

## A Tale of Two Lost Archives

by

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I have spent much of my professional life rummaging through collections of documents, mostly in well-kept archives, but sometimes also in hard-to-reach places in basements and attics. Fortunately, I have made some great discoveries in these places, but I will now tell you a story that doesn't have a happy ending.

It begins around fifteen years ago, when I was researching the life of R. Jehiel Jacob Weinberg. With the strength that only someone in his twenties has, I traveled around the world, knocking on doors, and tracking down every letter I could find written by Weinberg.<sup>[1]</sup> During this time I was in touch with the widow of R Hillel Medalie. While not a student of Weinberg, Medalie became close to him after the war. During this time he was serving as rabbi of Leeds, a tenure which incidentally led to a terrible dispute with R. Solomon Fisch, another rabbi in Leeds.<sup>[2]</sup> The dispute was so bad that Fisch refused to serve with Medalie on the Leeds beit din, and R. Joseph Apfel was appointed a dayan in Fisch's place. Apfel was a student of Weinberg, and more responsa in *Seridei Esh* are addressed to him than anyone else. At this time, he was serving as a hazan in Leeds, but after being appointed to the beit din his impressive learning was able to come to the fore.

In 1996 Apfel published *Yad Yosef*, which contains his collected writings. It also contains letters from numerous great Torah scholars including R. Jehiel Jacob Weinberg, R. Dov Berish Wiedefeld, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, R. Isaac Jacob Weiss and R. Nachum Eliezer Rabinovitch. Among the most interesting teshuvot is one that is written by R. Pinhas Toledano, the Sephardic Av Beit Din of London. Apfel turned to him with the following problem: In Leeds there is a Jewish old age home and a non-Jew cooks for the residents on Shabbat. Is this permissible? Apfel had argued that the elderly residents are regarded as *holeh she-ein bo sakanah*, and it is permissible for a non-Jew to cook for a *holeh she-ein bo sakanah*. Others disagreed and Apfel turned to Toledano for his opinion.<sup>[3]</sup>

Toledano points out that while Apfel is correct that a non-Jew may cook for a *holeh she-ein bo sakanah*, (see *Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 328:19), it is not at all clear that all old people have this status. Nowhere in the poskim do we find such a notion. So apparently, only for those elderly who suffer from diabetes, asthma or the like can the non-Jew cook. Yet Toledano concludes that the cooking is nevertheless permissible. Since the non-Jew is hired for the entire year, i.e., a contract worker, and can miss some days (vacation, etc.), there is room for leniency. While normally *melakhah* cannot be done in the house of a Jew because people will assume that the worker was hired to do the labor on Shabbat, in this case everyone knows that the cook is not hired on a daily basis. Toledano supports this contention by pointing out that in London everyone has milk delivered to the house on Shabbat and no one has raised any problems with this. I am too young to remember milk delivery, but I assume that this was the case in the U.S. as well, and the parallel is the daily delivery of newspapers. Toledano therefore concludes that it is permissible to have the non-Jew cook in the old age home. Yet he adds that even though halakhically this is OK, since it is very strange to permit such a thing in a Jewish old age home, the best thing to do is to cook the food on Friday and put it on a hot plate on Shabbat.

Returning to Medalie, from Leeds he went on to become the rabbi of the Antwerp community. After his death in 1977, a very nice memorial volume appeared honoring both him and his father, R. Shemariah Judah Leib Medalie.<sup>[4]</sup>

Here is a picture of R. Hillel.



Here is R. Shemariah



Although he came from a Chabad background, I don't know how strong Medalie's connection was to the movement throughout his life. His father, R. Shemariah, was close to the Rebbe, R. Yosef Yitzhak, and was a very important figure in Chabad spiritual activities in the Soviet Union.<sup>[5]</sup> He was also a major figure in the political activities that took place in Russian Orthodoxy after the fall of the Czar.<sup>[6]</sup> In 1933 he was appointed rabbi of the Moscow synagogue, which meant that he was regarded as the rav of the entire city, and also made him the most important rabbi in the Soviet Union.

Before he left the country, R. Hillel Medalie studied in a secret yeshiva that was headed by R. Mordechai Feinstein, R. Moshe's brother, who was the rav of Shklov. R. Moshe Zvi Neriya was also a student here. The communists would later exile R. Mordechai to Siberia, where he died.<sup>[7]</sup> In the 1950's Medalie wrote to Weinberg about his attempts to secure his father's release from the Soviet Union. It had been years since he had communicated with his father

and he did not know that in 1938 R. Shemariah was arrested, accused of counter-revolutionary activities, and shot.<sup>[8]</sup>

R. Shemariah was one of many great *talmidei hakhamim* who were stuck behind the Iron Curtain, and even if not killed by the regime, lived out their days in what can only be described as a living hell.<sup>[9]</sup> While it was bad for everyone in the Soviet Union, for those whose lives revolved around Torah it was even worse. In accordance with the Lubavitcher Rebbe's wishes, the elder Medalie did not attempt to leave the Soviet Union. While other rebbes and great rabbis were fleeing the country, the Rebbe told his followers to stay, as it was their responsibility to bring Torah to the Jewish people, even in times and places of darkness. He told them that they should not only think about their own physical and spiritual well-being but that of the Jewish people as a whole.

The Rebbe only changed his position in 1930 "when Stalinist terror was unleashed against rabbis and religious functionaries. But by then the difficulties connected with leaving the USSR were formidable and large scale emigration was impossible."<sup>[10]</sup> What this meant was that virtually all of the children and grandchildren of these hasidim ended up completely assimilating, and I think that in retrospect we can say that it was a terrible misjudgment. However, it must also be stated that when communism fell, there were still Habad families that had remained religious throughout all this time. The next time someone complains about how Habad is now dominating religious life in the former Soviet Union, he should remember this.

This reluctance towards leaving the galut, even to go to Israel, is tied in with the Habad ideology that stresses the need to keep Judaism alive throughout the world. While this is generally a very good thing, as all world travelers can attest, sometimes the way it is expressed can be maddening for a religious Zionist to read. For example, in 1955, a few years after he became Rebbe, R. Menahem Mendel Schneersohn said as follows to his followers (*Sihah* for 20 Av, 5715):

תונברקה תדובע תויהל הלוכי נאכ מגו, וב דיקלא 'ה רחבי רשא מוקמה הז ירה אראל אוחב מיאצמנ רשאכ מג  
ארא הז ירה "ימש תא ריכזא רשא מוקמה לכב"ש – מויה תשרפמ קיפהל מיכירצש הארוהה יהוזו . . . תוינחורב  
לארשי

This downplaying of the Land of Israel was too much for R. Zvi Yehudah Kook, and he responded as follows (*Le-Hilkhot Tzibur*, p. 33):

הנניאש מילשוריו לארשי ארא תשודק לע קר מימשה נמ ד' תרותב רמאנ "וב דיהל-א ד' רחבי רשא מוקמה" ראותה  
התלדגה, התדיקש, הרותב קסעה לש שדוקה תדובע . . . מלועב מוקמ מוש לע ו"ח יפולחו הרבעהל תנתני  
ויכרדב תכלל מייח מיהל-א ד'ב הקבדלו, המילש הנומאב תושודקה היתוצמ מויק לש שדוק תדרחו התרדאהו  
תוצמ תא פילחת אלו מוקמה תא אלמת אל, רוקעת אל מלועל, הבושתב וימי לכ רוזחל לארשימ סדא לכ לע בויחהו  
ארא – "לארשי ארא מש, ימש ריכזא רשא מוקמ לכב". אוחבמ אלו מינפב קר המוקמש, תונברקה תדובע לש ד'  
הרותו בתכבש הרות תורוקממ היתוצמ יבויה תורדגהלו התלוגסו התשודקל תנמוסמו תלבגומו תרדגומו לארשי  
מורע דמועה". זנ פד תוכרב ארמגה נושל הזו. מינורחאו מינושאר לארשי ילודג וניתובר ירבד ל"ז תורוקמ פ"עבש  
, אטח אלב דמוע לבבב": מש י"שר לש ושדק נושלו "תוצמ אלב מורע לארשי אראב, אטח אלב דמוע לבבב, מולחב  
כ"ע". תונווע מתוא אלב מורע דמוע הזו התבשיב שי נווע אלא, תויכו הל ניא ל"וחש יפל

Returning to Medalie, he also had a very good secular education, having received an MA from the University of Manchester and a doctorate from Trinity College in Dublin. In fact, Moshe Sharett, who was Israel's first foreign minister, wanted Medalie to serve as Israel's ambassador to Great Britain. Medalie declined the request after discussing the matter with the Hazon Ish.<sup>[11]</sup> Knowing of his closeness to Weinberg, I was anxious to examine his papers to find any letters from him, as well as from other great rabbis. His widow told me that all of his papers had been deposited at Machon Ariel in Jerusalem. No one had gone through them; they had simply been thrown into boxes and taken away.

Around twelve years ago I went to Machon Ariel to try to find out something about the papers. No one could tell me anything and I almost despaired. Fortunately, with the help of a janitor I found two giant boxes in a storage room in the basement. This contained all the materials taken from Medalie's home. There was no light in the storage room or even in the basement (something was wrong with the electricity that day). The only light I had was from the windows on the top of the basement walls. I took the boxes, one at a time, and emptied them on the floor. I then spent a number of hours going through all the papers, putting aside everything that came from Weinberg. The rest of the material, including letters, speeches, and pictures, was of great interest and documented many years in the rabbinate. But this would have to wait until another day. For now, my focus was on finding the Weinberg material, and I was able to make copies of whatever I located. I used a number of the Weinberg letters in my book and also published some of them in *Kitvei ha-Rav Weinberg*, vols. 1 and 2.

I was leaving for the U.S. on the following day, so I made a note to myself to come back to Machon Ariel and carefully go through both large boxes. I knew that there was all sorts of fascinating material in these boxes and was very excited about a return trip. Shortly before I left, I looked at another large box (or maybe even two or three; I can no longer recall). This was full of Pinchas Peli's papers. Peli, who was a distinguished person in his own right, played a major role in bringing knowledge of R. Soloveitchik's thought to Israel, with the publication in 1975 of *Al ha-Teshuvah*. Here is his picture.



Peli had a nice relationship with the Rav and I had no doubt that there were letters from the him among the Peli papers, but this too have to await a return trip. I was certain that no one would beat me to this, as no one cared, or even know, about the dusty boxes in the basement storage room, which had dishes and glasses in front of them. (There was a small catering business in the basement.) I had seen it before – boxes placed in some far-removed place

where they remain for years and years, out of sight and out of mind, much like the Cairo Geniza. There is no doubt that when the Medalie and Peli papers were donated, the survivors didn't expect that they would be put in some far away place where no one could examine them. They thought that the papers would be catalogued and kept in some sort of archive. Since Machon Ariel had not done anything in this direction, I figured that on a future visit I would take out all of the important material and then speak to the people in charge, alerting them to whatever treasures I had found and asking that they be kept in some sort of archive.

Mrs. Medalie told me that when the papers were at her home, some Chabad people had already looked through them for material from the Rebbe. She asked me to keep an eye out for any letters from him. Unfortunately, I didn't see anything, and presumably the material had already been removed. There are some letters to Medalie in the Rebbe's published correspondence. However, there are also many that do not appear there, but are found in R. Shalom Dov Ber Wolpo's *Shemen Sason le-Haverekha*,<sup>[12]</sup> which has a lengthy chapter on Medalie and the Rebbe. I assume that the new letters published here are what that the Chabad people found at the Medalie home.

While I was working in the basement no one was watching me. No one even knew I was there. I could have walked off with anything. I considered the possibility that all this precious material would one day be lost, since Machon Ariel had no interest in it. (They probably accepted it in order to do the families a favor, but didn't have the resources to do anything with the boxes). I rationalized to myself that since the material wasn't being taken care of properly, something should be done. I thought that since I could watch over it and give the material a good "home," that it would be OK for me to walk off with it. But I immediately squelched the thought, since stealing is always improper. Although there is a long list of people who have pilfered books and manuscripts, I didn't want to join the list, even for the best possible reason.

In January 2007 I finally had the opportunity to return to Machon Ariel to pick up where I left off. I saw that the basement is now a nursery school. Everything that used to be there was removed a number of years ago. There was no one there to talk to about this at the time, but in June 2008 I returned and had the janitor take me around. The boxes were nowhere to be seen. None of the administrators had any idea what I was talking about. I was shown the library, which is undergoing renovations. It was a mess and there were a bunch of boxes that were set to be taken to genizah the following day. What a story it could have been if I had been able to save the Peli and Medalie boxes one day before they were to be lost? But unfortunately, the material was not there. I assume that when the new construction happened in the basement, the boxes were thrown out like so much other garbage. For an average person looking at a large box with old papers, it certainly would have looked like garbage. Yet how much precious material is now lost forever.

For all the great and important material found in archives around the world, much more has been lost. In fact, only a few years ago the son of one of Weinberg's students contacted me about getting copies of the letters of Weinberg to his father, since they can't find the originals. The father gave me copies many years ago and now they are lost. After he passed away and his house was cleaned, the letters were mistakenly thrown out. Such was probably the fate of many of the Weinberg letters that I was given copies of. It is the way of the world and there is little we can do about it, but it is frustrating nonetheless.

The visit to Machon Ariel was noteworthy in at least one respect. On the floor of the library, waiting to be sent to the genizah, was a large pile of issues of *Panim el Panim*. This was a

weekly that appeared in the 1950's and 1960's, edited by Peli, which covered the entire range of Orthodox life, and included interviews with leading figures from all camps. Unfortunately, it is not available online. One of its outstanding features were the numerous pictures of gedolim, rabbis, scholars, and public figures, many of which are found nowhere else. I grabbed one issue (20 Elul 5724), in order to have something to read in the hotel, and in it one finds the following pictures of Abraham Berliner



and Jacob Barth,



which as far as I know do not appear anywhere else.

Here is a picture of R. Aaron Walkin of Pinsk, which I don't recall ever having seen.



While on the theme of pictures of gedolim, let me note what appears in the recent volume focusing on the life of R. Bezalel Rakov, the Rav of Gateshead.<sup>[13]</sup> Rabbi Rakov thought very highly of such pictures and had them all over his house. He felt that today, when there are so many inappropriate pictures everywhere we look, it is important to have pictures of great rabbis to act as a counter. Here is a picture of Rabbi Rakov, from the beginning of the volume.



Getting back to *Panim el Panim*, one of the cover stories in the issue I took is about how R. Yechezkel Sarne visited Heichal Shlomo and the conflict this created, since by so doing R. Sarne was violating the Brisker Rav's ban against the institution. Some believe that it was the Brisker Rav's harsh stance that prevented his nephew, R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, from accepting the offer to become Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel.

In general, the views of R. Sarne, and his Chevron Yeshiva, were more moderate than much of the haredi world (although he was known to be very anti-Habad). A glance at the names of those who attended the yeshiva shows that there are outstanding figures from all across the religious spectrum.<sup>[14]</sup> It is because of this that I was a little surprised when I read in a biography of R. Shakh<sup>[15]</sup> that R. Sarne once spoke very negatively to R. Shlomo Yosef Zevin about the Lubavitcher Rebbe. In fact, according to this source when R. Sarne was ill and R. Zevin visited him, R. Sarne told R. Zevin that his hasidut is heresy, his Rebbe is a heretic, and he is a heretic. When his health improved he went to R. Zevin's house and apologized for treating him that way when the latter came to visit him. But now that he is at Zevin's house, he wants to reaffirm that his hasidut is heresy, his rebbe is a heretic, and he is a heretic! The story as it appears is obviously a yeshiva fairy tale. But I asked R. Hayyim Sarne, R. Yechezkel's son and current Rosh Yeshiva of Hevron (the Geula branch) if it is true that his

father once spoke harshly to R. Zevin about Habad. He told me that it is true but that his father later apologized to R. Zevin, i.e., a real apology.

Since I mentioned R. Sarne and his inappropriate comments, let me tell another story that relates to the fact that he would sometimes say things that perhaps he shouldn't have. Those who have read my book no doubt recall the funeral scene that I describe right at the beginning.<sup>[16]</sup> That, more than anything else, really shows the difficulty in placing Weinberg in any particular category. I actually feel that it was appropriate that he was buried in Har ha-Menuhot with all the other great rabbis, rather than the place chosen by the Mizrachi leaders (even if R. Herzog is also buried there). I say this for the following reason: R. Weinberg could not live in the haredi world. His views were too different from them. In fact, as my friend Shlomo Tikochinski has correctly pointed out, Weinberg is the only great sage respected in the haredi world whose views are so much at variance with it.

Yet while Weinberg wanted to live as a more modern type of rabbi, one who was a Zionist and academic scholar in addition to being a Torah sage, he wanted to be remembered as a gadol be-Yisrael. At the end of the day, he wanted his Torah works to be studied, and the only place for this was in the great yeshivot. So although he couldn't live in their world, for posterity he would have wanted his legacy to be with them. However, I must also add the following: When Weinberg passed away all the great yeshivot were in the haredi orbit, so it would be natural that this is where he would want to be remembered. At that time, high level Torah study could hardly be found in the Mizrachi world. However, things are very different now, with the flowering of religious Zionist yeshivot of all sorts. If Weinberg were alive today, he would be able to feel fully comfortable in the religious Zionist world, since he would see the intensive Torah study and openness to secular learning of places like Maaleh Adumim, Har Etzion, and the like. Yet these yeshivot simply didn't exist in his lifetime.

Not long after my book appeared, I was in a bookstore in New York City (does anyone remember Ideal Books?). I started talking to a certain fellow who happened to be a rav in Brooklyn and a son of one of the great Torah scholars of the previous generation. He told me that he is the only one alive who can testify as to what was said in the conversation between R. Yehezkel Sarne and the men who were in charge of the funeral, after R. Sarne and his students stopped the procession. (At the time, he was a student at the Chevron yeshiva.) Before he told me the story, he noted that one should remember that in his old age R. Sarne sometimes said things that were not appropriate. He gave one example of this: R. Sarne once went into the Brisk yeshiva and started screaming at the students that they should start learning mussar (Brisk being a place where they don't do this). Only after telling me this story was he ready to inform me what was said at the funeral. According to him, after arguing with R. Sarne about where to bury Weinberg, Zorah Warhaftig, the Minister of Religions, was exasperated and declared: "But we have already dug the grave." To this, R. Sarne replied (in Yiddish): "Put yourself in it!" The yeshiva students then took the coffin and proceeded to Har ha-Menuhot.

Returning to my conversation with R. Hayyim Sarne, which began with a discussion on Weinberg and moved into other areas, I was at his home for a good while and asked him many things. I even got into a disagreement with him on one issue. I am sure this surprised him, since roshei yeshiva are not used to young men challenging something they say. He insisted that it was better for people to be secularists than to identify with one of the non-Orthodox denominations. I responded that the opposite was the case, as the non-Orthodox groups at least add some Jewish content to people's lives. They also help slow down assimilation. (Of course, all this is valuable in and of itself, but from a purely utilitarian



standpoint it also makes the job of the kiruv organizations easier.) Yet he didn't buy it and couldn't even see my point, which I think is shared by virtually all thinking people in the Diaspora.

I used the conversation to ask him why the haredim have such a negative view of R. Kook's philosophical writings, and his answer was very enlightening. To this day I have never seen it anywhere in print. He told me that one can turn pages and pages in R. Kook's philosophical works without coming across a rabbinic text (*ma'amar hazal*). He insisted that a "kosher" work of Jewish thought must be constantly citing rabbinic texts. I had never thought of this point before, but I think it is quite significant. As all who study R. Kook know, he writes in such an original fashion that he becomes the primary text, and one can indeed turn many pages before seeing a *ma'amar hazal*.

In the new biography of the Brisker Rav (R. Velvel Soloveitchik), there is a very nice picture of R. Hayyim Sarne and his father in Switzerland, together with R. Jehiel Jacob Weinberg and R. Wolf Rosengarten of Zurich.<sup>[17]</sup> This has nothing at all to do with R. Velvel. It is included because the picture was taken in Switzerland and the biography discusses R. Velvel's few trips there for health reasons. I assume that the author had this nice picture which he wanted to include, so he found some tenuous connection, even though, as I mentioned, it has nothing to do with R. Velvel.

While R. Velvel was in Switzerland, he was taken care of by Rosengarten, who appears prominently in the biography. R. Velvel also spent a lot of time with his nephew, R. Moshe Soloveitchik of Zurich. Both Rosengarten and Soloveitchik were also close to Weinberg. It has fascinated me that in all of the hundreds of letters that I have, Weinberg never mentions the Brisker Rav's trips to Switzerland. He also had no interest in going to meet R. Velvel, even though the distance between them was no more than a few hours. I get the feeling that Weinberg felt that R. Velvel was in such a different world that it would be hard for them to even have a pleasant conversation. It might be that he was even intimidated by the Brisker Rav's extremism. What makes this more interesting is that R. Moshe Sternbuch, who had become a great follower of the Brisker Rav, was also close to Weinberg. R. Bezalel Rakov taught at the Montreux yeshiva in the 1950's, and he too had a very close relationship with Weinberg. As with so many other Torah scholars in Switzerland, Rakov too went to see the Brisker Rav.

I think we might get a sense of why Weinberg made no effort to meet R. Velvel from the following story:<sup>[18]</sup> When Rakov went to meet R. Velvel, the latter refused to see him after he heard that he taught at the yeshiva in Montreux. This yeshiva was founded in 1927 and drew students from all over Western Europe. While R. Elijah Botchko, the Rosh Yeshiva, was a member of Agudah and the yeshiva was viewed as part of this world (R. Aharon Leib Steinman even studied there during World War II), he didn't tow the party line and was certainly more positive towards Zionism than the typical Agudist. Both he and his son and successor, R. Moshe Botchko, were also not opposed to the students getting a secular education. In the 1950's there was even a plan to for the yeshiva to provide this. It is this issue in particular that is mentioned in explaining why the Brisker Rav refused to see Rakov:

הבישיה ילתוכ ייב לוח ידומיל הבישיב סינכהל וצרש ולא ייב אוה מגש רשפאד

Only after Rakov was able to convince the Brisker Rav's son that he had the proper hashkafot was he permitted to meet the Brisker Rav. He later recalled that the reason he was able to develop a good relationship with R. Velvel was because the latter valued his efforts in "fighting at the yeshiva so that they not incorporate secular studies." I think it is likely that knowing how different his outlook was from that of R. Velvel, and that R. Velvel had no hesitation in speaking his mind, Weinberg decided to avoid what might turn into a difficult meeting. Whereas other gedolim from the yeshiva world wouldn't dream of getting into an argument with Weinberg or telling him why his outlook was mistaken, the Brisker Rav, who always spoke his mind, would have had no such compunctions. As for the Montreux yeshiva, in 1985 it relocated to Israel and is now a hesder yeshiva.<sup>[19]</sup> This shows that even apart from the issue of secular studies, the yeshiva did not share the Brisker Rav's approach.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Since my book appeared I have also discovered many more letters, including a collection sent to one of the leaders of the yeshiva world (whose identity I am not at present able to divulge). In my Note on Sources, found after the preface, I mentioned that while such letters might cause me to reevaluate some of my conclusions, I was confident that the picture I presented would not be substantially altered. I was happy to see that nothing in these letters caused me to change any of my earlier thoughts.

<sup>[2]</sup> See Fisch's *Yeriot Shlomo* (Jerusalem, 1983). Among Fisch's contributions to Jewish scholarship are his editions of Midrash ha-Gadol on Numbers and Deuteronomy and his commentary to Ezekiel in the Soncino Books of the Bible.

<sup>[3]</sup> Incidentally, I think that the standard position is that *bishul akum* for a *holeh she-ein bo sakanah* is only permitted on Shabbat, but not during the week. See e.g., *Kaf ha-Hayyim, Orach Hayyim* 328:119. Halakhic experts, please correct me if I am mistaken.

<sup>[4]</sup> *Shiloh*, ed. R. Shlomo Yosef Zevin (Jerusalem, 1983).

<sup>[5]</sup> When the non-Hasidim and Chabad were finally able to agree on a joint political front in the Soviet Union, the plan was for a group of four non-hasidic and three hasidic rabbis to form a sort of Moetzet Gedolei ha-Torah, the members of which did not have to actually live in the Soviet Union. The four non-hasidim chosen were R. Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, R. Isser Zalman Meltzer, R. Isaac Jacob Rabinowitz, and R. Avraham Dov Baer Kahana Shapiro. The hasidic side was to be represented by R. Yosef Yitzhak Schneersohn (the Lubavitcher Rebbe), R. Menahem Mendel Schneersohn (the son of the Bobruisker Rebbe, R. Shemariah Noah), and R. Shemariah Medalie. See Mordechai Altschuler, "Ha-Politikah shel ha-Mahaneh ha-Dati ve-ha-Haredi be-Rusyah bi-Shenat 1917," *Shvut* 15 (1992), p. 22.

<sup>[6]</sup> I mean, of course, Russian Jewish Orthodoxy, but I think it is worth noting that in pictures of rabbis from Old Russia one sometimes has trouble telling them apart from the Russian Orthodox priests, as they both work black and had beards. In fact, I found one such example with an American Orthodox rabbi. See [here](#).

<sup>[7]</sup> See *Iggerot Moshe*, vol. 8, introduction, p. 18.

<sup>[8]</sup> See Avraham Greenbaum, *Rabbanei Berit ha-Moatzot bein Milhamot ha-Olam* (Jerusalem, 1994), p. 36. Greenbaum also notes that in 1937 R. Hillel Medalie's brother, R. Moshe, was exiled to Siberia where he was killed. Unfortunately, this helpful book is not available online.

However, I would like to call readers' attention to another book which is also quite valuable and is online: Peninah Meizlish's *Rabanim she-Nispu be-Shoah*. This book contains an enormous list of rabbis who perished in the Holocaust. Available [here](#).

Speaking of online resources, it amazes me that there are still people who buy the Bar Ilan Responsa CD. Apparently, they don't know that one can access this through the Spertus College library for very little money.

<sup>[9]</sup> Another example is R. Levi Yitzhak Schneersohn, the father of R. Menahem Mendel, the last Lubavitcher Rebbe. R. Levi Yitzhak died in 1944 after having been exiled to Kazakhstan. See Avraham Greenbaum, "Rabbi Shlomo (Solomon) Schliker and Jewish Religious Life in the Soviet Union 1943-1957," *Shvut* 8 (1999), p. 126 n. 10. Another example is R. Shaul Yisraeli's father, R. Binyamin, who was rav of Koidanovo, a town near Minsk (see R. Shaul's introduction to his *Amud ha-Yemini*). He was exiled to Siberia where he died. R. Shaul writes that his grave site is unknown, and therefore he called his first book *Amud ha-Yemini*, אדני יעמל עדונו אל רשא ורבק לע וורכו דומעל. R. Shaul and two others escaped from the Soviet Union by illegally crossing the border into Poland, which would have meant the death penalty if they were caught (as no doubt many others were). This dangerous step was taken only after Moscow's Chief Rabbi, R. Yaakov Klemes, performed the Goral ha-Gra. See [here](#).

Before setting out for the border, R. Shaul spent time in R. Yehezkel Abramsky's apartment in Moscow. See Aharon Sorasky, *Melekh be-Yofyo* (Jerusalem, 2004), vol. 1, p. 199. R. Shaul made his way to Jerusalem where he became one of the leading Torah scholars in Israel. Because of his religious Zionist outlook, he is another figure who is scrupulously ignored by the Frankel Rambam, even though he was an expert in the agricultural halakhot and should have been cited repeatedly in the Frankel index to *Sefer Zeraim*. See R. Yaakov Ariel's introduction to R. Shaul's *Havot Binyamin*. In Sorasky's book, cited previously in this note, R. Shaul is not referred to as "Gaon" and his name is not affixed with ל"צ. But we should be thankful that at least R. Kook and R. Herzog are given the proper titles (but not R. Soloveitchik!)

<sup>[10]</sup> David E. Fishman, "Preserving Tradition in the Land of Revolution: The Religious Leadership of Soviet Jewry, 1917-1930," in Jack Wertheimer, ed., *The Uses of Tradition* (New York, 1992), p. 106 n. 48. Fishman also notes that R. Yosef Yitzhak repeated the advice that his great-grandfather had given to one who wanted to go on aliyah in the 1850's: "We should make this the Land of Israel. Create a Land of Israel here." This remained the Habad approach and is one of the reasons why the movement never stressed aliyah.

<sup>[11]</sup> See Nitzan Kedar, "Ha-Medinai she-Nishkah," *Ha-Tzofeh*, Nov. 18, 2007, available [here](#).

<sup>[12]</sup> This book claims that Medalie was born in 1918. Yet this is incorrect. In 1938 Medalie came to England to start his university studies. The *Jewish Chronicle* of May 20, 1938, has an entire story on this, complete with a picture of the young man. According to the paper, he was twenty-four years old at the time and had received semikhah from R. Isaac Herzog and R. Isser Zalman Meltzer. In *Shiloh*, pp. 15-16, semikhah from R. Isser Zalman and R. Moses Avigdor Amiel are printed.

<sup>[13]</sup> *Be-Tzel ha-Kodesh* (Jerusalem, 2007), p. 131.

<sup>[14]</sup> See [here](#).

A number of distinguished people are missing from this list, and the following come to mind: R. Eliezer Waldenberg, R. Yitzhak Abadi, R. Aryeh Ralbag, R. Zev Segal, Prof. Yaakov Sussmann, Prof. Reuven Kimelman, and Dr. David Lando.

<sup>[15]</sup> Moshe Horovitz, *She-ha-Maftehot be-Yado* (Jerusalem, 1989), p. 94.

<sup>[16]</sup> Here is a little quiz: What classic book by a woman historian also begins with a funeral scene? Hint: The book is devoted to an event that is often related to the Ninth of Av. I don't mean the Spanish Expulsion, which contrary to popular belief--a belief popularized by Abarbanel--did not take place on this date. See Yitzhak Baer, *A History of the Jews of Christian Spain* (Philadelphia, 1978), vol. 2, p. 439.

<sup>[17]</sup> Shimon Yosef Meller, *Ha-Rav mi-Brisk* (Jerusalem, 2006), p. 368. I wrote to Meller asking his permission to post the picture, but I haven't yet heard back from him.

<sup>[18]</sup> See *Be-Tzel ha-Kodesh*, p. 118.

<sup>[19]</sup> See [here](#).