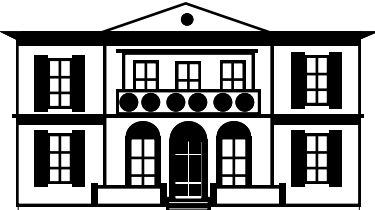


IN TOUCH

DECEMBER 2009



NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

DR. HANNO LOEWY

Did you see my Alps? –
Yes, they came to see!

The most successful exhibition in the Museum's history is now traveling. The exhibition, "Did you see my Alps? A Jewish love story", attracted thousands of enthusiastic visitors to Hohenems. The show generated wide media interest. Reports were published even in the US, such as the article in Forward that you can read in this newsletter.

Due to the success of the exhibition, more visitors than ever came to the Jewish Museum or attended one of our events in 2009. We expect about 13.000 visitors by year-end. This is the best attendance to date, including 1991, the year of the **Museum's opening**, or even last year, after the new permanent exhibition opened in 2007, which was our best year until now.

The exhibition about the Jewish love for the Alps opened the Museum to new audiences -- passionate mountain lovers of all kinds, as well as Jewish



people from Switzerland, Austria or Germany – and visitors interested in a new perspective on Jewish culture and history.

From December 2009 to March 2010, the exhibition will be presented at the Jewish Museum in Vienna, our partner institution in the development of this exhibition. An extensive program, brought together by both our Viennese colleagues and us, will accompany the exhibition in Vienna. If you want to know more about the program, please visit the Vienna Jewish Museum website <http://www.jmw.at/en.html>.

In April 2010, the exhibition will move to Munich to the Alpine Museum of

the German Alpine Association, and be presented in collaboration with the Jewish Museum of Munich. There too, the exhibition will be accompanied by a large number of events. It will run until February 2011. Learn more about this on the web at http://www.alpenverein.de/template_loader.php?tplpage_id=478.

If you have a chance to visit either the Austrian or the Bavarian capital during the upcoming year, **don't miss the opportunity** to see the exhibition. After the Munich presentation, the exhibition will travel to other destinations, such as Merano, Frankfurt, Berlin and - if

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NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

(Continued from page 1)
things can be worked out
- New York.

On the occasion of this exhibition a comprehensive catalogue was edited by the Museum. *Hast Du meine Alpen gesehen? Eine jüdische Beziehungsgeschichte.* Ed. by Hanno Loewy and Gerhard Milchram, 450 pages, numerous color **illustrations, € 29,80.** Bucher Publisher, Hohenems 2009. The book is available only in German and can be ordered through the Museum.

Help wanted! New archival facilities – The memory of the Hohenems Diaspora in good hands

In 2010 the Jewish Museum's new archival facilities will be opened in the business park in the former ski factory of Kästle. What was once a factory for an international brand of fine winter sports equipment is being turned into a business center – and there we found a home for our growing archives and collections.

Since 1991, when the Museum opened its

doors to the public, and particularly since 1998, when more than 160 descendants from all over the world met in Hohenems, the collections of the Jewish Museum Hohenems have grown substantially. Today we take care of thousands of documents, photographs, and artifacts, representing not only the Jewish heritage of Hohenems, but the story of the Hohenems families, who trace their roots back to Hohenems, having spread all over the world since the early 19th century.

We know that this is a job for us that comes with a great responsibility; to preserve the memory of a particular cosmopolitan group of people: the Hohenems Diaspora. Archival and collection facilities installed in **the 1990's in the old Kitzinger house** are much too small at present and are not equipped, in a professional sense, for long term preservation of precious archival material.

We have consulted with museological experts and are planning proper depository facilities that will host our collections for the future. Together with our new colleague Christian Herbst, a historian from Innsbruck who studied with Thomas Albrich and who was involved in the workgroup on Hohenems family history at the University of Innsbruck, Eva-Maria Hesche is preparing the move of the collections into the new depository next year.

In connection with the new installation of the collections, the database of the Museum is being revised and completed. The photograph collection will be cataloged and put into the database by Christine Jost, a student of history, who is helping us with this project. The genealogical database is completed as well and will soon be posted on the Internet by Niko Hofinger.

All these major moves of the Museum will be substantially sponsored by special funds from the Federal government in Vienna. But the Museum needs your support as well. We want to preserve the Hohenems family archives as **YOUR** resource for a meaningful connection between the past and the future. Heritage counts, and we count on you. Please help us make the move a successful enterprise.

Turning the old synagogue into a place of Jewish thought – Summer University for Jewish Studies in Hohenems held for the first time

For the first time in Hohenems, we were able to host the European Summer University for Jewish Studies, organized, together with the Jewish Studies departments of the Universities of Munich, Salzburg and Basel. More than 30 students, 15 lecturers and many guests attended the one-

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NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

(Continued from page 2)
week program that began on Sunday, July 12 and ended on Friday, July 17.

The central topic of the first program, involving professors and scholars from Jewish studies, theology, contemporary history, and German, American and Yiddish literature, was the subject of our exhibition: the Jewish love for mountains and the Alps, between tradition and modernity, reaching from the Sinai to the Jewish Alps in the Catskills, New York. For the students, from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, the week meant intensive discourse with scholars, going far beyond the possibilities offered by the normal routines of universities. It also meant a close encounter with Hohenems, its museum, its heritage and the atmosphere of the Jewish quarter.

Lectures and seminars, Yiddish courses and film screenings were held in the Salomon Sulzer auditorium in the former synagogue and in the classrooms of the Music School in the same building. In so doing, we turned the old synagogue into a Jewish university for one week.

Next year's program, scheduled for July 11-16, will focus on a hot issue of contemporary Judaism as much as Jewish history: the questions of conversion, mixed marriage and Jewish secularism.

We expect a lively forum with aspects of Jewish history and presence that are not always examined with proper attention and academic thoroughness.

Next year's highlight: – The Mikvah over time

A new extension of the Museum in the old Jewish ritual bathhouse and a special exhibition about the contrasting experiences with an ancient Jewish tradition

The Museum's 2010 spring program will focus on the tradition and presence of the Mikvah, the Jewish ritual bath. The restoration, in Hohenems, of the old Jewish schoolhouse and the Mikvah has been completed. On March 7, 2010, the Jewish Museum will open an extension in the old Mikvah, presenting to the public a most touching, but at the same time very intimate part of Jewish tradition. Tours through the Jewish quarter, including the Mikvah, will be offered to groups and other visitors.

On the occasion of this important event (the Hohenems Mikvah is the oldest preserved Mikvah in Austria) the Museum will devote its spring exhibition to both the history of Mikvah buildings throughout Europe and the contemporary experience of Mikvah in modern Judaism. The Jewish rituals of purity are par-

ticularly connected with aspects of gender, marriage and sex, and therefore often treated with a certain shyness. On the other hand, the rituals have been the subject of arguments about reform and tradition for almost 200 years, disputed by secularists and reformists.

Today we see a certain renaissance of the Mikvah, not only among orthodox, but also among Jewish women who are seeking meaningful rituals to organize many intimate aspects of their life.

So the exhibition in Hohenems, prepared in collaboration with the Jewish Museums in Frankfurt, Vienna, and Fürth, will touch the subject of Mikvah from different perspectives. Frankfurt based architecture photographer Peter Seidel will present impressive photographs of fifteen different Mikvahs within Europe, in big light frames.

In addition, an exhibition by American photographer Janice Rubin and writer Leah Lax, which has been shown in several Jewish Museums in the US, will be presented for the first time in Europe, here in Hohenems. Rubin and Lax portrayed women in the Mikvah and in their daily lives, adding quotes from interviews they conducted about the role

Mikvah plays in their respective lives. Women, who do not attend the Mikvah for various reasons, will comment from their perspective, adding a secular Jewish component to the dialogue.

All these aspects of Mikvah will be connected with each other and with an audience all over the world by a medium, used by the Jewish Museum Hohenems for the first time: Internet Radio Mikwe Hohenems. It will be on air (or more accurately, on the Internet) beginning March 7, 2010 and continuing for the next 12 months. We hope to create a meaningful medium for the Museum, one that will present other aspects of our **Museum's life in the future.**



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Hohenems

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EXCUSE ME, HAVE YOU SEEN MY ALPS? EXHIBITION

A.J. GOLDMANN (PUBLISHED IN THE JULY 03, 2009 ISSUE OF *FORWARD*)

Before embarking on a trip to Switzerland in the 1880s, the great rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch is reported to have said, “When I shall stand before God, the Eternal One will ask me with pride: Did you see my Alps?” This apocryphal quote is the jumping-off point for a new exhibit at the Jewish Museum in Hohenems that explores the Jewish love of the Alps.

Hohenems sits at the foot of the mountains in Vorarlberg, Austria. Nearby Lake Constance attracts summertime visitors to the internationally renowned Bregenz Festival.

Hohenems is a toy-sized town surrounded by towering cliffs and distant peaks. Whenever you look up, nature reminds you both of its grandeur and savagery. You can walk the town center in an hour, see the old town square and renaissance palace or the winding streets of the old Judengasse.

It is here, in a stately 19th-century villa once owned by Jewish textile magnates, that a Jewish museum opened in 1991. The permanent exhibit details the small yet prosperous Jewish community that thrived here for 300 years. Nowadays, the only Jewish resident is Hanno Loewy, the museum’s director. But his institution — the only Jewish museum in the region — attracts Jews from Innsbruck, Zurich and Geneva.

The morning of my visit, the museum opened early to give tours to energetic yet curious elementary school

children, with whom I nearly collide on my way to Loewy’s office.

The idea for the exhibit came to Loewy in the Swiss Alps. While vacationing, he encountered Orthodox Jews. “It was fascinating to see how devoted they were to this landscape and to this experience,” he said, in reference to the large Orthodox leisure culture in the Swiss Grisons. In fact, kosher resorts in places like Davos attract religious Jews from all over the world.

Getting from this kernel of an idea to an exhibition took nearly four years. The first step was to talk to people. “The reaction was very much the same with a lot of people — both Jews and non-Jews. The first was always, “Jews and the Alps? What do you mean? Jews and pirates? Is that a subject?” he recalled. “Jews are people of the coffee-house, and they definitely are no mountaineers. Jews are *luftmenschen*, that’s the basic idea!”

After this initial resistance, people opened up and passionately shared their stories. “In a way, what we learned is that to be a real *luftmensch* means to be a very physical person, because the real *luft* is on the top of a mountain. That’s the place where heaven and earth meet. You need a lot of physical power to really meet the spirit,” he explained.

Loewy’s first idea to organize the exhibit topographically proved impractical both for design and for con-

tent. “Our idea was to create mountains and to walk through a kind of landscape,” Loewy said. The exhibit is now arranged thematically and fits into various pine structures. For instance, the portion that deals with leisure culture in the early 20th century is modeled after a hotel balcony. You duck through a tunnel to learn about stories of flight and escape. On the outer walls of a cabin that visitors cannot enter, you find the history of Aryanization. Finally, contemporary Jewish tourism is displayed inside a sukkah, whose rooflessness represents the connection between earth and heaven.

After Loewy and his colleagues had amassed mountains (no pun intended) of information, they whittled down their selection by seeing what “catchy objects” they could get their hands on. Luckily, they were able to track down a great many, including the Opel bicycle that Theodore Herzl rode around the Aussee region, where his family vacationed in the 1890s and 1900s. Another easily accessible vacation spot for Viennese society was Semmering, a pass where intellectuals and artists like Arthur Schnitzler and Gustav Mahler would go to experience nature in a comfortable bourgeois environment.

On display are the walking stick and flask belonging to Sigmund Freud, who liked to spend his summers on the Semmering in the company of Schnitzler, Mahler,

and Arnold Schoenberg. Siegfried Kracauer and Theodor Adorno preferred hiking in the Dolomites.

Psychiatrist Viktor Frankl, an avid climber, used to cite the Alps as a reason he found to keep living during the Holocaust: “Mountain climbing, the memory of how the rock feels, this was one of the reasons to survive the concentration camp horrors.” His mountain hat and rope are on display.

Beyond showcasing objects such as these, the exhibit details Jewish contributions to tourism, winter sports, medicine, climbing and ethnography — often in the pursuit of advancing German culture. Take, for instance, Paul Preuss, the spiritual father of free climbing, who completed 1,200 ascensions (including 300 solo and 150 first ascents) before plunging to his death at the age of 27. Or perhaps Eugenie Goldstern, an ethnographer whose investigations into alpine folklore and everyday objects was invaluable to the Austrian Museum of Folk Life and Folk Art.

Other Jews, such as Julius and Moritz Wallach, promoted *Tracht*, or German regional folk dress — Lederhosen for men and Dirndls for women. Their specialty store in Munich popularized the Bavarian costumes until the business was Aryanized (although that word seems especially absurd in this context) in 1939. Jewish physician Raphael Hausmann helped turn the Ital-

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EXCUSE ME, HAVE YOU SEEN MY ALPS?

(Continued from page 4)

ian town of Merano into an internationally famous resort and spa destination by promoting the “the Merano Grape Cure.”

But the dark side of this history also looms forbiddingly. The Nazis considered the Alps a fortress. This led violinist and mountaineer Joseph Braunstein to lament in 1936 that the Alps had gone from being “Europe’s playground” to a “military training field.”

The Nazi fascination with the Alps had been nurtured by a string of highly successful films from the 1920s and '30s, known as the *Bergfilme* (Mountain Films) that depicted in ways both thrilling and hokey man’s struggle against the relentless forces of nature. This genre gave Leni Riefenstahl her first experience as a director, collaborating with the communist Hungarian-Jewish writer and film theorist Béla Bálazs on the film “*Das Blaue Licht*.” In fact, many left-wing Jewish artists, including composer Paul Dessau and photographer Helmar Lerski (who also designed special effects for Fritz Lang’s “*Metropolis*”), were as captivated by these epic mountain adventure fairy tales as the films Nazi admirers. (“*Das Blaue Licht*” was one of Hitler’s favorite films).

The Alps ceased to be a place of leisure and inspiration and instead became a battleground for hateful ideology. Starting in the 1920s, Jews were banned from joining the Alpine As-

sociation. A caricature from 1922 shows a fat Jew with a hooked nose desecrating German culture by wearing *Tracht*. Antisemitic comments are scribbled in the margins of a 1921 register from the St. Moritz Palace Hotel. In 1938, Jewish-owned spas and hotels were Aryanized,

play on the Catskill Mountains — or “Jewish Alps” — supplemented by paraphernalia from the Concord Hotel and Grossinger’s. It’s a suitably quirky note to land on, especially when viewed alongside the Orthodox vacationing that was Loewy’s starting point for the exhibit:

world, with many important places. The top of an Alpine mountain can be an experience of Zion,” he said.

As I was about to go, Loewy told me about an Orthodox Web site he came across where a student posted a *shayla* (query) about his



and the property of Jewish guests confiscated.

As early as 1939, the Nazis even set up concentration camps in the Alps, many of them connected to Mauthausen. One such camp was at Ebensee in Aussee, where Herzl’s family used to spend their summers. There are stories of daring escapes — many unsuccessful — across the mountains into Switzerland. More escapes took place after the war, when Ebensee was converted into a displaced persons camp and 3,000 inmates crossed the 7,900-foot-high Krimmler Trauen Pass en route to Palestine.

After this weighty history, the exhibit takes a detour across the Atlantic, with a short dis-

saying in effect, you can take the Jews out of the Alps, but you can’t take the Alps out of the Jews!

But what exactly, after all this, is the Jewish relationship to the Alps? It is a question that the exhibit resists answering explicitly. Instead, Loewy hopes it provokes discussion about the Alps as one of mankind’s natural heritages, and not belonging to a single nation or people. He adds that the exhibit has attracted members of mountain clubs and *Tracht* aficionados — in other words, people who otherwise would not enter a Jewish museum.

In the end, Loewy returns to his Orthodox Jews vacationing in the Swiss Alps. “As Jews, we live in a polycentric

rebbe’s teachings: “When *mashiach* comes, will God move the Alps to *Eretz Yisrael*?”

Did You See My Alps? is at the Jewish Museum Hohenems from April 28 through October 4.

A.J. Goldmann is a writer based in Berlin. His articles on art and culture have appeared in various publications, including *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today* and *The Christian Science Monitor*.

This article originally appeared in *Forward* and is reprinted with permission.

THE VORARLBERG ELECTIONS OF 2009

DR. KURT GREUSSING AND DR. EVA HAEFELE

Elections to Vorarlberg's regional parliament in September 2009 brought a landslide success for the FPÖ (The Freedom Party) and their xenophobic campaign – or so it seems. A closer look reveals some interesting details.

First, it is important to mention that the FPÖ (The Freedom Party) has had a relatively strong standing in provincial elections in Vorarlberg from the fifties onwards, ranging between 10 and slightly over 20%, with a high of 27.4% in 1999 (Jörg Haider's heyday). After a split of the party at the national level in 2002, the Vorarlberg branch fell back to 12.9% in the 2004 provincial elections. Back then, many of their voters stayed home and did not vote for any of the other parties. After some hesitation, the Vorarlberg branch, with Dieter Egger as their party leader, decided to stick with the original FPÖ (headed by H.C. Strache) and not to join the new party (BZÖ) run by Jörg Haider. Particularly after Haider's lethal accident a year ago, the new party chairman of the rival FPÖ **became Haider's true successor** – same rhetoric, same xenophobia, same style etc. This led to a renewed growth of this party in various elections on provincial, national and even EU-levels.

For this year's provincial election campaign, the FPÖ decided to engage the same marketing agency that had done a

highly successful job for the Swiss xenophobic right under Christoph Blocher. This was one of the reasons that from the beginning, and still before the controversy with Hanno Loewy, they started their campaign around issues such as "Heimat Vorarlberg", foreigners, Islam etc. When Hanno wrote an open letter to Dieter Egger (who is from an old and prominent Hohenems family) challenging his campaign issue to support only "heimische Familien" (families here at home) by public grants, Egger first rejected this by saying that foreigners should not intervene in Vorarlberg politics. This rejection was equally addressed to David Pountney, director of the Bregenz Festival, who at a press conference publicly had expressed his disgust in view of xenophobic campaign posters of the FPÖ.

During the FPÖ's start-up convention on August 21, Dieter Egger then called Hanno "Exil-Jude aus Amerika in seinem hochsubventionierten Museum." (*An exiled Jew from America in his subsidized museum.*) This was immediately picked up by the media and evoked responses from all political strata in Austria as well as in other European countries. Landeshauptmann Sausgruber now took the bold decision, not undisputed in his own party, immediately to cancel the traditional coalition with the FPÖ (and

their predecessor) that had existed since 1949, with the explicit argument that he would not tolerate a party leader as an ally "whose remarks could be understood as anti-Semitic". Though he offered him the chance of an apology, Egger did not budge.

The ensuing public debate during the whole election campaign was completely dominated by this issue and overshadowed everything else. So the FPÖ received an extremely high media exposure, which is exactly what the Swiss agency prided itself about. The public response in Vorarlberg was mixed in various perspectives. It is a notable feature of this debate within the campaign that the anti-Egger camp deemed it necessary to explain why this remark was essentially anti-Semitic. This was because they were sure that younger people and also many middle-aged people did not understand the full meaning that was encoded in this remark, particularly the reference to "Exil" and "America". Even "Jew" as a pejorative has lost part of its negative connotation, being replaced among younger people by other "cuss words". For the older anti-Semites, however, code words such "Exil" or "America" most probably were perfectly clear, denoting people who had deserted and not fought at the front during WWII and the "East Coast" that allegedly had stirred up the

controversy around Kurt Waldheim when he ran for President of Austria in 1986.

In this sense the FPÖ presented itself to those who did not understand or grasp the anti-Semitic message as a victim for the seemingly simple fact that they had called a Jew a "Jew," whereas for the anti-Semites they were heroes by speaking out what no one had dared to say for many years. In any case, people like Hanno or David Pountney were made a tangible symbol for the "foreigners (Fremde)."

The outcome of the election on Sept 20 was a surprise to a certain extent, particularly for the polling **agencies: Sausgruber's** party won an absolute majority contrary to pollsters, some of whom had him down as low as 44%, and the FPÖ doubled its votes, though not quite to the level of 1999. Their voters came (i) for a small part from the ÖVP, while a much larger part came from (ii) the ranks of the Social Democrats, who lost more than a third of their votes, falling back to a meagre 10%, and to an even larger part from (iii) former non-voters, but probably FPÖ voters in 1999.

What is really troubling is that, according to exit polls, over 40% of young men under 30 years voted for the FPÖ, giving them

(Continued on page 7)

THE VORALBERG ELECTIONS OF 2009

(Continued from page 6) a majority in this age bracket, but “only” 23% of all female voters. It is to be noted, that in general twice as many men (31%) voted for the FPÖ as women (16%).

Their motives are a mixture of anti-Islamic xenophobia, a general stance against foreigners and immigration, fear of unemployment and an amor-

phous bad feeling about politicians. Anti-Semitism might have played a role but not so much among these young men. It is also clear that young men appreciated the FPÖ's flashy and modern style using widespread youth cultural elements such as rap music or disco dancing to promote their message. In comparison, other parties looked just hopelessly old.

So the question is basically not different from what had happened in 1999: Will other parties move more towards xenophobia (which might also lower the threshold of tolerance for anti-Semitism although this is not the focus of the rightist parties, but rather Islam and the Turkish immigrant population) or will a politically steadfast stand such as Sausgruber's set a clear line against anti-Semitism?

We don't know yet. Communal elections, which are to be held in March 2010, will tell us more.

This, of course, is not an analysis cut in stone but rather a reflection of our more personal assessment of the political situation. ❖

THE JEWISH CEMETERY IN HOHENEMS, PART II THE LOST GRAVES

GERHARD SALINGER

A very interesting article by Bernhard Purim about the Jewish Cemetery in Hohenems in the 17th and 18th centuries is a fitting supplement to the June edition of *In Touch*. Purim found evidence of about 150 additional burials in this cemetery in other sources, especially in public records, called “Raitbuecher.”

The information that he found is, as he says, only partial data. Nevertheless, the persons mentioned are not listed on Rabbi Taenzer's cemetery chart and the facts in the previous article in *In Touch* are not changed.

The graves mentioned with the exception of those identified in the June article were swallowed by the wet and steep hillside and have disappeared. Of those additional 150 burials,

about 43 were those of adults, and 97 of children. We find here the names of the early Jewish families in Hohenems who already lived there in the 17th and 18th centuries: Meyer, Moos, Levi, Wolf, Gumpert, Landauer, Wassermann, Ulmer, Uffanheimer, and others.

When the Hohenems Jewish cemetery was established in 1617, under the rule of Count Caspar of Hohenems, it was specified that a burial fee of 2 Guilden for an adult and of 1 Guilden for a child was payable to the Count's treasury. The collector was the Count's Rentmeister.

There were at least two instances where the fathers of a Jewish child had the body secretly buried at the cemetery.

When this came out at a later time, three Guilden had to be paid, as a punishment. The burial fees were abolished after about 150 years, when Hohenems came under Austrian rule. Under Maria Theresa, in March 1769, a collective burial fee of 5 Guilden was imposed.

Sources:
Aron Taenzer: Die Geschichte der Juden in Hohenems und Vorarlberg, Meran 1905, Nachdruck Bregenz 1982.

Bernhard Purim, Der Hohenemser Juden Friedhof im 17 und 18 Jahrhundert, in Montfort Heft 3/4, 1989, s. 238f



Do you have an ancestor buried in the cemetery?

A list of headstones can be found at <http://www.jm-hohenems.at/index.php?id=7030&lang=1>



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THE JEWISH CEMETERY IN HOHENEMS, PART II

(Continued from page 7)

Adult Persons buried at the Hohenems Jewish Cemetery between 1641 and 1799 Based on Bernard Purin's article

Year	Person
1641	Jewish woman, name unknown
1653/54	Isaac Beurlin
1660	Foreign Jewish man, who died in Feldkirch
1663	Mayerl; Jud
1666	Wife of Meyerl; Moos
1669	Mother of Gumperle Jud
1669	Adult son of Lazurus Ulmer
	Years of expulsion from Hohenems 1676 -1688, no burials until
1709	child
1719/20	Wife of Rabbi Joseph Ainstein
1719/20	Wife of Gumperle Jud
1734	Father of Jonathan Uffenheimer
1735/36	adult daughter of Wolf Levi
1735/36	Wife of Simon Nathan
1737/38	Father of Nathan Goldschmidt
1740/41	Wolf Levi
1740/41	Simon Nathan
1740/41	Mother of Mayerle Moos
1741/42	Wife of Josle Levi Isaaks son
1742/42	Lazarus Levi
1744/45	Jewish woman, name unknown
1745/46	Wife of Abraham Landauer
1746/47	Wife of Jacob Levi from Sulz
1746/47	Wife of Abraham Levi Gumpers son from Sulz
1747/48	Mother of Saloman Moos
1748/49	Wife of Kauschel Moos
1748/49	Domestic worker (Knecht) of Abraham Landauer
1748/49	Foreign Jew, name not given
1748/49	Mother of David Moos
1749/50	Brother of Mayer Moos Kauscheles son
1749/50	Joseph Moos
1750/51	Emanuel Wolf from Sulz
1750/51	Samuel Levi from Sulz
1751	Josle Levi
1752/53	Isaac Levi

(Continued on page 9)

THE JEWISH CEMETERY IN HOHENEMS, PART II

(Continued from page 8)

Adult Persons buried at the Hohenems Jewish Cemetery between 1641 and 1799 Based on Bernard Purin's article

Year	Person
1754/55	Wife of Maierle Moos Jackeles
1755/56	Isaak Levi
1755/56	Jonas Wassermann
1756/57	Wife of Joseph Levi, Urban's son
1759/60	unknown man *
1762/63	an old person *
1765/66	an old person *
1765/66	an old person *
1765/66	an old person *
1765/66	an old person *

*Since Hohenems had a Chevra Kadisha by at least 1760, it is odd that these names are not known. None of these graves can be traced today.

The following are family names for the 97 children who died between 1641 and 1799:

Mayer, Mayerlis, Mayerle, Mayerli; 1644, 1719/20, 1720/21, 1721/22, 1724, 1727/28, 1757/58, 1765/66, 1773/74

Moos; 1653/54, 1656, 1657, 1658, 1673/74, 1724, 1727/28, 1738 1745/46, 1750/51, 1753/54, 1754/55,

Spiri; 1658

Wassermann; 1752/53, 1755/56

Levi; 1659, 1670, 1671, 1709, 1741/42, 1745/46, 1748/49, 1750/51, 1751/52, 1752/53, 1753/54, 1754/55, 1755/56

Landauer; 1745/46, 1752/53, 1753/54, 1756/57

Ulmer; 1669, 1738

Salomon; 1671

Gumport, Gumperle, Gumper; 1672, 1754/55, 1756/57

Israel; 1672

Wolf; 1719/20, 1751/52, 1752/53, 1753/54, 1754/55

Jacob; 1719/20, 1720/21

Isaak; 1728/29

Uffenheimer; 1728/29, 1729/30, 1746/47, 1749/50

May from Sulz 1746/47

Levi from Sulz 1746/47, 1749/50, 1750/51

17 Children without names.

None of these graves can be traced today.

Some names from various families appear twice in a given year, but are only mentioned once in that year. ❖

FROM HOHENEMS TO LEMBERG, RABBI ABRAHAM KOHN

GERHARD SALINGER

When Rabbi Angelus (Amshel) Kafka left Hohenems, where he served as rabbi between 1830 and 1833, he recommended as his successor Rabbi Abraham Kohn, who like himself originated from Bohemia.

Rabbi Kohn was born in 1807 in a small town named Zaluzan in the district of Jungbunzlau, today Mlada Boleslav.¹ He studied in Pisek and Prague, was interested in philosophy, and his rabbinic studies were under supervision of Rabbi Samuel Landau. Eventually, he became a high school teacher in religious subjects and received his rabbinic ordination from Rabbi Samuel Landau and Rabbi Samuel Kauder. For the position in Hohenems, he was recommended by Professor Sulzer, then living in Vienna.

Being a young and ambitious young man, Rabbi Kohn was determined to leave an imprint in the life of the Hohenems Jewish community.

First came the reorganization of the religious school in 1833, which he set up in accordance with the practices in Vienna. The new Hebrew teacher, Friedrich Mannheimer, from Reichenau in Bohemia, was no longer paid by the parents, but by the community.

In the same year, he made some changes in the religious practices in the synagogue to create a better decorum, but as Rabbi Taenzer later mentioned, Rabbi Kohn was strictly conservative in his views and conduct.

A year later, the physician, Dr. Wilhelm Steinach, moved to Hohenems and took an active part in the life of the community. He was instrumental in founding the Israelitischer Handwerkerverein, which was designed to help Jewish young men learn a trade. Since the custom was that the young men became itinerant peddlers like their fathers, they were persuaded to learn a trade according to their abilities and capabilities, such as shoemakers, tailors and blacksmiths. Young girls were also encouraged to learn sewing or similar skilled vocations. Both Rabbi Kohn and Dr. Steinach worked harmoniously together in all communal affairs.

As mentioned in another article (see *In Touch*, vol. 10, Issue 1. p. 8) Rabbi Kohn recommended in 1837 the purchase of a hearse because it was at that time the custom to carry the deceased to the cemetery located at the edge of town. Probably for financial reasons a hearse was not purchased until 1886.

When in early 1844 Rabbi Kohn received an offer to become a rabbi in Lemberg, he saw this as a challenge in his professional career. He had basically accomplished what he had intended to do in Hohenems where he enjoyed a life of relative tranquility.

Lemberg's political position has changed through the years. It was Lemberg when part of Germany, Lwow when part of Russia, Lvov when part of Poland and Lviv when part of the Ukraine. It has a long Jewish history. It is mentioned in the 10th century when Kazaria was flourishing, was later invaded by the Tartars, and was subjected at various times to floods, earthquakes, epidemics and other calamities. In 1349, the city was annexed to the Polish kingdom. There was subsequently an influx of German settlers, with the German culture ultimately prevailing. Karaites lived here for a long time but eventually by 1457 disappeared. In 1550, three hundred fifty two Jewish families lived in the walled city and five hundred fifty nine in the suburban area. In 1571, a Gothic style synagogue, called the Di Gildene Roiz (the Golden Rose) was built and existed until the early 1940s. A second major synagogue was built in 1632 outside the city wall.

After various wars and persecutions, the Jewish population was placed under the protection of King John Subieski who died in 1696.

By 1764, the Jewish population in Lemberg had increased to 6142. In 1772, the year of the first partition of Poland, Lemberg and all of Galicia came under Austrian rule. The Lemberg Jewish community continued to grow. A Jewish hospital was built in 1801. Jews were accepted at the University of Lemberg in 1806. The Jewish population had grown by 1826 to over 19,200 and a Jewish orphanage was established in 1843. Lemberg became one of the cities with the largest Jewish population in the Austro-Hungarian empire.

The increasing Jewish population after 1800 became more and more split in customs, lifestyle and religious practices. The better situated Jews, who were merchants and professionals became more and more adherents to the Haskala (Enlightenment) movement. They went their separate ways from the Chassidic Jews, who mostly came from smaller Galician towns and had attached themselves to various Chassidic dynasties. Among one of the larger

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was the Belzer group. Riots had already occurred in the 1830s about the questions and appearance of the Chassidic dress codes.

Rabbi Kohn was called to Lemberg by the followers of the Haskala movement, who intended to build their own temple. When he arrived in 1844, the temple was still under construction; the building was not finished until 1846.

Rabbi Kohn developed a good relationship with the authorities, but became more and more despised by the Orthodox and Chassidic elements, who formed the vast majority of the Lemberg Jewish community. Those groups had no intention of changing their garb, nor abandoning the Yiddish language. We have here all the elements of a cultural clash (Kulturkampf).

Rabbi Kohn was instrumental in developing a progressive Jewish school system in Lemberg, although, of course, his detractors adhered to the old Cheder schools customary in the small towns of Eastern Europe, especially Poland. Despite his advocacy of assimilation, Rabbi Kohn realized that bridges would have to be built to his adversaries. In "Briefe aus

Galiizien" (Letters from Galicia) published in Isidor Busch's "Kalender und Jahrbuch für Israeliten," (1847-1848), Rabbi Kohn expressed his thoughts, especially about Chassidim.²

Chassidim- as he is quoted- is a return to childhood, but also to childishness, which in many respects is more worthy and offers certainly more hope than the useless and tired old wisdom (Altklugheit). Chassidim is a popular reform and has opened the way to a rational reform, has brought more freedom in religious life and brought changes in the mode of prayer. Its religious service- as little as it may appeal to an **observer's taste**- is full of life, exerts magic upon the masses, who like this **kind of excitement...**

The reforms in the religious service that Rabbi Kohn brought to Lemberg were most probably not significant enough to arouse animosity against him. It was rather his striving to assimilate people who fought against such assimilation and Haskala.

The word "reform" can apply to almost anything. Reform, as applied to the first half of the 19th century in Europe, is certainly not synonymous with the American Reform movement that

started some time later. When a rabbi in Warsaw gave his sermon in the vernacular and not in Yiddish, it was enough for many to call such an otherwise Orthodox synagogue a reform temple. While in Vienna- aside from changes in the decorum- the religious services remained traditional. That was not so in Hungary where under the leadership, especially of Rabbi Leopold (Lipot) Loew in Szeged, Neolog services were introduced, which correspond more or less to the conservative services in the United States, but without mixed seating, which was not customary in Europe.

After the elevation to district rabbi, the hostility and anger against Rabbi Kohn increased and there were threats against his life by certain people, who may not have been Chassidim but were otherwise opposed to him.

The year 1848 was a year of upheavals and revolutions in Europe, reaching from Berlin to Vienna, Hungary and elsewhere in the monarchy. Battles were fought between the adherents of the new and old order. In most cases the established authorities prevailed.

Rabbi Kohn, now 4 years in Lemberg, was satisfied

with what he had achieved so far, despite the atmosphere in which he lived. His enemies took him to court and accused him of various delicts, but the court rejected all charges against him. This infuriated those people even more. They were fanatics.

It is reported that his last sermon dealt with the **commandment "Thou shalt not kill."** What happened after that is reported by his wife Magdalene to her brother in law, Bernhard Kohn.

Mrs. Kohn remarked that there was a cholera epidemic in 1848, which **apparently the rabbi's** enemies wanted to exploit to avoid any suspicion of their intended evil. Because of the epidemic, Mrs. Kohn left no food standing on the table. Before she went out shopping, she prepared the soup for lunch. During lunch time on September 6, the rabbi noticed an odd and sharp taste in the soup and soon the entire family became ill. Neighbors told her then that on that morning a strange man had asked everyone **where the rabbi's kitchen** was located and at an unguarded moment he entered the kitchen. A doctor was immediately called and medications were taken to empty the stomach of everyone,

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(Continued from page 11) because poisoning was suspected, presumably arsenic. Mrs. Kohn and one of her children recovered, but not the rabbi who had ingested too much of the poisoned soup. Eventually, he realized his conditions and **his last words were “No Jew could have done this.” He passed away** early the following morning, September 7, together with his youngest child.

An inquiry took place by the authorities and two or three suspects were arrested. In subsequent court proceedings, no

proof of their guilt could be ascertained and the suspects were acquitted.

Fifty years later, on the anniversary of **Rabbi Kohn’s death**, Rabbi Taenzer eulogized the martyrdom of the deceased who only reached the age of 41. It was an eventful day in the synagogue of Hohenems. In his **description of Rabbi Kohn’s** life, Rabbi Taenzer closed with the words **“Abraham Kohn’s memory remains a blessing for ever and ever.”**

Rabbi Kohn was an idealist but what he tried to

achieve in the 1840s, he could not even have accomplished today. Chasidim still retain their old customs of centuries ago.



[i] Zaluzan, 9 kms southwest of Bresnitz (today Breznice) had a Jewish cemetery with tombstones from the 18th century and an empire style synagogue from the first part of the 19th century (**Jiri Fiedler, “Jewish Sites of Bohemia and Moravia,”** Prague 1991).

[ii] Wolfgang Häusler, *Das Galizische Judentum in Der Habsburg Monarchie*,

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