

Interviewee: Roberto Schopflocher

November 28, 1996

Interviewer: Ana Epelbaum

This interview deals with the Jewish-German agricultural colonies in the province of Entre Rios, Argentina. There were very few Jews also who had come from Rumania.

Colonies' discussed: Avigdor, Cohen Oungre (or Alcaraz.) Other colonies mentioned: Moisesville, Rivera, Dominguez, Pedernal, Basavilbaso, General Campos, Ubajay, Clara. Some names of colonists mentioned: Livestein, Levinsky, Fraidemberg, Carlos Noimayer, Hirshbrand.

The recruitment of German Jews to go to the colonies was not very successful, even after the advent of Hitler, and until 1937 (when very few accepted.) There was a slight increase after Kristallnacht. Mr. Oungre, the director of the JCA (Jewish Colonization in Argentina) said: "to make regular people into farmers is difficult, but when it comes to Jewish people, the work is even harder." The idea was to send to Argentina families from the most exposed areas of Germany, and those with more male children (to get more of a work force.) Eventually this latter strategy came to haunt them because the absence of women in the colonies did not allow for the formation of more families. The pitfalls of "importing" young women.

Details about the farms: the workers, housing, education, cultural life, customs, celebrations, medical service and clinics. The community building was housed in the Civic Center, together with the police station, the Jewish school, the telegraph office, the cooperative, the office of the administration, and the bath to remove the ticks off the cattle.

The contract between the JCA and the farmers.

The problems originated by the fact that the farms' planners did not know the topography of the land, or the particulars of the local cattle.

The small industries brought by some of the arriving farmers.

News of the extermination of the Jews arrived to the colonies only in 1945, although they knew before about the concentration camps.

Anti-Semitism in Avigdor was expressed by the wife of the governor of Entre Rios. Seated next to the wife of the colony administrator (Mrs. Mosnain,) the wife of the governor said: "Too bad Hitler lost the war". She thought the farmers were German but non-Jews.

Leaving Avigdor to go to Moisesville, colony that was more established.

The celebration of the Argentinean patriotic holidays.

The colony of Alcaraz.

Reasons for leaving the farms.