

Hirsh Laib Sussman's
1935 Visit to Ponedel (Pandėlys)

The *Sussman News* was a newsletter begun in March 1934 for relatives of the Sussman family of Philadelphia. The family had emigrated from Ponedel (Pandėlys), Lithuania, and the newsletter carried stories of interest for family members in the United States, Lithuania, South Africa, and Palestine. In May 1935, one of the editors, Hirsh Laib Sussman, made a trip back to Lithuania to visit relatives and friends. The *Sussman News* presented the notes from his trip in installments.

Hirsh Laib's trip took him through France, Germany, Poland, and Lithuania. He also made a side trip to Moscow, Russia. At the time, Germany was controlled by the Nazi regime and Russia was part of the Communist-controlled Soviet Union. Within a few years, the world Hirsh Laib visited in Lithuania was swept away.

The following pages contain the account of Hirsh Laib's trip, beginning with his departure eastward from Paris.

June 21, 1935

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KIRSH LAIB'S LOG-BOOK (cont)

KOVNO, Lithuania

Wednesday, May 29, 1935

Together with other tourists - I left Paris, on May 25th at 11 P.M. about eight o'clock on Sunday morning (May 26) we were at the German border. Every passenger had to get out of the train, and walk over to a large building - where we showed all the money we had with us. Then each person received a permit, allowing him to leave Germany - with that sum of money.

The train on which I was traveling passed through Berlin and then went direct to Warsaw (Poland). So when I arrived in Berlin - at 5.00 P.M. I checked my baggage and went out to "see" Berlin. I had some several hours to wait for the train to Kovno. At midnight I left Berlin & on Monday morning (May 27) - about 10.30, I was at the Lithuanian border.

The necessary formalities over - we crossed into Lithuania - at the city of Kibart. Here the train conductors changed, and a thorough inspection was made, of our baggage. Certain articles were taken away & sent on to Kovno where duty has to be paid... Here in Kibart, I had a most pleasant surprise. My brother Feivel Zisman was there to meet me (I had sent a telegram to him when I was in Paris). I am still unable to write about this "meeting" with my brother. At a calmer moment - I will write details to you.

I am already three days in Kovno and I have already spoken per telephone four times with my sisters - Gittel and Baileh - in Ponedel... I plan to be in Ponedel tomorrow, on Thursday morning May 30. My mother is awaiting me impatiently - and I am no less impatient.

Feivel's apartment has all kinds of modern conveniences: telephone, electricity, bath-room, hot & cold water, etc. Kovno is now modernized in its physical aspects. I will now take a walk in the city - with my brother-in-law, Jacob Vengerin, who happens to be in Kovno now.

PONEDEL, Lithuania

Sunday, June 2, 1935

As mentioned before I arrived in Kovno (now called Kaunas), at 1.00 P.M. on May 27. On Wednesday night May 29, I left for Ponedel (at present called Pandelys), and with me went Feivel and our brother-in-law Jacob Vengerin. We reached Ponedel on May 30, at six in the morning.. My sisters (Mrs. Gittel Sher & Mrs. Baile Vengerin) met us at the station. Jacob took my baggage to the house by horse and wagon while the rest of us walked home. Halfway to the house, my mother met us, and I recognized her at once. I would've known her anywhere although I have not seen her for thirty years.

All day Thursday and Friday were spent in intimate conversation. On Friday night, I was in the Bes Hamdrash (synagogue) & met many acquaintances of long ago. On Saturday, a number of people were with us for dinner, and we sang Zemiroes and otherwise entertained ourselves. The younger folks of the town came to the house on Saturday evening... My mother says that she will not let me return to America right away.... I asked her how long that meant. She answered: "At least one year!"... After Shavuot, I plan to visit Russia....

On Friday, I visited some of the poor homes in Ponedel. It is impossible to picture the poverty of many of the homes. One can hardly believe - that people can live under such conditions.... More, later....

The SUSSMAN NEWS

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July 5, 1935

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during the summer, the Sussmanews is published bi-weekly. The next issue will appear, Friday, July 19th.....

On the occasion of her graduation from High School - Miss Florence Sussman made a contribution to "Sussmanews" to provide for this enlarged edition.....

Local News

On June 14th - Rubin & Katie Hyatt moved to 870 N. Fifth St. where he has his place of business. Years ago they already lived here.

Mollie, Ida and Faye Sussman motored to New York, on June 25, with Henry & Minnie Broder, to visit Frank and Fannie Sussman and family in their new home.

On June 22nd Henry & Minnie Broder returned to Philadelphia from a trip through the South where Henry sold suits for the Middishade Company where he works.

During June they travelled thru Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia and Maryland. They were in many cities and towns,

Baruch Baker (cousin of Mrs. Dobra
Chaffer & Jacob Kotzen) died on June

DAUGHTER BORN TO MR. & MRS GILBERT WOLF

A daughter - Carrol Ann - was born to Gilbert and Rose Wolf, of Elizabeth, New Jersey, at the Beth Israel Hospital in Newark (N.J.) on Tuesday, June 18th. Mrs Wolf is a daughter of Mrs Jennie Sussman.

The editors congratulate the parents, wishing "Mazal Tov" to all the relatives of "Miss Carrol Ann".

reporting to the Sussmanews from Memphis on June 3; from Lexington on the 7th; Norfolk on 6/16; Salisbury on the 18th; and Frederick on June 22.

In Norfolk, they visited their cousins Julius & Dora Robin. With them they went to Cape Henry, Virginia Beach, and other resorts.

Naftali Sussman left on a vacation trip, to Canada, on Friday June 28th. He went by automobile together with a friend, Carlton Rosenstein. They plan to be away for ten days.

Their first stop was
(cont p.93)

Foreign News

PONEDEL, Lithuania

A gathering in honor of Hirsha Laib Sussman was given, on Saturday night June 8th, at the home of Flax & Meller. The hosts were Boris & Gitel Meller and Yitzchak, Shne-ur & Hannah Flax. The latter & Gitel are brothers & sisters of Jacob Flax, of South Africa.

The twenty-five persons making up the party included the relatives & leading Jews of the town. In addition to the fine and plentiful "spread" there was dancing and singing accompanied by a musical instrument - played by Velvel Herring. It was midnight when the people left for home.

JERUSALEM, Palestine

On June 5th - Mendel and Zisel Sussman were at the grave of the famous scholar Simon Hatzadik. Hundreds of visitors were there, reciting the evening service and Psalms.

Recently, Mendel and Zisel received permanent visas and they now may live in Palestine, as long as they want..

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LOG-BOOK. By Hirsh Laib Sussman

(NOTE:- This is the third installment of the Log-Book, which was begun on page 74 and continued on p. 80. Translated from the Yiddish..)

PONEDEL, June 3, 1935

Spent the morning in writing letters. Later - Jacob Vengerin and I went to Boovener Road where he has to repair part of the road. According to the law each citizen in the town is taxed with repairing given parts of the road.

We returned home at 3.00 P.M. In my mother's store I saw a Jew come in. He was dressed in old, patched trousers, worn shoes with holes in them, and an old coat. On his back he carried a sack, and in his hand he held a twig. He threw the sack on the floor and it began to move. Mother greeted the man (whose name is Itza M-luntzer). From his sack, he pulled out two chickens, and my mother bought them. This Itza asked for Laibzig and Mendel Sussman, and for Mrs. Paye Zussman, whom he knew well before they left for America, decades ago.

After dinner (at 4.00 P.M.) - my sister, Mrs Gitel Sher, and I visited our aunt - Esther Leah Heller who is not well. Then, we went to the "Pastas" (post-office), the attendant of which is a young Lithuanian girl in uniform.

PONEDEL, June 4, 1935

Today is the "Mark" (market day, or a fair). The market place reaches from the bridge to Birzer Road, and from Podjuleker Gas till Moshe Berel's street (see map, on p. 3 - of issue of May 27, 1934). The market place was filled with wagons & their owners (gentiles). All morning the wagons pulled by many lean

horses, came into town, from every direction.

I walked among the crowd, to see what was being sold. Here was oats and flax-seed; there, ducks, chickens, and eggs. Horses and cows are no longer sold in the main market. Another market, behind Podjoileker Gass is now used; and pigs are now sold near the train station - in a modern way. There is a "Maistas" - (cooperative organization) and the Maistas representative weighs the pigs and pays the farmers a specified, set price. There is no haggling or bargaining about prices... The pigs are loaded on trains, and sent to slaughter-houses in Poniviez (a nearby city).

Near the "Svintar" (the church), are many booths where are sold all kinds of crosses, candy, toys, and dozens of other small articles. Not far away, are men's hats, earthen pots, & even "ladeeshes" - earthen jars, with inscriptions "for Pass-over" in Yiddish. Apparently, left over goods from before Passover... In another section, villagers sell pig-meat and "Vurst", also baigel. Noise and haggling everywhere. Jewish "merchants", from Rakishok and other nearby towns, run around between the wagons, sample the goods and buy and sell it. One thing is noticeably absent from the marketplace -- flax. Now, it is bought & sold by cooperative organizations) although at one time, it was altogether in Jewish hands.

I returned to the "krom" (store) which was now full of women & men, villagers. My mother and sisters - Gittel and Baila - and Jacob Vengerin were busy serving them.

The rush is due to the fact that at 2.00 P.M. the villagers must be

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YERUSH LAIB'S LOG-BOOK (cont)

to leave the market-place. The villagers leave, and by 4.00 P.M., it is quiet already. Men and women street cleaners sweep up the market-place, and within an hour there is no evidence of any business having taken place - the market-place being so clean.....

Today - I was visited by Yechiel Raffe and his daughter Rivkah - of Laishishik. Yechiel is the brother of Mrs. Zisleh Levin (of Philadelphia)....We spent several hours together. I also saw Yosel Ginsberg, of Rakishok...He is the brother of Meyer Ginsberg of Staten Island...He resembles Meyer -- and if Yosel would shave off his beard, I would swear that he is Meyer. His father Ortzik is old and weak...and I promised him - that I will visit them at their home in Rakishok...

PONEDDEL, Mon. June 10, 1935

On Wednesday night June 5, I was in synagogue for "Maariv". One Jew asked me, whether I was in America all the time since I left Ponedel? He does not believe it, and says:- "An American doesn't speak such an excellent Yiddish and doesn't come to shul on weekdays." He continues "I know this from seeing the other Americans who visit here". On June 6 (Thursday), I received the first Sussmanews which I did not help to prepare....

All of the first day Shavuot (on June 7) we spent at the synagogue, at home, and in taking a walk. The chief event of the day was the receiving of a telegram from Samuel, Jennie, Louis & Mollie Sussman and their children wishing us all "Gut Yomtov". Of course, a special "Lecha-yim" was drunk...

The second day Shavuot (June 8) was more interesting. We all arose late (nine o'clock). Jacob Vengerin and I went to shul. Of the four synagogues that Ponedel had, there are only two remaining: the "neuer minyan" (now an old building nearly falling apart), and the "alter" Bes Hamedrash recently built. When the Jews returned to Ponedel after the World War, they found that the "Shtiebel" was in ruins. The "kalte shul" was torn down last year.. because it was so old.

After services, Jacob spent some time in study with other Jews - he is their teacher. After this, they went to the Rabbi's home for "b-rochah". I went home, recited kidush for my mother and waited for Jacob to return home. He came at one P.M. and after the meal we went out for a walk. We met other "promenaders" too. At five, in the afternoon, we visited a grandchild of one Moishe Ber, & later we visited relatives, members of the Flax family.

All stores were closed yesterday (Sunday). It was a Christian holiday - "Sheminkes" (pentecost)...We spent the day at home...Jacob went to the synagogue to bring home our "taleisim". In Ponedel, one doesn't carry anything on Shabos.....After prayers and breakfast, Velfke Groones (Velvel Herring) visited us, & he wanted to talk to me. So we went for a walk in "Pusten-sod". He asked for advice - about migrating to America. His brothers in Worcester (Mass), already sent him the necessary papers; but he wants to go to Palestine...It is interesting that everyone is thinking about leaving for some other place. Even my brother-in-law Jacob Vengerin discussed this matter with me...We returned home...After supper - a certain

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HIRSH LAIB'S LOG-BOOK (cont)

gentile (Fovalis Zalbas of Shroobi shok) came into the house. He wanted to see and speak with the "American". He spoke in "English", and together we took a walk outside of the town....

This morning (Monday) although I arose early (six A.M.) - I already found my mother reciting her morning prayers, & Gittel was kneading dough for baking. The maid (a gentile) was preparing tea in the "Savonar". In the street it is quiet. A few wagons with cans of milk are passing. The villagers deliver the milk to the "Pena-Tzentra" (a central milk station). A Jewish teamster is taking a passenger to Rakishok...Otherwise, the town is very quiet...I open the shutters on the windows of our store...Now-a-days, stores may be open only ten hours, from eight in the morning till six at night...I sit down near the "tom bank" (counter) in the store, & begin to write this letter.....There is too much free time on hand...

KAUNAS, Thurs. June 13, 1935.

My sisters (Mrs. Gittel Sher and Mrs. Baileh Vengerin) and I arrived in Kovno yesterday. We will remain here till Sunday night (June 16) & then, we return to Pandelys. While here (in Kaunas), I already arranged for my return passage to America, on the S.S. Normandie, leaving Havre (France) on Wednesday August 14th...My mother wanted me to stay in Ponedel for one year....

My sister-in-law (Liebe Blumeh, the wife of Feivel Zisman) and her children and a maid left for their summer vacation on June 11th. They went to Kolatovah, a summer resort near Kaunas. Feivel will be there, for the Sabbaths, only.....We plan to visit them in Kolatovah.

Next week - I and my brother-in-law Jacob Vengerin expect to visit friends in Rakiskis (Rakishok). His parents live there, too....On June 23, I plan to leave for Moscow (Soviet Russia)....My best regards to each and every member of the family. It is high impossible to write frequently to each one individually...

(NOTE: The following letter is dated from Ponedel, but the post-mark reads "Kapiskis". We demand an explanation from Hirsh Laib...Editor)

PONEDDEL Tuesday June 18, 1935

Yesterday, I returned from Kovno and found two letters from Dr Samuel Sussman and one from Uncle Mendel (of Jerusalem). This was a real treat....Being away from "home", a letter is much appreciated....Life in Ponedel is generally monotonous - and were it not for my relatives I wouldn't be able to remain there for any length of time.

The street is lifeless except on the market-day. Here & there, sits a storekeeper near his booth half-asleep. A villager (a poyer) rides past in his small wagon, pulled by a lean horse, and disturbs the quiet....Two strong, Lithuanian girls remove the grass that grows on the pavement.... A woman (goyeh) carries a "nastze vaser" (two buckets of water hung on a bar, resting on her shoulders)...She got the water from the pump in the center of the market place. She walks barefooted on the pointed stones of the pavement, stepping so lightly -- as if she were walking on a carpet...The druggist, long-bearded, & his head shaven, sits on a bench in front of his store. He is waiting for "sick customers"...for in his drug-store one cannot buy "ledai" (ice-cream)

(continued next page)

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HIRSH LAIB'S LOG-BOOK (cont)

of other articles...so his customers are few... In passing - I want to note that it is customary here, to shave off the hair of the head; and I am quite in style...

I am pleased to hear that our office staff is doing well...I quote

from Mendel's letter: "Hirsh Laib - I can tell you that the Sussmanews helps us remain in Jerusalem. It is a worthy undertaking"...I also received a letter from Africa...They write that "Fehler and Flax bought lots for the erection of 2 houses, and this will be done later"...Regards to everyone in the family.
(NOTE: More next issue.....Editor)

LOCAL NEWS (cont)
(from page 85)

at the home of his sister (Mrs. Fannie Sussman) in New York. They continued the journey, on June 29 - along the Storm King Highway and visited Albany, on the way to Saratoga Spgs..

A MEGILLAH

A 20-in-one letter was mailed - to Hirsh Laib Sussman in Ponedel, on July 2 in scroll form. The letter was "in production", from June 26 to July 1. It included messages from 20 relatives and friends - of Hirsh Laib, rounded-up by Dr. Samuel Sussman. To the latter, & to Mr Henry Broder we are indebted for the following statistics: Unrolled, the giant-dispatch measured 21 feet; individually counted - the total number words was found to be 3276.....

On July 2, Israel R. Sussman & Henry Broder were in New York; Henry for business and Israel for pleasure.

On June 23 - Maurice Levine was in Brooklyn on a visit to his cousins.

Jacob & Sarah Zussman moved from their apartment to another one in the same house (Sunderland Apts. 35th & Powelton Avenue). They are now located on the 3rd floor.

Morris Sussman (from Brooklyn) was in Philadelphia on Sunday June 30th, for the day.

On Thursday, June 20 Morris and Lillian Levine left for New York where he attended the convention of the United States Army Ambulance Service, at Pennsylvania Hotel.

Dr. Samuel, Jennie & Rebecca Sussman, together with Mollie, Nosi & Florence Sussman motored to Atlantic City on July 1st. The children spent the day - on the beach, while the others attended the convention of the Zionist Organization.

OUT-OF-TOWN NEWS
(cont from page 89)

and Ida Stutman, Fanny Hausman (oldest daughter of Dina Raisa) and Philip & Hannah Rosen.

BRONX, N.Y.

Morris & Ray Sussman and their children (on June 23) were in Mount Vernon, N.Y., on a visit to their cousins Mr & Mrs. Harris Sussman. On the same day, Harry and Beanie Finkelstein (of Brooklyn - the sister of Morris) also visited in Mt. Vernon.

BALTIMORE, Md.

Florence and Sidney Stutman (on June 23rd) motored to Washington, to visit a sick friend - and on June 27 Abe & Ida Stutman were there on a combination business & visiting trip.

Harry Sussman visited his sister (Fannie) and her family in New York on June 29th,

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AT LOG-BOOK. By Hirsh Laib Sussman

NOTE:- This is the fourth installment of the Log-Book, which was begun on page 74 and continued on pp 75 and 90. Translated from the Yiddish at the request of the author)

Ponedel, Fri. June 21, 1935

About my visit to RAKISOK, which is now called Rakiskis. To go from Ponedel to Rakiskis is not an easy matter. If you want to go by train you must get the "small rail-road" in Ponedel and go to Skapiskis and wait there a few hours for another train going to Rakisok. This journey takes some eight hours (including the waiting. NOTE: Rakiskis is about fifteen miles, in a straight line, from Ponedel). You can also go to Rakisok by bus; but there is only one bus between Birz and Rakisok (passing through Ponedel). And this bus has been hired at present by a company of actors of the government theatre of Kovno....Hence, there is no bus running now.....So Jacob Vengerin and I used the well known, old method of travel, using horse and wagon. We went to Rakiskis on Wednesday June 19. We spent only eight hours in this town.

Rakiskis gives the impression of a larger, more developed town than Ponedel. "Respublic Gass" (formerly, Kamayer Street) is a long wide road. If instead of the old houses this street would have newer homes - it would appear like "Main St.", in a small American town. The market place of Rakisok is much smaller than the one in Ponedel. On the other hand, Rakisok has many buildings of which, even Kovno wouldn't have to be ashamed.

These buildings are in the newer part of the town which was develop

ed in recent years. The Lithuanian Bank, on Kaunas Street, is quite a fine building. I spent ten minutes in the bank, and business is quiet there. It was a busy place years ago - when the Jews were engaged in the flax trade. Rakisok was an important center for flax. Since the government took over the flax business, it is quiet everywhere & the Jews practically lost the means of making a living. Today, the "rich" Jews are those who receive dollars or pounds, from their relatives in America or in the British Empire.

Rakisok has a new post-office, a hospital, a court of justice, a Lithuanian Gymnasium (school) -- & a prison. Among the Jewish buildings the following must be mentioned:-- three synagogues (a Bes Hamedrash, a Shtiebel, & the "Griener Minyan" because it is painted green); the Talmud Torah (a large wooden building, 2-stories high); a bath-house and a Mikvah....About four hundred Jewish families live in Rakisok, & they have three shochatim, and one Rabbi....

First, we stopped at the home of Ber Hirsh and Yacheh Vengerin, the parents of my brother-in-law Jacob Vengerin. Cake and whiskey was served. Before we left the town we ate supper there.

Then, we visited Ortzik Ginsberg (the father of Meyer and Sol Ginsberg of Staten Island). He was eating breakfast when we entered the house. At first glance I thought I saw Meyer with a long white beard, so alike do they look...With tears in his eyes, he listened avidly to my words about Meyer & Sol & their families. He asked that they write more often that they have done until now... From another room --- a young, pretty girl came in, and in

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YIPSH LAIB'S LOG-BOOK (cont)

roduced herself as Fanny Ginsberg (Rakitski's daughter). A number of delicacies were served including tea, cake, taiglach, etc...We spent a few hours there. Later, she went with us to her brother Yosel, & we found him, his wife and two daughters at home. His two sons weren't at home, then.

We left Rakisok in the evening & reached Ponedel at 11 o'clock...On the way, we passed through RADUTA, the birthplace of my aunt Chaye Mary (Mrs. Zavel) Sussman. Of the entire place, there are left only, a few small houses & the delapidated synagogue. (Raduta is a very small hamlet near Rakisok).

Moscow, U.S.S.R.

Thursday, June 27, 1935

Comrade Samuel! I really have no time to write much. Half of the day passes in sightseeing with the Intourist guides and the rest of the day, I am busy "seeing things", by myself. Jacob Vengerin's uncle and sister live in Moscow, & they help me in sightseeing. I went to bed - last night - about two A.M., & now (7.00 A.M.) I am writing to you in a hurry, because at 9.00 o'clock I must be at a clothing factory that is about one and a half hours distance from Moscow. This factory is not on the list of places shown by the Intourist, & I have to pay the interpreter who is with me.

Here are some of the things I saw.....

SHE WORKS HARD

A house is being painted. Both men and women are working. They are on a scaffold. All but one woman wear overalls. This woman wears a dress - but she holds the dress, folded, in one hand between her legs while

painting with the free hand. Apparently, she does not want others to see how hard she is working...

WITHOUT SHOES

I was riding from the station in a beautiful, large open limousine. I noticed that the people don't wear shoes... They are wearing rubbers, "Laptses" (shoes of bark or straw) and "nagenehs" (footwear of woven, flat reeds). Others walk barefoot. One sees very few natives, wearing leather shoes...

LEGS

I am in the park, where young girls are drilling. A tall, young man is in command. "Raz, dva, tri!" Again "Raz, dva, tri" he commands, & the girls march in time. I watched the marchers for an hour, and I wanted to go away. My friend (who is with me, and who experienced all the activity since the "Revolution") refuses to leave. He says: "Lets see more". I asked, "What"? And he answered naively: "The beautiful legs of the girls".....

IN THE SUBWAY

The Moscow subway is the latest achievement of the Soviet. It is so beautiful, so decorative & so convenient! On one of the stations, I was smoking a cigarette. The train arrived, and as I entered, I threw away the cigarette on the ground.. "Tovaristch, tovaristch!", a guard began to call me. "Pick up the cigarette", he said, and showed where it should be put away (in a can).. Then he thanked me: "Spasiba".....

INTERNATIONAL

I bought some cards and stamps, in the hotel, and gave the cashier an American Dollar, for the ten cards & stamps. She tells me, that it is not enough. So I give her more money (ten Lithuanian Lit). Now, she

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RUSH LAIB'S LOG-BOOK (cont)

gives me change: an American quarter, two English shillings, a few German pfennig, some French coins, and a few Lithuanian cents....

SOCIALISM

I am in the lobby of the Hotel "No vo Moskovskaya". A young man and a girl enter. They appear to be "Russianified" - this being recognizable by the unpressed, baggy trousers of the man, & by the white cotton dress of the girl and her bare feet in slippers... They go over to some American tourists, kiss, & begin to speak in Yiddish. A tourist asks the girl as to what she is doing in Russia, and she answers enthusiastically: "Mir boyen dem Socialism!"

GOING AND COMING

While going thru a large iron foundry, I stopped to watch a man working. "American?" he asks me. "Yes" I answer. "How are things in America?" he queries. To make him feel better, I say "Bad"... "Oh" he answers, "If I could only return, to America!!"..... That same evening, in the restaurant, I spoke to a tourist from Denver, Colorado. I asked him, as to the length of his tour in Russia. He answered:- "One month. But I will try to stay here forever. I like Socialism, and I'm not going back".....

SERVICES

On Friday, I went to the synagogue (Chor Shul) & heard a good chazan. More Jews were in the Chor Shul at services than in all the three synagogues in Wynnefield.....

MARRIAGE & DIVORCE

At the marriage bureau, I witnessed three weddings. By my time, the three ceremonies took a total...of

twenty minutes..... In the divorce department I waited and waited but none took place. I walked away disappointed....

Moscow, June 28, 1935

I think it is Friday today. Perhaps it is Saturday or Thursday or some other day. Days do not have any names in Russia. Only the monthly dates are counted... The sixth, twelfth, eighteenth, twenty-fourth and thirtieth of each month -- are the days of rest. Those who are religious (keeping Saturday, or Sunday) are sad, because only once in six weeks does a rest day come, on Saturday or Sunday... I was talking to a girl in the Intourist bureau, and told her that I want to visit the clothing factory not later than Saturday. She did not know to what day I was referring. I showed her my calendar & pointed out that it occurs on June 29... She told me that before the Revolution, people used to count time this way....

Yesterday I spent three hours in the clothing factory (men's). Manufacturing of suits is a new innovation in Russia. Before the Revolution, clothes were made to order - by a tailor... I visited factory #5 of the "Moskva-Svi" (Clothing factory of Moscow). It is in a "pereoolak" (a narrow lane) - in an old house. Eighty percent of the workers are woman and girls. A central factory supplies the cut goods - & the latter is distributed to thirteen sewing plants. In the factory I visited, thirty-five hundred persons work, and 1800 suits and 1000 extra pants are made every day. The operations on the coat are divided into 122 parts, and everything is done by machine. The cloth, is the cheapest that can be made (ragoze) - of matted rushes. A better grade of cloth is made in some places...

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ESPERANTO LAIB'S LOG-BOOK (cont).

The suits are sold in government stores. The price per suit (of the cheap variety) is forty-nine ruble & twenty kopikes...The people work five days and rest one day...& the working day is six hours and forty minutes. The workmen get annual vacations of four weeks, with pay. When a workman falls sick he is paid his wages in full weekly, for a period of three months & he also gets free medical service, hospital & medicines, when necessary.

Some of the girls receive wages, amounting to 150 ruble per month & the more skilled workers get wages as high as 400 ruble a month. This makes an average of 250 rubles per month, which is not enough for living expenses (for a family) in Moscow. The foreman told me, that the workers can buy their necessities, cheaper, in government stores.

I arrived in Moscow at five P.M. on Monday June 24, after a twenty-eight hour journey from Ponedel by train. An automobile from the "Intourist" took me to the Hotel Moskovskaya - a fine place - for even a city like New York... I am inconvenienced because I can't converse in Russian. However, in the hotel, English is spoken.

ESPERANTO

While on the train to Moscow (on Sunday June 23) I saw a man who appeared to be an American...I asked him if he speaks English and he answered "Ne ponemayu", then "Ne saprante" (meaning - I do not under-

stand). Then, he said to me:- "Ret ihr efshar esperanto?". I answered "A shailah", & I spent the rest of the trip with this Jew from Kovno. Apparently the Yiddish language is useful in many places.

MOSCOW, Monday, July 1, 1935

Yesterday, I saw a parade, given at the "Red Square" in Moscow - by the Sports and Athletic clubs; and it was impressive. I stood near to Stalin and Voroshilov...Indeed, it was well worth while to stand, for six hours to see the parade - made up of 115,000 persons. They demonstrated all kinds of sports and acrobatic stunts, including boxing & ballet-dancing.

I plan to remain in Moscow a few more days, because there are so many things I still want to see. Not only do I visit factories but also clubs, stores (noting the price of various articles)...I am busy seeing things. I will leave Moscow on July 4th. I should stay here longer, and visit other cities besides Moscow; but time does not permit.

My general feeling in regards to Russia is that - just, as in other countries, so here - there are shadows and lights; and it depends on how you look at the country. There is one thing certain: in the Soviet country, one lives more calmly, than in America. Although one does not have as many conveniences. Conditions in Russia are much better, today, than they were some years ago. There is food for everyone and unemployment is unknown. What else does the average person need?.....

OUT-OF-TOWN NEWS

(cont. from p. 97)
and uncle, Sarah & Nathan Rubin.

Frieda Davidow was at

the Esplanade Concerts (on July 10), given on the Charles River Basin by musicians of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Recently, she

also attended a dance, given at the opening of the United Jew. Appeal on June 26th.

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F O R E I G N   N E W S   A N D   L E T T E R S

**PONDEL, LITHUANIA**  
News by Jacob Vengerin

Mrs. Gitel Sher went to Poniviez on July 7, with her aunt Mrs. Esther Leah Fehler to arrange for the latter's vacation at Bardonoye, near Poniviez. Esther Leah is the mother of Al Heller, of Philadelphia. She will stay at Bardonoye for a month. Gitel returned to Ponedel on July ninth.

Hirsh Laib (Sussman) plans to leave Ponedel about August the first on his way back to the United States. He will be in Kovno, for a few days, and then proceed to Havre (France) - to sail on the Normandie, leaving August 14th.

Jacob Vengerin spent ten days in Kovno from June 26th to July 7th, undergoing a tonsillectomy. He is back in Ponedel & feels better.

On Tuesday July 9th, Bereh Hirsh and Yocheh Vengerin (of Rakishok) were in Ponedel to visit their son Jacob, & other relatives there. They returned home, on the same day.

Ortzik Ginsberg and his daughter Fanya, of Rakishok, left on July 4th for Dubelin (a spa near Riga, Latvia) and

they will remain there over the summer at the home of Ortzik's daughter (Mrs Hannah Vegenheims) who lives in Dubelin. Hannah and Fanya are sisters of Myer Ginsberg of Staten Island, New York.

**JERUSALEM, Palestine**

On Thursday July 18, Mendel & Zisel Sussman left Haifa (Palestine) for Naples, Italy; and from there they sailed on the Italian steamer Rex, for New York.

**JOHANNESBURG (AFRICA)**  
From Mrs. Mushe Fehler

July 1, 1935

Dear cousin Samuel,

...Altho we have not yet received mail from Hirsh Laib, we already know from "Sussmanews" that he arrived safely in Kovno. We also read the detailed story, of his departure for Europe. In this connection I again must comment about the value of this small family paper, received by us from such a great distance - and which brings the family so near to us. With out the paper we would know so very little of our family --- for how much does one write in a letter?

..We bought two lots on which we will build

houses for ourselves - that is, one for us, & one for the Flax family - with whom - until now - we lived together. The houses will be erected this year - as soon as the cold weather permits - for it is winter now in our country.

...The children (Barney & Lillie Fehler, & Bessie Flax) now have the midwinter vacation from school, for an entire month...The girls are studying for their music examinations.... We are quite busy, and only from time to time do we "go out". Recently, my husband (Jacob) & I attended a Yiddish folk-songs concert.

....Some months ago, Hirsh Laib inquired about a certain Mr Ginsberg (a brother of Myer, of Staten Island). I met him...He came to our home, & he was surprised to hear news about his brothers & of his friends. I gave him the "Sussmanews" where he found the addresses of his brothers.

...With best regards from us to all our relatives, I am,

Your cousin,  
Mushe Fehler

(NOTE: This letter was translated from the Yiddish.....Ed.)

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July 31, 1935

MY LOG-BOOK. By Hirsh Laib Sussman

(This is the fifth installment and the previous parts are on pages 74 - 80 - 90 - & 99. Trans. by S.S.)

MOSCOW, July 3, 1935

In the hotel where I stay, there is another Louis Sussman, and many misunderstandings arose therefrom. I was invited by an "aunt"; & "sisters and children" came to see me. I was called on the telephone; but since the "relatives" all spoke in Russian, we understood one another very little...The other Louis Sussman already departed and I did not have an opportunity, to become acquainted with him personally....

PONEDDEL, July 8, 1935

While in Moscow, I spent many an evening with Jacob Vengerin's cousins who live there; & when I left Moscow on Thursday July 4, at 7.00 P.M. - they came to the station to bid me farewell....One of them expressed the wish that we soon meet again in Moscow; and the other one hoped that we meet in Palestine... Both live in Moscow...so try to understand Communism!

I entered the train, and went to the compartment assigned me by the "Intourist"...It was a small room, for two persons - with two berths, upper and lower, for sleeping quarters. My companion (whom I already found there) was an old woman... I felt sort out of place...She was a Russian gentile travelling to Riga (Latvia) and did not seem disturbed at all because of me - her male companion... But I protested...and the conductor changed my quarters. Now - I was in a compartment, with a Russian official who was travelling to Polozt. His baggage consisted of five packages of cigarettes. When he left the train at 8.00 A.M.

- four packages were empty...How a person can smoke one hundred cigarettes in one night, I do not understand. I had a headache for several hours from the cigarette smoke, even after he had left.

At ten in the morning, July 5th, we arrived at the "port of entry", Bigosava, where the custom officials carefully examined every piece of paper in my baggage. Nothing of mine was taken away. Only four passengers remained in the train now, when it entered Latvia.....One of the passengers spoke German, and I became acquainted with him. He told me that he works in Russia, but is a citizen of Latvia. He was travelling to Dvinsk (now named Dogopolos) to visit his parents - while he is on vacation. Russian money may not be taken out of the country-- & he received a receipt at the border - for his money - 910 rubles - which he will get back when he'll return to Russia. I asked him, if he were sure that he will get that money.. So my German friend answered thus: "Gevis.. Es iz mein gelt.. Ich hob es KOSHER ferdient.."

In Dvinsk, I changed trains, and my companion this time was an official of Latvia. He carried a large basket of strawberries, and he ate and ate, not even raising his head for a minute.... At the Lithuanian border, he left the train, and his basket was half-empty, & his lips were red as if painted....The Latvian custom officers took away the Russian newspapers "Pravda", & the "Moscow Daily News" -- which I had with me....

In Abel (at the Lithuanian border), the custom officials examined my baggage and left it in a mess.. just kashaheh.....old socks mixed up with fresh "zwieback"...my bedroom



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~~LAIB'S~~ LAIB'S LOG-BOOK (cont)

slippers, wrapped in a clean shirt  
...dirty handkerchiefs on my tooth  
paste and brush....my hair brush &  
some cheese, in neighborly contact  
...my summer suit which was pressed  
neatly - was now so creased and  
wisted that it looked like native  
clothes....Finally I was permitted  
to close my valise and I left.

I arrived in Skopishik, at 3.10,  
in the afternoon and I expected to  
find a horse and wagon for me from  
Ponedel. I had written to my relatives,  
the week before....But there  
was no wagon...It was Friday afternoon...  
and I must arrive in Ponedel  
before Shabbos; for in Ponedel,  
Shabbos is Shabbos... A Lithuanian  
coachman was near the station with  
his horse and wagon. He walked over  
and asked where I wanted to go. By  
now I can already speak Lithuanian  
- & I told him that my destination  
was Ponedel...He gave me a rate of  
seven lits for the journey...I offered  
him four lits...He went down to six,  
& I came up to five... Finally,  
we arranged the journey, for five  
lits and twenty cents... Soon we  
were on our way...The roads are  
just being built, and they are covered  
with sand and stones, so that the  
wagon "danced" over the road. I  
held on to the wagon with one hand  
and with the other hand, I kept my  
handkerchief over my head...to protect  
myself from the rain...

At five o'clock Friday afternoon  
I already was at my mother's home,  
in Ponedel. They were worried, why  
they hadn't heard from me. The letter,  
which I sent, they did not receive.  
When we were eating "kugel" on  
Saturday, the letter arrived...  
I stayed home all day Saturday, to  
rest from the journey.

PONEDDEL, Thursday July 11, 1935  
To spend two months in Ponedel is  
entirely too long...I am not bored  
here - but that is because I am among  
persons whom I love & who are  
dear to me...

How does one spend the day here?  
This is what I did yesterday which  
was a more interesting day than others.  
At seven in the morning - I was  
up already. Drank tea and zwieback,  
and then recited the morning prayers.  
Jacob Veñgerin and I pray at home  
on the weekdays.

Then, we begin to write letters.  
Generally, letter-writing is among  
the routine matters of life, here.  
(I personally write only on a market-  
day, when the others are occupied in  
the store, and on Sundays, when the  
Christians leave church & at this time  
too, my relatives are busy in the store.  
At other times, we spend the days in  
talking while drinking "a glezel tay",  
or we are walking). Anyhow, everyone  
was engaged in writing letters...  
Mother sat at the table, in her bed-  
room; Jacob wrote at the dining-room  
table, & Baileh, at the desk in the  
store...and Gitel had already written.  
So, she busied herself in the kitchen,  
preparing lunch, which is eaten at  
any time; for there is no set time  
for having a meal. I walked here &  
there, from the store to the dining-  
room, smoking cigarette after cigarette.

To whom are they writing? To the  
children, says my mother - who has  
such an international family -- to  
Mushe and Mary in South Africa; to  
Joe in Philadelphia; to Feivel, in  
Kovno; to Basya (Gitel's daughter)  
in Palestine....

Since I returned from Russia, it  
rained almost every day and we did



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## FIRSH LAIB'S LOG-BOOK (cont)

not leave the house. Today - it is clear, but very cold for this season of the year. Mother says: "Far ii oogerkes in unzer gorten iz aza yater, an emeser chalef"....

Sarah Riva (mother of Mrs Stella Glass of Philadelphia) came to our house, to thank me for the letter, which she received yesterday, from her daughter....Why she thanked me I do not know....If those who have an old father or mother in Europe, would only have seen the happiness and joy in Sarah Riva's eyes, full of tears, & if they only had heard with what ecstasy she told of every detail in her daughter's letter - yes, these children, then, would never fail to write often to their parents.....

We sit down for "onbeisen" (that is, lunch). What do we eat? An omelet, a piece of herring, strawberries and cream, a glass of coffee. For five persons - this meal costs less than two lits (about 35¢).

Often I wonder, why people stand and watch how a house is torn down...but now I understand...Some persons were cutting down a tree - in the market-place. Two peasants diligently chopping away with axes & a third one pulling a rope tied to the tree-top. The deep-rooted tree resists strongly. It does not want to be removed from the place where it grew...but the ax wins, and the tree falls down...Thus I stood and watched the procedure, not realizing that an hour passed. Why? Because there is nothing else to do; so this also is interesting....

Later in the day we had a visitor in the store. One Mosheh (a son of Shemu-el Shiya's) came to Ponedel for his annual visit. His home

is in Birz. He comes to Ponedel for his father's yahrzeit. This Mosheh was one of my fellow-students - in my youth - in the "shtibel". About three o'clock, we go with him - to his mother's home. He called other Jews also (from the street) and we recited the minchah service. Jacob Vengerin & I went home...but there is nothing to do... We already had read the "blatt" (newspaper)... so we decided that we ought to go eat supper. This was about 5.00 P.M... At supper, we sat at the table for about two hours; & after the meal, Gitel placed the samovar on the table, and then she and Baileh washed the dishes.

About nine at night, we went for a walk in the "poosten sod" & till the "mohilnik" (Christian cemetery) and back. Mother didn't go with us - she rested on the bench near the house. At ten o'clock - we went to sleep.....

And this is the life of the Jew, the small store-keeper, in the little cities and towns of Lithuania. Like a shadow, he fleets, day in - day out...On the surface it appears that everything is well with Jews; but there are over a hundred families of Jews in the town - and not all of them are store-keepers; and not all store-keepers earn a livelihood...I believe it is not an exaggeration to say that only ten of the Jews in Ponedel earn a living. A large majority live only, on the "dollars" and "pounds" sent them.. and most of the Jews do not live - they merely exist...The people are not at fault...They want to work & earn...but there is nothing to do. No one who is able ought to forget his friends in the "old home",

Only last week, this happened in Ponedel. A storekeeper had to travel to Rakishok. So he engaged one



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## MERSH LAIB'S LOG-BOOK (cont)

of the teamsters. The latter's wife made the arrangements, because the teamster was in Birz & he wouldn't return till four in the morning... However - at eight in the morning, he already was at the storekeepers home.... He returned at midnight of that day; and for the entire journey and time (sixteen hours) -- he received five lits (some 85 cents).... On the morrow, his horse died; & the teamster was left without any means of making a living... (For obvious reasons - I have not given the names of the teamster or storekeeper).... When the people need so very little to live - it is heart-breaking that this "little" cannot be gotten.....

PONEDDEL, Monday, July 15, 1935

It is six o'clock in the morning as I am writing this letter. Arose late today (at 5,00 A.M.) & mother has already recited her prayers... She prays daily aloud, & I like to lie in bed and listen to her praying, so devoutly...

Now, my mother is in the garden, examining the cucumbers, which are not doing so well - because of the cold weather..... The maid prepares the samovar (called - "shtelen dem samovar")... To do so without causing a smoke in the house is an art - and this is how it is done:- The samovar is placed near the stove & a long pipe is attached to the central opening, where the "kinelech" are. (Kinelech are slender slivers of wood). The attached pipe enters the chimney of the stove, creating an air current which "draws" smoke from the samovar into the chimney. If these connections can't be made - then the samovar must be put out side..... Gitel is in the store for she cannot sit long in one place &

rest. If she has nothing to do she goes for a walk..... Jacob & Baileh sleep late -- even till seven A.M. They sleep on the "shalke" (a sort of second floor) & they don't even hear the crowing of the roosters. They admitted that, they never yet saw "vie men treibt arois die kuh, in feld"... The time for taking the cows to pasture is about four A.M. .... (Intermission: The letter must wait, for the tea is ready & after I drink tea and zwieback, and then pray, I will write more).

Last Saturday (July 12) we had a visitor from Poniviez. His name is Jacob Kahn -- an old friend of the family; an interesting person; and a linguist. Er ret fliesig yidish, govorit po-rooski, kalbes po-letoo veskeh, me-dabair be-lashon ivris, spricht deutsch - and ooni - booni mooni (this means:- he understands esperanto)... He also might've been a physician, had he completed that course; he is a mathematician... he sings Yiddish sings.... and recites selections from Sholom Aleichem... & earns a living as a book-keeper, in a bank in Poniviez. He remained with us till Sunday night - and we had an enjoyable time...

In the synagogue, this Saturday, there was interference at the reading of the Torah..... The aggrieved persons did not let the reading of the Torah proceed. This is the second time such a thing happened in Ponedel while I am here. The first time the shochatim complained that a butcher threatened to attack one shochet if he would declare as unfit (traifsh) that butcher's cow... And this time, the people began to discuss the problem of a Lonkeh (pasture land).... The story is too long to write it down here - but I will give part of a speech made in shul by one of the townsmen..... He walked up on the Bimah (platform),



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AIRSH LAIB'S LOG-BOOK

(continued from page 111)

changed his fist on the tabel - and said: "Friends - for many years we had a pasture land behind the bath house - where our cattle and horse grazed....This land belongs to the boyim now, & the Jewish horses now don't have a place on Sabbath days...hence, I say, that we Jews must do something (with God's help), to redeem this pasture land, from the gentiles.....What was decided?....That the Torah be read, & that the services proceed....

Last night (Sunday) the Zionists voted. Ticket # 1 got 81 votes; #6 received 38 votes; and # 3 had only two votes...Two more votes were disqualified; the Revisionists and Agudists refused to vote....So the Zionists-Socialists won, & the Ponedel Jewish Youth is overjoyed.

Jacob Vengerin went to a meeting of the "Waldibus" (city council) - of which he is a member; and there together with the other members, a decision will be reached about the pasture land... So much for Communal affairs....

The "Megillah" which you sent me (see page 93) arrived on July 13.. What shall I tell you? The Megilah caused a furore in the house..They wanted to know, where you got such a long piece of paper...Seeing the latter, I realized you are on vacation...I cannot answer each one individually who wrote on the Megilah but I thank each and every one at this time....

My tentative program from now is as follows:- On Friday, July 19th, I will go to Poniviez, where as a youth, I went to "cheder" and will be the guest of Jacob Kahn already

mentioned. On Sunday, July 21st, I will be in Poompiyan - where I was born. Maile Fehler (a cousin of my mother) lives there. There, I will be together with my sister Gittel, and on Tuesday (July 23) I return, to Ponedel. The first week in August, I will spend with my brother, Feievel, in Kovno....A letter from the French Line informed me - that my cabin on the Normandie is 813b, leaving Havre on August 14...There is an additional charge for traveling on this boat, and tickets cost more after August 10th...

PONEDDEL, Thurs. July 18, 1935

It is 2.00 P.M. Sivah Asar B'tam muz (a fast day), and we just came from shul where we attended Mincha services...So now, we will eat.... As you see, even in Ponedel -- the modern spirit has permeated....and there is hardly a "minyan" (religious quorum) who fasted this day...

We visited the Hachnosas Orchim, where poor Jewish itinerants & beggars get lodging & food for a day, or so.....This place has two clean rooms....Then, went to see the bath house and the "mikveh". It is much nicer than I remember it from thirty years ago. The "mikveh" now has a pump, for filling it with water, and modern means for removing, and for warming water...The Mikveh is heated every Monday & Thursday; & the bath-house is heated only once a month and before holidays. I was informed that all the improvements were made with the donation, given by Simon and Ida Sussman when they visited Ponedel in 1931.

The Ponedel Jews always have some local issue that gives life to the community. As examples:- recently, they had the elections for the Zionist Congress (about which I have already written to you). There were



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## HIRSH LAIB'S LOG-BOOK (cont)

lectures, debates, and even a parade of the Hebrew School children! ...The pasture-land issue provided talk and arguments and accusations of all sorts. Finally, the pasture was bought back by the Jews & rented to the Jewish community (Kehillah) for twenty-five years....Then there is the permanent issue about "mating" the girls. In all Lithuanian towns (Ponedel included) there is an excess of girls...Maids with money (nadan, dowry), and without. Young girls, old ones, all degrees of beauty - but all with one hope, and thought:- "Where can one get a choson"...Then there is the watching of any young man, who comes to town...Everyone speculates whom he came to see; what he does; and his

movements are carefully watched... This is the way people spend their time, in addition to making a living...Poverty, however, is extreme among the Jews....

Yesterday I went around the town with a photographer and he took many pictures of houses and persons. You will see how people live..This week I visited "Yokishek" - a farm once known as the "galach's - fulvarik". This place now is owned by the Flax family. They are among the three Jews in Ponedel who have a permit to buy land....In general Jews are not allowed to own or cultivate land in Lithuania...

I am awaiting the arrival of the Sussmanews just as a religious Jew waits for Mosi-ach....

PA.-VA.-PA. -- (cont. from p. 114)

Having previously decided on our course, we headed straight for the Naval Academy. As we entered - the first sight that greeted us, was a "workout" of what appeared to be a sail-boat class. (To anyone interested, I will gladly show the moving-pictures I took here and elsewhere on the trip)...We then started on a self-directed tour, of the Academy grounds. It is an enormous place consisting of a library, hospital, gymnasium, dormitories, recreation halls, etc...A meal and a movie completed the day's work.

Wednesday, and business attended to, to Washington. Some 30 miles of smooth road led us to a city, that was to hold for us -- that is, for Henry -- bad luck. The Capitol was our first (and last) stop. First we went to the Senate Chambers. It was somewhat of a thrill to see all in one place such notables as V.-Pres. Graner, Sen. Wagner, LaFollete..&.

In the Senate reception-room -- we succeeded in introducing ourselves to, & shaking hands, with Sen. Guffey of Penna. (We shall be happy to let whoever wishes, shake the hand that shook the hand that shook the hand of the President).

Now, the sad part of our story!! Ambitiously Henry & I began the circular climb to the dome of the Capitol. We climbed two-thirds of the way when Henry began to feel a dizziness. We stepped out at the landing for a rest. It was there, that Henry, leaning over the railing -- suddenly loosened his hold.....and Plop! - fell back, head first..... Within a few minutes - the guard was up. When he recovered from his faint, Henry was taken down to the guard's booth, where he rested for some time, until he felt better... ..A severe knock on the head has a funny way of making one want to see a doctor... We arrived in Philadelphia the same evening (Wednesday), Henry executing a neat driving job.



August 16, 1935

MY LOG-BOOK. By Hirsh Laib Sussman

Previous installments appeared on pp. 74, 80, 90, 99, & 108. The Log is translated from the Yiddish...

PONEDEL, July 25, 1935

Two days ago (on Tuesday) I came back from a trip to Koopishok, Poniviez, and Poompiyan. Gitel accompanied me.

In Koopishok - we spent only two hours as guests of the merchant Mr. Kreitzig - an old friend of the family, and with whom my father used to deal years ago. Koopishok is in no way any different from the typical Lithuanian small town.

Then we went to Poniviez - which is a larger, more attractive town, full of life. It has fine streets. Many of them are paved with smooth stones. A number of "drozhkes" are lined up in the market-place, waiting for customers...but the coachmen just wait and doze....Poniviez has a power plant, and the streets have electric lights. There are also many three-story houses.

Among the Jewish institutions of Poniviez are "Tarbut" and "Yavneh" (two Hebrew Gymnasiums - schools); a large modern hospital; and a Yeshivah (Talmudical college), which has high standing in Lithuania. It is a three-story building, erected at the expense of a Mr. Rubinstein (a rich Jew of Poniviez). The Hebrew Gymnasium "Yavneh" was erected through the efforts of Rabbi Yosef Eshenman who went to South Africa, and obtained money for the institution from Mr. Luria (originally of Poniviez), who is known as the "potato-king" of Africa.....I visited a friend in his leather-store, and found him reading a Hebrew book -- "Toledos Hafilosofia Be-yisrael" -- and later I was at his home in the

evening. This man is Motel Plotzky - a cousin of Al Heller (of Philadelphia).

By automobile, Poompiyan is only one hour travel from Poniviez. Here one again sees the poor Lithuanian small town. Sixty Jewish families, living in gloom and poverty. There are no pavements, no electricity - nothing that would indicate we are living in the year 1935...However, this is the Lithuanian town...

However, we came to Poompiyan to visit our relatives, and we had an enjoyable time. We were greeted so cordially and warmly that it was a pleasure to be there. Our first visit was to the home of my mother's cousin Maile Fehler. He is the father of Jacob Fehler of South Africa. He lives in an apartment, over his store, together with his daughter and son-in-law Hodel and Motel Kramer. They have a small daughter (Sheveh Leah). We also were at the home of Hirsha Fehler (another son of Maile). Later we stopped at the home of Mrs. Riva Kramer who lives with her son Yisroel - who married a few months ago.....We were sorry that we could not stay longer, but my time is limited now...

Ponedel always has something to talk about. On Tuesday night, July 23, a "meshulach" from a Kovno Yeshivah was in Ponedel. He spoke in the synagogue before Ma-ariv...His lecture I cannot repeat, for to do so, one must motion with his thumb and spit on the floor....On Wednesday night (July 24) a "chazan" visited the town. After Ma-ariv -- he gave a concert of Yiddish and Hebrew folk songs. The listeners were enchanted, all except Aaron Rabinowitz, the shochet, who frequently serves as a cantor - and considers himself a musician....Then, a circus came to town this week...A big



## HIRSH LAIB'S LOG-BOOK (cont)

tent was put up in the marketplace and two Lithuanian flags are over it. All kind of tricks are said to be performed inside of the tent... it is true, that there are no animals in this circus...but who says that a circus must have animals?

Last night a small boy distributed circulars that a "world-renowned chazan of Utian" will daven and give a concert in the shul....Here is a verbatim report of my conversation with the lad:-

Hirsh Laib: How old are you?

Boy: I am eight years old.

E.L. Where is your mother?

Boy. Mother is at home.

E.L. And father, where is he?

Boy. Papa is in Argentina.

E.L. How much are you getting for this work?

Boy. Twenty cents (Lithuanian).

E.L. To what party do you belong?

Boy. To the Z.S. (Zionist Socialist Party).

E.L. Why do you belong to the Z.S.

Boy. Because it is for the poor.

E.L. And the "Agudah" is no good?

Boy. It is no good.

E.L. But the Agudah is religious.

Boy. It is not so religious.

E.L. How do you know?

Boy. In our house lives a girl, who belongs to the Agudah - and I saw her fixing her stockings, on the Sabbath.

E.L. And the Z.S. is religious?

Boy. Sure. All, who belong to the Z.S. pray three times a day.

E.L. And you also pray?

Boy. Indeed, I pray.

E.L. What will you do with the twenty cents?

Boy. I will go to the circus.

E.L. By yourself?

Boy. No, I will not go to the circus. I will give the money to mother. She will buy bread.

My brother-in-law Jacob Vengerin told me to give him some candy. He thanked me and went away to continue to distribute the notices.

Visitors from Birz came to see me on Tuesday last. They were Abram & Shaineh Fisher (a cousin of Morris Sussman of Elizabeth, N.J.). They asked me to convey their thanks to their aunt Mrs. Jennie Sussman (of Elizabeth) who sent them money recently. Their daughter was sick, & the money was most useful. Now the child is convalescing.

PONEDDEL, Tuesday July 30, 1935

Today, I received the Sussmanews of July 19th. This is the last number of our paper which I will read in Lithuania....and this letter is the LAST ONE which I will write to you for the "Log-book". (NOTE: Lou is left Ponedel on August 4 on his way to the United States.....Ed.)

It is the fourth day since it began to rain and it is cold; & here in Ponedel when it rains one feels gloomy...Not a soul in the street. Everyone sits in the house & waits for clear weather. My mother says: "So many Jews have rented orchards and gardens (for business) - & the rain and wind will ruin them...But the "ribono-shel-olam" knows what he does, and one must not sin"....

I do not know what to write; not because there is a dearth of daily events, but rather because I've accustomed myself to the life in the small town, and I don't "see" much anymore. Everything appears so naturally in place.

Recently, my sister Mrs. Baileh Vengerin left for a vacation, in a place near Kovno. Jacob and I went to see her off at the train-depot. The train of cars is made up of...



August 16, 1935

HIRSHA LAIB'S LOG-BOOK (concluded)

one car - and it runs from Ponedel to Shkopishok...

Any number of persons in Ponedel are visiting me, and giving me all sorts of addresses of their relatives in America - asking me to see them and ask them to write.....and to send money.....I try to explain that Bellingheim, Washington & Los Angeles are far away from Philadelphia, where I live, and that it is not easy for me to go to these cities and see the people...But it's useless....."S-macht nit ois", one woman says. "My Itzikel and my Mayerel are very good children. You will call them on the telephone, & they'll surely come to see you"... Another calls me into his house, & shows me the picture of his 4 sons who live in the United States. Two are in Sheffield, Alabama, and the other two live somewhere else - he doesn't know where. He wants me to see them.....I say: "But I do not know where the other two live"...& he answers: "Smacht nit. Ir vet em shain derkenen".....A girl (close

to forty years old) tells me thus: "I have a cousin in Norfolk, three in New York, & two in Chicago. When you come to America tell them that if each one sent me 200 dollars, I would have enough "nadan", & would be able to marry.....One old woman says to me "Why did you come from America? Had you come from Africa - I would be able to send regards to my Avremel who lives thirty kilometer from Johannesburg"...

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All these stories are not imaginary. They actually happened, and it shows how the Lithuanian Jews must now depend on American relatives.. Till some five years ago, they received help from America. Economic depression has cut off this aid, & a large part of the Jews in Lithuania are in dire needs.....

My best regards, to every one of our relatives...And so, Samuel, I close my Log-book -- hoping to see you soon in Philadelphia.

Your

Hirsha Laib

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FALSE ALARM

Florence and Nussie Sussman felt sorry for the poor cat. They noticed how it was suffering as it struggled to stand up...They wanted to do something to relieve it...

So....no sooner did they arrive home, than Florence looked up certain 'phone numbers in the telephone book.... First...she called the B.P.C.A...then the Morris Refuge....then the

electrical bureau - at City Hall...&..the Morris Refuge again..... Finally, she succeeded in evoking one promise that the suffering cat will be called for later in the afternoon...

Nussie was appointed to keep an eye, on the cat till the ambulance would call for it..... Every few minutes - he would run to the porch window, look at the cat for a few seconds, and then report...that the cat was still ailing..

This he repeated several times...until...Nussie came running into the dining room with.. "Gee, the cat isn't out there any more...."

An investigating party went out & verified the statement. Looking around for the animal, they espied it, strolling along very nonchalantly....Later, it was learned that the cat's "sickness" amounted to nothing more - than an empty stomach....

So what?