My grandmother Mañe had in her living a small bookcase with books in two rows, one behind the other. The books were in no particular order. I remember that the front row featured a blue volume on Operation Entebbe, during which the Israeli army rescued some hundred hostages from the airport in Uganda; standing next to it were the novel *Jaws* and a book by William Somerset Maugham. That is to say, the whole thing was a bit Babylonian, Borgesian.

Mañe Perelmuter, my grandmother, was a little old lady, full of energy, topped with a bundle of grey hair. She had been born in a Polish town that is now in Ukraine. Mañe lived on one of the top floors of a highrise built in the 1970s, located on the avenida Rivadavia, a commercial boulevard that crosses the entire city of Buenos Aires, from east to west. The edifice seemed too proud in the midst of others, shorter and deteriorated. A soft light from the picture window illuminated the entire room. Even in winter, my grandmother’s home, with its wood floor and worn leather armchairs, was a warm place.

That small bookcase had never particularly interested me. I had spent many years poring over another library, in one of the bedrooms, brimming with books and magazines my uncle had left there when he went into exile in 1977, during the dictatorship. But one day, after having had three or four servings—how can one say no, when the food keeps arriving?—I sat in the armchair for a while to digest and realized I had never carefully looked over the little bookcase in front of me. The first row was no mystery (Entebbe, *Jaws*, Somerset Maugham), but in back was the other that I had never inspected. I stuck my hand in. There were unusual volumes, books I had forgotten and others that had never interested me. Then I found a small hardbound book, on whose cover no words were printed. Always excited to find a book without a title on the outside, I opened it. It was *Tsu der geshikhte fun der yidisher zhurnalistik in Argentine*, a soft volume rebound with a protective cover. I remember the emotion caused by discovering, on the Spanish title page at the other end of the book, the author’s name: Pinie Katz; and the title: *Apuntes para la historia del periodismo israelita en la Argentina* [Notes Toward the History of Jewish Journalism in Argentina].

---

edition, published in 1929 by the Yidisher Literatn- un Zhurnalistn-Fareyn in Argentine [Union of Argentine Jewish Writers and Journalists], an association founded in 1922 and long forgotten.

At that time, I had been doing research for my book that would come out under the title *Los crímenes de Moisés Ville: Una historia de gauchos y judíos* [The Crimes of Moisés Ville: A Story of Gauchos and Jews].\(^2\) It is a work of literary non-fiction about the beginnings of the Argentine Jewish community. The point of departure was a series of twenty murders that took place toward the end of the nineteenth century in Moisés Ville, the first Jewish agricultural settlement in this country. My great-grandfather, Mijl Hacohen Sinay, had written in a long article about those crimes, many years after they occurred, in 1947. It was a kind of memoir in which he evoked his arrival in that colony, at once so longed for and so inhospitable.

Mijl Hacohen Sinay, who died in 1958, had been a teacher, writer and journalist. At age twenty, when the century of the same number was about to begin, he left the colony to try his chances in Buenos Aires—a large city by then—where he founded the first Jewish newspaper in Argentina: *Der Viderkol* [The Echo]. It was a rudimentary organ that ran only three issues, but it is still mentioned today in histories of the Argentine Jewish community. I have never seen a copy. After researching the matter, I estimate that some five hundred of each issue were printed, but the last of them were no doubt blown to smithereens during the 1994 terrorist attack on the AMIA Jewish community center in Buenos Aires.

I had wondered whether my great-grandfather had, long before the 1947 article, written in *Der Viderkol* about the twenty-two murders in the Moisés Ville colony. Looking for an answer, I had come across Pinie Katz. Delving into his book, I would discover much more: a history of Jewish journalism in Argentina that was an intense, quick-paced, indiscreet, enjoyable story. And very probably, the copy I had found behind the façade of Entebbe, *Jaws* and Somerset Maugham had belonged to my great-grandfather.

I was keeping a diary of my research. On Thursday, 19 August 2010, I noted:

Jana and I are continuing to translate Botoshansky’s article. Later, I stop at my grandmother Mañe’s house and have an incredible stroke of luck. I shake the dust off a rebound book hiding behind others on a shelf in the living room. It turns out to be... the history of Jewish journalism in

---