events at county and town or village levels, and most of them are replete with names.

6. *Political Organizations (Personal Files)—Records of the Osobyi Otdel and Gendarmerie.* While the police agencies amassed "vital record"-type information on Jews, they also compiled tens of thousands of files with detailed personal information on specific individuals under surveillance or investigation. These records are a genealogist's delight.

The Chief of the Vil'no Okhrana (security detachment), on September 6, 1905, submitted the following report to the Osobyi Otdel. He could not establish the identity of a "Nadia" in Vil'no, named in a perliustrated letter. The "Asinovskaia" also mentioned in that letter proved to be Roza Iankelevna Asinovskaia, daughter of a landholder in Oshmiansk, 18 years of age, dwelling in her own house in the city of Vil'no on Novgorod Street. "Aronovich," also mentioned in the letter, had earlier been identified as Gitlia Ioselevna Aronovich, 19 years old, then living in a cottage in an area known as Antokol' on the perimeter of Vil'no city. Finally, "Sonia Don," also named in the letter, was Sora Faivushev Don, registered in the municipality of Zhosel' in Troskii county in the province of Vil'no. She had recently applied to study midwifery at the hospital of S. Jacob. (Fond 102, OO, Opis 5/1905, delo pt. 161LA, pp. 20-21)

In another file, the chief of gendarmes of Bessarabia



Sample of a pogrom-related record. It is the sworn testimony of a Miron Iakovlevich Mokhrík of Odessa, who lived at No. 55 Small Arnautskaiia Street. The testimony states in part that "At the time of the anti-Jewish orders, which occurred in Kishinev on 6 April of this year (1905), a group of ill-intentioned people, unrestrained by any representatives of the police, in the presence of police, destroyed a house belonging to me.... My loss from the destruction amounted to 275 roubles." Mokhrík was seeking restitution from the Minister of Internal Affairs.

Province, in a letter of March 1906 to the Osobyi Otdel, reported on membership in Poalei-Tzion. His secret investigations had revealed the following:

"Sioma" is Solomon Nukhimov Livshits, 17 years old, registered in the municipality of Akkerman, a student in the 6th grade of the Akkerman Gymnasium. He lived at home with his parents in the house of his grandfather, Meer Gamshev Sheinberg. His father was Nukhim Gershev and his mother was Dina Meerova; she had a brother, Shulim Nukhimov, 21 years old, who, rumor had it, had moved to Odessa. Livshits was noted to be in contact with unreliable personalities and had participated in a meeting of Jewish students

held October 18, 1905, at the gymnasium. Meer Gamshev Sheinberg, the grandfather, 65 years old, was registered as an inhabitant of the municipality of Akkerman. He lived in his own house on Jewish Street. He was Solomon Livshits' maternal grandfather, a merchant of various manufactures, and also politically unreliable.

Whether any of the above had traveled to Odessa for the Poalei-Tzion conference held in December 1905 could not be determined.

Similar information exists on David Goldel'man, 18 years old, of the town of Soroky, suspected of belonging to the Bund. Other names appearing in this file are Moisei Isaakov Levin, Illarion Levin, Elia Balaban and Iankel' Etelis. (Fond 102, OO, Opis 6/1906, delo 25/pt. 84, pp. 7, 16-17)

The reports of the chief of the Odessa Okhrana Detachment to the Department of Police of March 1905 and 1906 provide the following information. Police had detained Azriel Nakhimov Gel'man, who belonged to the Social Democratic Committee (liaison with the Communists). A meeting was to have been held on January 29, 1905, of individuals connected with the local group of the Central Committee of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party to be held in the home of the son of Zakhar Movshev Mikhelovskii, a merchant of the second guild in Odessa, residing at 59 Malaia Arnautskaiia Street. A police detachment sent to the address took 10 people into custody. The Odessa Okhrana chief then appended a list of 10 names, basic data on these individuals, and the punishment accorded to them. The names included Mikhelovskii (mentioned above), Zisia Markusev Feinshtein, who was registered in Odessa, 19 years old, unemployed, lives on Preobrazhenskaia Street, at No. 83 in Room 2, and others—Naum Mordkov Voronitskii, David Iankelev Goikhman, Sonia Vol'fovna Galtermakher, Noson Gershanov Temkin, David Leibov Menis, Mordko Iankelev Nidel'man, and Rukhliia Volkova Morgulis. (Fond 102, OO: Opis 6, delo 11/pt.1, p. 15; Opis 1905, delo 5/pt.4LA, pp. 17-20)

In the final document summarized here, the chief of the Vitebsk Provincial Gendarme Administration, writing to the Osobyi Otdel on November 15, 1905, reported on the revolutionary situation in Vitebsk. He submitted two lists of names. I will deal only with the first list, entitled "Battle Command of the Vitebsk Group of Socialist Revolutionaries." The first name on this list is Nokhim Movshev Vaitin. He was a registered townsman of the city of Vitebsk, 23 years of age, and a dentist. He was short in stature, of medium build, brown haired, with a clear round face, and a small black moustache. A Jew, he lived on Kanatnaia Street, in the house of Martynov. In 1904 he had been investigated in connection with the Socialist Revolutionary Circle in Vitebsk.

There is similar information in this list on the following individuals: Mariia Borisovna Vaitin (née Levinson), Osher Movshev Vaitin, Peretz Barlas, Ol'ga Samuilovna Barkan, Berko Bezsmertnyi, Khaim-Mordukh Abramov Movshev

Vrubel', Vul'f Gurevich, Tsipa Gurevich, Nokhim Israelev Gurevich, Movsha Veniaminov Gurevich, Musia Movsheva Ginsburg, Khana-Shlima Iosifova Khaimova Krinskaia Gol'dshmidt, Lev Feodorovich Dribin, Golda Falkova Dribin, Eiga Dysia Meerova Davydova and Itska Itsykov-Leibov Evelev. (There are four more names in this group, all non-Jews.) (Fond 102, OO, Opis 1905, delo 1800/34, pp. 6-10)

Following 1905, this type of detailed listing of individuals and their biographies replaced the printed information prepared by the Gendarmerie, on revolutionaries and those suspected of crimes against the state (discussed above as the first record type). The genealogical utility of the above record type is obvious.

OTHER SOURCES WITH RECORDS OF GENEALOGICAL VALUE AT GARF

More on Department of Police Files at GARF

The above provides some idea of what is available to the genealogist in the files of the Department of Police in Moscow. The following describes the extent of records held in the various sub-units of the Department of Police. The following examples represent only a minuscule portion of the overall records of the Department of Police in GARF:

- Department of Police, Fond 102, OO, Opis 253, 339 files, 1861–1917. Political parties in the Empire—much on Zionist congresses and Party of Zionist-Socialists.

- Department of Police, 102, OO, Otdel Shifrov, Opis 259, 56 files, 1896–1907. Monthly tables of individuals under surveillance.

- Department of Police, Fond 102, OO, Opis 264, 318 files, 1881–1916. Lists of students and higher education activity.

- Department of Police, Fond 102, OO, Opis 265, 1,306 files, 1883–1917. Perliustrations (largely from the period 1906–17).

- Department of Police, Fond 102, OO, Opis 270, 561 files, 1881–1917. Investigations.

- Department of Police, Fond 1742, Gendarmerie, Opis 1, 52, 771 items, 1840–1917. Photographs.

In addition to the above, there are 49 fonds of either provincial or blocks of two to three gendarme administrations, most of which were established along the western, southwestern and southern peripheries of the Empire (i.e., coinciding with the boundaries of the Pale of Settlement). There are three of special regional security structures of the Gendarmerie and five of Okhrana security administrations.

Other Departmental Fonds at GARF

In addition to the files of the Department of Police are other departmental fonds in Russia's central archives that I have not yet had an opportunity to view, even in as fleeting a manner as I examined the police records in GARF. I doubt that other central repositories will prove as rich, except, perhaps, for RTsKhIDNI (on which more follows below). That many other still unimagined Jewish

genealogical riches exist in other archives in the capital and in St. Petersburg cannot be doubted. For example, at GARF are held the pre-1917 Department of Justice files. Fond 124, Opisi 1-14, 43-55, 57 and 67 all deal with politically active individuals and with political cases. Thousands of files are connected with the Bund, the Socialist Zionists and Poalei-Tzion, all political parties and movements to which Jews belonged in massive numbers. It takes no great imagination to realize that these files also would hold vast riches relevant to Jewish genealogy. Given that these files are the result of preparation for, and results of, trial processes, the personal information included on individuals concerned might be more extensive than in police files and present far more rounded images of individuals, their extended families and the Jewish communities whence they came.

Specifically Jewish Fonds at GARF

One other source of Jewish material at GARF must not be overlooked, i.e., the specifically Jewish. Not having reviewed them, I cannot comment on them, other than to present the following list. It goes without saying, however, that as specifically Jewish fonds, they are bound to hold material of interest and utility to Jewish genealogical endeavors.

- Bund, Fond 8417, 92 files, 1917–21

- Jewish Aid Society for Victims of War and Pogroms, 9538, 244 files, 1914–24

- Committee on Allocating Land to Laboring Jews (*Komzet*) of the Presidium of the Council of Nationalities of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR, Fond r-7541, 1,411 files, 1924–38

- Central Committee of the Jewish Social Democratic Workers' Party "Poalei-Tzion," r-8373, 369 files, 1919–23

OTHER ARCHIVAL REPOSITORIES BEYOND GARF

RTsKhIDNI

RTsKhIDNI is the Russian-language acronym for the Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Records of Contemporary History, formerly the Central Party Archives of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the central committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, located at 15 Pushkin Street in Moscow. As mentioned earlier, an extraordinarily large number of Jews belonged to the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party, later the Bolshevik, and then the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In the approximately one million personal files located in this repository, hundreds of thousands of files deal with Jews living at the turn of the century. Access to these personal files is allowed only to established family members or to nonrelatives with the permission of relatives.

In addition, there are a number of fonds of almost unimaginable potential genealogical value for Jews, as follows

- Bund, Fond 271, 2 file lists, 637 files, 1897–1921

- All-Russian Union of Jewish Veterans, Fond 273, 1 file list, 25 files, 1917–19

Russian Will Search Police Records

Anton Valdine, a professional researcher in Moscow, will search the police records in the GARF archives for clients. For no charge, Valdine will search the card catalog for names of up to 10 individuals or families and prepare a preliminary report on the data in the index cards—sometimes they carry information, too. If the results of the search lead to a request to analyze a specific case file, his fee is \$7 for each file.

Valdine recommends he be contacted through the internet at geneal@geneal.msk.ru. He can also be reached by telephone or fax at (7-095) 491-78-26 or by mail at BP 22, Moscow 123481, Russia.

- Organization "Poalei-Tsion," Fond 272, 3 file lists, 758 files, 1917–28
- Central Bureau of the Jewish Section of the Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party-Bolshevik, Fond 445, 192 dossiers, 1918-30.

RGIA

RGIA is the Russian-language acronym for the Russian State Historical Archives, located at 4 Angliiskaia Naberezhnaia, St. Petersburg. In the extent of its holdings, RGIA surpasses even GARF. Generally there were not many Jews resident in the pre-1917 capital of the Russian Empire; however, all pre-1917 government ministries were located here and amassed material on all inhabitants in all regions of the Empire. (In fact, most of the police and justice files now resident at GARF were originally removed from RGIA's predecessor and logically should reside in the St. Petersburg archives.) Among government departments that monitored Jewish life and had great impact on it were the Synod and the Ministry of Education.

The Synod was the highest lay authority over the Orthodox Church and also over all other faiths in the Russian Empire. All religious/synagogue activities (the building of synagogues, their staffing by rabbis, rabbinical institutions to train rabbis, etc.) were monitored and recorded by the Synod. All Jewish schools required Ministry of Education approval; again, the building of these schools, their staffing by teachers, the training of these teachers, curricula, student enrollments—all this and more would be located in the files of the Ministry of Education located in St. Petersburg.

A specifically Jewish fond at RGIA is the "Mariinsko-Sergievskii Sanctuary for Jewish Children Being Christened and Already Christened into the Orthodox Faith," Fond 542, 1,345 files, 1869-1918. A fond of this nature can only be richly genealogical in the information it holds.

WHAT NEXT?

In this presentation, I have sought to open a New World to Jewish genealogy by sailing eastward into the very heart of the Old World. This is not written presumptuously. I recognize fully that others before me have known of this Old World wealth. Until now, however, it

seems to me that most Jewish genealogists abroad have only nibbled at the peripheries of the mother lode and hence my "claim" is proclaimed now. Much more important, however, is the question once posed, in a different time and another context, by N.G. Chernyshevsky, who wrote a famous work titled *Chto delat'*, which we can translate roughly as "What next?"

There is the standard, time-tested and traditional approach. Anyone interested in his or her Old World genealogy can utilize a local (Russian) genealogical service or one that works from North America. One can try working directly through the archives concerned or, depending on conditions at any given moment, going through central governmental agencies, such as the Main Archival Administration of Ukraine or Rosarkhiv. There are difficulties with all these routes. Expense and reliability are the main ones, and when working in Eastern Europe, any number of impediments can rear up unexpectedly. The truth of it is that people interested in their genealogy are caught between unpleasant pincers straddling both sides of the Atlantic: Expense and abuse, with little gratification, are as often the product of efforts as is a rewarding, perhaps even exhilarating, discovery of family roots.

It is important—and I cannot stress this enough—to realize that all archives in Russia and Ukraine are open for business. If you can get through to them, all are prepared to search for clients. The difficulty is in getting through to them, occasioned by a number of factors. There are local tensions between central archival administrations and their subordinate agencies over who should get what proportion of foreign currency payments for genealogical searches and provision of information. Diplomatic imperatives complicate communications and transactions, since foreigners abroad must communicate through embassies abroad, which then transmit requests up and down the Ministry of External Affairs-Archives continuum in Russia and Ukraine. Simple communications are difficult (faxes and telephones often do not work), there are language difficulties, and bureaucracy still rules the day in the eastern Slavic lands). There are difficulties in making payment for services, given the primitive nature of Russian and Ukrainian banking systems. Many, many difficulties....

Why not, then, a community effort? Why not work through an American agency, some American Jewish organization or university? Why not, working through such an agency, or through a Russian- or Ukrainian-based Jewish agency, establish direct relations with an archival institution such as GARF? In Moscow, there is the Russian State University for the Humanities, which has a strong Jewish Studies faculty. In St. Petersburg, there is the St. Petersburg Jewish University, which is managed by very able people. Could not some mechanism be established, a pipeline across the Atlantic tethered institutionally at both ends, through which the genealogical information could flow from Russia and Ukraine to North America and, of course, elsewhere?

Why not a systematic program of some kind? For a fair offer—in dollars or in kind (a complement of computers would probably be preferred)—most central archives will happily build an alphabetical database of their Jewish holdings for western partners to use. There is colossal genealogical wealth here. I do not speak of placer mining or of panning for gold; it is an open pit strip mine that could easily be opened up, with the right tools and the right funding. This is so because the records have been concentrated, all brought to several single points. And what a boon this can prove to be!

To make a project like this work, it would be signally imperative also to get the right people in charge. If the Jewish community responds as a whole, if objectives become focused and energies conjoined in the pursuit of genealogical information, all things are possible, and the rewards are beyond imagination. Without a concentrated, organized, and well-directed community response, nothing will change—and the field will remain with the peripheral nibblers, bringing up specks only, while the mother lode continues to lie in the centre, largely untapped, holding its human secrets for another time. Might now not be the time?

NOTES

1. L. M. Savelov, *Lektsii po genealogii* (Lectures on genealogy), edited by A. Iu. Karpov (Moscow, 1994). This text consists of lectures delivered by Professor Savelov at

a higher institution in Moscow in the opening years of this century.

2. This archives formerly was called *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Oktiabr'skoi Revoliutsii* (TsGANKh), the Central State Archives of the October Revolution. In terms of extent of holdings, it is one of the largest archives in Russia. More significant is the nature of the records it holds. Following the revolution of 1917, the victorious Communists moved the capital from St. Petersburg to Moscow. They also took the records of key security departments—such as the Ministry of the Interior (including police)—to Moscow. All these records taken from St. Petersburg, along with others, were brought together to create TsGANKh, which later developed into GARF.

3. The sources cited follow Russian historical-archival convention. A fond stands for record body or group, material generated by a single entity. *Opis* signifies file list. *Delo* is a file. Thus, the citations indicate record group/body, file list, file and page number(s) in that order. Where *OO* follows Fond 102, it signifies *Osibyi Otdel*.

Dr. George Bolotenko is a professional archivist who has been associated with the National Archives of Canada since 1981. He holds a PhD from the University of Toronto in the history of the Russian Empire. Dr Bolotenko, who is of Ukrainian heritage, is a founding member of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Ottawa.

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