

# White Slavery and Jews



White Slave by  
Mary Abastenia St. Leger Eberle -1913

In memory of Sophia Chamys

By Jerry Klinger

**Anti-Semitism's heel ground harder, unrelenting, crushing, murderous and vicious. Jewish life, the worth of Jewish life, in Poland and Russia, plunged into degeneration.**

**Max Nordau, co-founder with Theodor Herzl of the World Zionist Organization, knew Zionism was the path to regeneration.”**

Judith Rice

"Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion] could not imagine that Jewish women would stoop to crime or prostitution. Meyer Weisgal, a close associate, who resembled David Ben-Gurion, humorously quipped, a girl walked up to him on a London street and offered her services, overwhelmed by the idea of sleeping with the 'Israeli prime minister.'

Ben-Gurion, clearly troubled, was interested in only one thing:

'Was she Jewish?"

**"What is worse... ten times worse... no a hundred times worse?**

**If sexual immorality becomes accepted,  
the strong will exploit the weak...**

**God will send a new flood.**

**It will be his tears, raining from the sky.**

**Rabbi Zusia Friedberg – Baltimore, Md. 1895**

My mother told me about Gomberg. She knew him in the Ghetto.

"Salomon Gomberg was a hero", she said.

The Nazis did not think of him that way. The Jews did. In the winter of 1943, the Nazis ordered him to come to Gestapo headquarters in Pietrokow Trybunalski. He stood at attention outside the building. They removed his overcoat, his shoes. The biting cold snow and sleet whirled in mini-cyclones. The Nazis poured buckets of ice water over his clothes, soaking them. Quickly the wet clothing turned to ice. He stood outside the Gestapo headquarters the entire night, shivering violently. His health broke from the experience. The Nazis had no further use for Gomberg. He was sent to Buchenwald and death.

Salomon Gomberg was not a physician. He was a Jew of Russian background who ran a small electronics business in Lodz before the war. He and his wife were rounded up and sent away from Lodz where they might have had friends and found help. They were sent to Pietrokow Trybunalski. In 1942, the Nazis put Gomberg in charge of overseeing the health of tens of thousands of Jews concentrated there.

January, 1943, the Nazis ordered 500 children to be made ready for "relocation", to relieve the overcrowding in Pietrokow. Everyone knew what that meant. Gomberg organized an emergency response. If the Nazis could be bribed, maybe, the children could be saved.

Money was quickly collected. Booze was found. Women (mothers, daughters, wives) agreed to give themselves to the Nazis, if the children would be released from the "relocation" train.

The bribes were given. The price was paid.

The Children's Train was cancelled. The children were released. Gomberg was hailed as a hero.

After the war, the incident was kept quiet, buried. The women, who had prostituted themselves with the Nazis, never talked about what they had done. After the war...what had to be done during the war to save the children was thought best left hidden in a closed chest at the bottom of the darkest closet. It was painful, shameful.

That Jews should have had to do this....

Respectable Jewish society did not want to remember. Respectable society developed a perverted embarrassment for what happened. The women were no longer heroes. Jewish society, and especially rabbinic leadership, did not talk about it. The rare times they did, their voices were hushed. Doors were closed. The children should not hear.

Sex, sexuality, dysfunction and abusive Jewish home life is not aired before non-Jews.

White Slavery is a curious term. The procurement and prostitution of women is not a white business. It is not clean. It is a business. It is a very dark business, frequently very gray. White Slavery is an opportunistic business fueled by sexual disproportionality –simply, not enough women to men.

It is an ancient business. It is a sadly human business that is demanded because of emotional/hormonal hard wiring. It is a business as old as humanity. The Bible speaks of it in mixed metaphors – some prostitutes are good people, some are bad. Almost universally, it is their behavior that is bad not their humanity.

Men prey on women. Women prey upon men. Women prey upon women. Men prey upon men. Pimps upon prostitutes, prostitute upon prostitute, *johns* upon prostitutes, and prostitutes upon their *johns*. It is mainly a business where men prey on women. It is not a victimless business.

The “business” draws across all cultural, economic, social, racial and religious boundaries. In Israel, an estimated 30-40% of the prostitute’s clients come from the religious world.

The world of Prostitution is white, gray and utterly dark. A very distinct, and very small number of prostitutes, have chosen their profession rather than the drudgery of the 40 hours week. Most *ladies of the evening* became prostitutes for a plethora of reasons, usually socio-economic, emotional or drug related.

Jews want to believe they are not and have not been involved in the White Slave business. Jews need to believe they are not involved. If Jews are involved, Jews want to believe that that individual is a rogue, an aberration, a perversion from who they are. White Slavery is perversion from the higher values of a Torah guided moral life.

Jews as White Slavers are bad for all Jews. It is an affirmation, a confirmation, of Jewish depravity for the anti-Semite. Jewish criminality is proportionally very small in the Jewish community. Small or not, it is a huge justification for the anti-Semite’s generalizations.

Jews are made like all people. They have the same blood, sinews, tissues, hormones, foibles, needs and weaknesses God placed in all His creations. They are no better or worse than anyone else.

George Bernard Shaw, the famous, cynical British 19<sup>th</sup> century playwright was a guest at a stuffy, formal society dinner. He was seated next to a respected, matronly dowager.

Turning to her, he asked:

"Madame, would you go to bed with me for \$10,000,000?"

The dowager squeezed her eyes into tight slits looking at Shaw deeply.

"Yes, I would", she replied.

A few moments went by. Shaw turned back to his dinner companion and asked,

"Madame, would you go to bed with me for \$10?"

The respected dowager became indignant.

"Sir, what do you take me for? Absolutely not!" she retorted with offended venom.

Shaw looked calmly at the respected symbol of society. He answered her question.

"Madam, what you are has been established. Only the price is negotiable."

Anecdotally, there is a story of a Jewish madam in the American Wild West. To absolve herself from sin, she used her profits to build a synagogue on the frontier. The story is most likely urban legend. It has the flavor of buying indulgences for salvation. Jews do buy indulgences, respectability and *machordom*. They don't admit it.

Donald Sterling owns the American professional basketball team, the Los Angeles Clippers. Sterling was born Donald Tokowitz to Ashkenazic Jewish immigrants. He changed his name for "business" reasons. Sterling has donated heavily, annually and regularly, to Jewish charities earning him places of honor and respect. Revelations about Sterling's deep seated racist animus to Black Americans has brought outrage, embarrassment and distress to the Jewish community. Calls to return Jewish charitable donations rang vociferously. Jews rushed to buy the Clipper franchise, take it away from Sterling as he was not representative of the broader Jewish world. Sterling's ownership of the Clippers is being litigated in court.

Until Sterling's mistress revealed his racism, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the NAACP, was going to give him a second lifetime achievement award. Calls to the NAACP to return Sterling's huge cash donations to them have been declined. The money, though tainted, could do much good they argued. The award to Sterling was canceled and the President of the Los Angeles Chapter of the NAACP resigned instead.

In 2006, a bestselling book from 1953 was republished, A House is Not a Home by Polly Adler. Adler was a Jewish Madame. She was born Pearl Adler in Yanow, Russia in 1900. She ran the *best* whore house in New York City during the 1920's through the 1940's. Her house of prostitution on Lexington Avenue was a stylish crossroad for the city's liberal intelligencia to mingle with organized crime, corrupt police and political officialdom. Celebrities such as Milton Berle, and the baseball hero Joe DiMaggio, crossed paths with the famous writers of the Algonquin Round Table, Dorothy Parker, Alexander Woolcott and Robert Benchley. Organized crime types such as Arthur Flegenheimer and Dutch Schultz

used the House for both relaxation and, when needed, a hideout. The racy titillating book was Adler's biography.

Adler said she entered the "business" after she was raped. It is a plausible reason given the social ostracism of "fallen" women. Her reason for becoming a prostitute, who ran her own stable of women for profit, is not reasonable if her reason for doing so was that she was raped. She understood the trauma. Profit and fear of her clientele kept her doors open.

The book is an informal window, a social history, of immigrant life and the Jewish American urban experience. The great Jewish immigrant generation of the 1880's – 1920's passed in time. Adler "retired" from the business and settled in California after her last arrest in the 1940's. She wrote her story in 1953 when it was just beginning to be O.K. for Jews to talk about themselves and prostitution. America was changing after the War. The forbidden fruit, the forbidden aphrodisiac of Jewish sexuality that lingered in back of anti-Semitic minds, was o.k. to tell. Hollywood made a movie about her life. It was never released for unknown reasons.

American Jewish crime organizations had grown up in the overcrowded seething poverty of the immigrant urban world of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. At times, they cooperated with the much larger, established Italian and Irish organized crime world. They too had been spawned in their own communities for much the same reasons.

Jewish criminals were involved in the American prostitution business but only as peripheral activities to their broader criminal interests. In the United States, Jewish life and mutual aide societies organized early. Courageous focused Jewish women, such as Sadie American of the National Council of Jewish Women, worked to protect and integrate Jewish immigrant women into American life. Sadie worked tirelessly to defeat White Slavery.

White Slavery never became the primary focus of Jewish organized crime in North America. It did in South America. From 1860's until the late 1930's, Jews were disproportionately represented in the White Slave business in Latin America.

Isaac Boorosky traveled back to his native Poland from Argentina where he was an up and coming businessman. Women, especially marriageable Jewish women, were scarce in Argentina in the 1890's. Many young Jewish men sought their fortunes in the Americas. Sending back and even going back to the Old Country to find a bride was not unusual. Marriages were arranged, sometimes sight unseen. The Bride would travel to the Groom and meet, not unusually, for the first time.

Isaac Boorosky was not that kind of man. He wanted to go and meet his future bride and her family. He knew and understood the desperation of Jewish life in Poland. It was a life made rancid by unceasing anti-Semitism and the desperation of poverty that Jews were pushed into. Jews existed with little hope except for the promised Messiah and the Messiah they had heard of - America. Boorosky traveled to a small shtetl not far from Warsaw.

He met Sophia Chamys' father. Boorosky, a young man in his mid-twenties, was well dressed, clearly moneyed and established. He was searching for a bride, he told the father, a bride to take back to his home in Argentina. Sophia was little more than a child. She was fourteen. There was no hope or prospect for Sophia in Poland. There was in America. Argentina was in South America.

Boorosky gave Sophia's father a, considerable, reverse dowry. A simple wedding called a Stille Chupah, common to many in shtetl life where a Rabbi was not affordable or available, was arranged. A wedding, before a Jewish witness, the ancient vows of Israel, *Hare at mikudeshet lee...* were pronounced and Sophia and Isaac were *married*.

Tearful goodbyes, most likely forever, were exchanged between Sophia and her parents. The young couple departed for the long ocean voyage to Argentina and Sophia's new life.

The voyage to Argentina took a few weeks. Isaac began to teach Sophia what he wanted and expected. The, loving, newly wed husband disappeared in the dark waves of the Atlantic Ocean. Isaac began beating Sophia, terrorizing her, training her. She was to be obedient to his will in all things. She was to work and do what he wished.

In Argentina, Isaac brought Sophia to his business at the Hotel Palestina and the Café Parisienne in Buenos Aires. She, and other new "brides", were displayed naked before groups of Jewish businessmen who examined what they were about to buy, carefully. Isaac, like the other Jewish businessmen, only dealt in Jewish women.

Sophia was sold.

Sophia was alone, without language, friends, money, and family in a strange land. She was put to work immediately as a prostitute for the new owner of her labor. She was a piece of human machinery designed to bring in revenue nightly, weekly, regularly. Sophia was required to provide service for dozens of men daily and hundreds weekly. Prostitution was very profitable for the Jewish pimps and Jewish madams who largely controlled prostitution in Argentina. The business Society that they all were members of, the *Warsaw Jewish Mutual Aid Society*, looked after the administrative and legal issues of the membership.

Isaac, and others like him, returned to Poland or Russia, multiple times a year. They were degenerated products of the anti-Semitic world that they themselves had escaped. The false marriage and Stille Chupah ruse worked again and again, replenishing the supply of Jewish women for the business.

The Warsaw Jewish Mutual Aid Society was organized about the 1860's when the first boatload of Jewish women were sent to Argentina. The organization grew in size, power and influence until it reached its pinnacle in the 1930's. They used a common technique to operate in Argentina, with branches in New York, South Africa, Brazil, Poland and India... bribery of government officials, police and judiciaries. It worked remarkably well.

By the 1930's, the society had over 400 members. The rufinos, or pimps as they were sometimes called, controlled an estimated 2,000 houses of prostitution in Argentina alone with 30,000 women. They were

big business, tightly integrated and vertically controlled for maximum economic efficiency. Members, ironically, were expected to operate with each other on a basis of order, discipline and honesty.

Outrage from the Polish envoy to Argentina demanded that the Warsaw Jewish Mutual Aid Society change its name in 1927. The name was changed to the Zwi Migdals, in honor of the director of the society Louis Zwi Migdal. The name stuck and is associated with the Society from its founding.

Conflict between Jewish respectable society and the Zwi Migdals in Argentina was always present and schizophrenic. On the one hand, in the early decades, the organized Jewish prostitution business was a disgraceful black mark. It stained all Jews in Argentina and everywhere the Zwi Migdals operated. On the other hand, the Zwi Migdals were pillars of the community charities. They lived in the best neighborhoods. Their children attended the best schools. Their wives were part of general society. Organized Jewish life was struggling and financially delicate.

With growing maturation and economic viability of respectable Jewish society, association and money from the Zwi Migdals was shunned. Articles in the local papers began appearing in 1885 about the Zwi Migdals. The Argentinian Jewish community organized the Jewish Association for the Protection of Women and Girls. The organization was largely ineffective in Argentina where corruption was endemic.

Respectable Jewish society struggled with what to do. The Jewish Pimps and Procurers were heavy contributors to the construction of synagogues, community buildings and community organizations. Ultimately it was decided that accepting "dirty" money would not be tolerated. It lead to more Jewish women being trapped into prostitution. Respectable Jewish society acted.

The Argentinian legal system had been bribed. There was little recourse to the government. Jewish society chose to label the Pimps, the Procurers, and the Prostitutes as "tmeyim", unclean. They would no longer associate with or permit them to associate with Jewish society. The "tmeyim" were banned from synagogues, Jewish community life, even burial in the Jewish cemetery.

When the respectable society would not have them in their synagogues and permit them to be buried in the Jewish cemetery, the Zwi Migdal Society built their own synagogues and purchased land for their own cemetery. On the Jewish High Holy Days, most certainly when a Rabbi could be obtained, Jewish prostitutes prayed with Jewish pimps and procurers for forgiveness from God.

The wealthiest of the Zwi Migdals were patrons of the center of Jewish life in Buenos Aires, the Jewish theater. It was a tacit compromise on the activities of the Zwi Migdals. The compromise ended in a violent and bloody confrontation.

One evening, it was a pleasant enough one for the opening of the Jewish theater in Buenos Aires, May 7, 1906. The rufinos arrived for an evening of entertainment. Outside stood a young man, an ardent, vociferous Zionist, outraged at the degenerative filth that was coming to associate with Jewish society. His name was Nathan Sorkin. Nathan stood in the doorway and blocked the entrance of the rufinos. They pushed back. Joined by other Zionists and members of the Jewish society, the rufinos were attacked violently. Blood flowed. The rufinos never returned.

The struggle to eradicate the Zwi Migdals was a difficult one. It took two key elements to bring them down. It took members of the police, with the government, and a judge who could not be bribed. And it took someone from inside of the Zwi Migdal world that was courageously willing to testify.



Rachel Liberman

Rachel Liberman was a former prostitute. Her husband had died the very year they immigrated to Argentina. To support her two small children, Rachel became a prostitute. She worked for four years, eventually saving enough money to get out of the “business.” She opened a small antique store and tried to move back to normal life.

Her pimp had other thoughts. Her store was robbed. Everything she had was either smashed or stolen. She was destitute again. It was a situation her pimp wanted. He thought she would have to come back to him to work as a prostitute. Rachel did something very different in 1930.

No one had been able to make a case stick against the Zwi Migdals in Argentina. The police were corrupt, the courts were corrupt. There were members of Argentinian society who wanted to clean up the country but they were stymied. No prostitute would come forward and give evidence.

Superintendent of Police, Julio Eslogray, was in his office when Rachel Liberman came in to see him. Liberman had been a former prostitute but she refused to be bludgeoned into becoming a prostitute again. She gave Eslogray the evidence he needed.

An honest Judge sentenced over 100 Zwi Migdal members to long terms in prison. The majority of the membership had been alerted to the coming crackdown and fled the country. The cases were appealed and few of the convicted served much if any time. The Zwi Migdal society relocated to other outposts, even returning to Argentina. They continued their operations of procuring Jewish women for prostitution.

What finally ended the Zwi Migdal's operations was the *Final Solution*. The supply of Jewish women from Europe was violently ended with the rise of Hitler and World War II. Jews, good, bad, young, old, guilty, innocent, were all exterminated together.

In the United States, Jewish organized crime business declined. America was truly the *Goldene Medina*. In America, a Jew was free to become the best that was possible. They were not forced by anti-Semitism into a degenerated caricature of Jewish life and values. Economic opportunity and vertical mobility quickly emptied the Jewish urban ghettos as the Jews emerged into American life.

Jewish prostitutes continued operating in Argentina and Brazil until 1960. They were older, worn women with no alternatives and no community except their own. They remained shunned and isolated.

Rebecca Freedman was one of those prostitutes working for the Zwi Migdals. Most Jewish prostitutes died before they were thirty. Respectable Jewish society fought them by shunning them as *tmeiyim*. They were denied Jewish burial. It was a frightful thing for the women to know that in life they were condemned to hell. They did not want to be condemned to eternal damnation and denial of redemption when the Messiah should finally come as well. Without a Jewish burial, and the rites of Jewish burial, they were forever doomed.

Rebecca Freedman, with other prostitutes, collected their monies. They rented a space for a small synagogue that they could pray to God in. One of the women died. The prostitutes purchased, on their own without Zwi Migdals money, a small cemetery ground. They consecrated it as best they could, Jewishly. A small building was erected on the grounds for the preparation of the body for burial.

In the years that followed, Rebecca Freedman would have the body of a deceased prostitute brought to the building before burial. She locked herself in the building with the body and personally, gently, cleaned and bathed the body in water. She performed the rites of tahara, ritual washing of the body and running water over the deceased prostitute to ritually purify her for eternal rest. At long last, the prostitutes were ritually clean, free to await the Messiah's coming, to await redemption.

God blessed Rebecca Freedman with 103 years of life.

Sophia Chamys is believed to have been born in Poland about 1878. She is believed to have died from tuberculosis in 1896. She would not have been given the rites of tahara, to have her body cleansed for her eternal rest. Sophia's body was taken, as so much scrap, to the municipal cemetery in Buenos Aires. She was interred in a communal grave and given Christian final rites. There was no one to say Kaddish for her.

The records of Sophia Chamys and the Zwi Migdal Society have mostly been destroyed. July 18, 1994, Palestinian terrorists bombed the AMIA Jewish Center in Buenos Aires. 95 innocent people were killed in the murderous attack. Nearly all the records of Jewish life in Argentina, including the records of Sophia Chamys and the Zwi Migdal Society, were destroyed.

The Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation approached a Chabad Rabbi in suburban Washington. We explained the story of Sophia Chamys. We explained to the Rabbi she had been a

prostitute. She died many years ago without a tahara or even someone to say Kaddish for her. We asked, if we could pay for a Jahrzeit plaque in his synagogue.

The Rabbi responded.

"B"H

We would feel it to be a merit to be able to put up a plaque in her name. I will take care of the details."



Israel is one of many, many countries that have legalized prostitution. Procurement or pimping is illegal in Israel. The Knesset is considering a new law making solicitation for sex illegal.

Sophia is not forgotten.

Jerry Klinger is President of the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation

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