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### Inhalt—In This Issue

- 1) Tsum Punkt
- 1) Ukrainian Klezfest
- 2) Der internatsyonaler kalendar
- 2) L'Chayim Comrade Stalin
- 3) The Secular Yiddish Schools of America Research Fellowship
- 4) Portia Rose Makes a Contact
- 4) Music from the Yiddish Radio Project
- 4) Hilda Rubin of Rockville, MD Asks Two Questions
- 4) Santa Monica "Nakhes"
- 4) Vos a mekhaye
- 4) L'Chayim Comrade Stalin
- 5) Birobidzhan
- 6) Mark Levy's Fall Programs
- 6) Yiddish Club in San Diego, California
- 6) Der Abraham Golomb Fund
- 7) Oystsugen fun briv in der redaktsye—  
Letters to the Editor (17 letters were excerpted; California, Fisher, Rauch; Canada, Beckerman, Lustig; Colorado, Coit; Connecticut, Fama; Florida, Robinson; France, Goldwasser; Illinois, Esselin; Missouri, Wax; New Jersey, Glaser; New York, Borodulin, Fishman, Juni, Siegelman; Ohio, Stratton; Pennsylvania, Antelman;
- 8) Yiddish Words That Are the Same in Singular and Plural

**Der Bay Editor: Philip "Fishl" Kutner,**  
1128 Tanglewood Way,  
San Mateo, CA 94403

**Web site: <http://www.derbay.org>**

**E-mail [FISHL@derbay.org](mailto:FISHL@derbay.org)**

**Ph: 650-349-6946**

**Make checks for chai (\$18) payable to Der Bay.**

**If you've been blessed, won't you send a LITTLE extra—  
please.**

### Tsum Punkt

Several Yiddish clubs have newsletters that are particularly worthwhile and have Yiddish information beyond that for local readers. Most noteworthy are the ones from Toronto and Boulder Colorado.

This article is about the newsletter of the Yiddish of Greater Washington. Its size and breadth makes it the best of any like it. Tsum Punkt is a sequel to the original newsletter. The type is large, clear and easily read. Bernard Konopko, the Yiddish portion editor is excellent in his presentations. *Di yidische prese arum der velt* is his fascinating contribution.

In addition to listings of the local area events there are regular articles on book reviews and well-known Yiddish cultural figures. This issue reviews the wonderful book, *Yiddish a Nation of Words*, by Miriam Weinstein. Shelby Shapiro, the English portion editor, writes the column on famous Yiddish personalities. Moshe Leyb Halpern is the personality covered in this issue. Your editor found it particularly informative.

The plethora of Yiddish activity in the Greater Washington area is shown by; the eleven vinklen, two leyenkrayzn, Hilda Rubin's Yiddish theatrical group, Di Shpilers and Hilda's activity with Café Kasrilevke.

Often *Der Bay* has suggested that Yiddish clubs should subscribe to as many publications as possible, and have members report on articles at the club's meetings. To subscribe to Tsum Punkt send \$18 to: Yiddish of Greater Washington  
6125 Montrose Rd., Rockville, MD 20852

### Ukrainian Klezfest

**Center of Jewish Education [center@cjeu.carrier.kiev.ua](mailto:center@cjeu.carrier.kiev.ua)**

The 3rd Ukrainian Klezfest is July, 28- Aug. 1, 2003 in Kiev. It centers on the vitality of Jewish weddings. Klezmer music served as entertainment. We shall:

- learn traditional music and dances for weddings, and how they are adapted by new performers & composers.
- study the folklore, folkart (ketubot) and Yiddish literary texts that relate to weddings and wedding music.
- study songs of the life cycle, and the improvisatory / theatrical / musical form, badkhones (wedding narrator).
- read plays depicting Jewish weddings and see Yiddish films. It ends with a theatricalized wedding reenactment.

**Portia Rose Makes a Contact**  
Mel Rogow mrogow@sbcglobal.net

Portia Rose called me today and asked me to e-mail this message in reference to an article published recently in *Der Bay*, by Fradle Freidenreich, *Amol iz Geven*. Portia would like you to know that she responded to her with a four-page letter of the history of Hebrew schools and camps in Los Angeles.

Portia was in the first Habonim group in Los Angeles, and this included the shliach sent there from Israel. Her teachers included the grandparents of Zev Yaroslavsky (presently a Los Angeles County Superintendent, and for many years a Los Angeles City Councilman). Portia has willed her vast collection of photos and memorabilia to an appropriate agency, and she invites Freidle and all other interested persons to share in her collection.

**Music from the Yiddish Radio Project**  
Klezcorner@aol.com

This wonderful CD features excerpts from the NPR program. It was produced by Dave Isay and Henry Sapoznik, and includes songs and commercials from the Golden Days of Yiddish Radio.

Included are the WEVD Station ID, WCNW Station ID and Yiddish commercials by Seymour Rechtzeit singing the Ajax Cleanser commercial (in Yiddish) as well as "Battle Hymn of the Republic," "Surrey Mitn Fringe Afn Top" and more. The "Manischewitz Matzo commercial" by The Barry Sisters and Jan Bart with Sam Medoff and The Yiddish Swingtet, The "Joe & Paul" jingle as well as the hit version of the song by the Barton Brothers.

Also featured are Moishe Oysher and Sholom Secunda performing "Dona Dona." Oysher performs the 'Stanton Street Clothier's Theme Song'. Other artists featured include; Charles Cohan performing "Levine Mit Zayn flying Machine", "Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen" by the Andrew Sisters, Abe Ellstein, Naftule Brandwein Orchestra, "Oh Mama, I'm so In Love" (Oy Mame Bin Ich Farleibt) in English by The Barry Sisters and more.

The accompanying booklet is full of information of an era gone by as well as photos including a 1942 photo of Joe & Paul Clothing store on Stanton Street. It is an excellent job by Dave Isay and Henry Sapoznik.

Music From The Yiddish Radio Project \$16.98 s&h incl. Credit card only, **Simon at Hatikvah Music 323-655-7083 436 N Fairfax Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90036**

**Hilda Rubin of Rockville, MD Asks 2 Questions**  
Hilda Rubin, hirubin@starpower.net

Ikh hob nor vos erhalten dayn naves bletl, un ikh muz dir zogn az s'iz take an antiki!-- gedikht mit zeyer interesante zakhn un temas. Ikh vel kenen nutsn informatziye vos iz dortn faran oyf undzer kumendiker Yiddisher Culture Festival. A dank dir in kepele, Fishl.

Itster, an andere por frages. Vemen kenstu in Anchorage, Alaska. Ikh darf visn oyb s'iz faran a Yiddisher kahal dortn-- vu a yunge meydl, nokh nisht in di draysiker, ken arayntret in ergets vu men pravet a seyder.

Frage, numer tsvey-- efsher veystu a kapelye in Sarasota, FL velkhe kenen shpiln alerley sortn muzik-- oyf a khasene.

**Santa Monica "Nakhes"**  
by Archie Barkan

Every Wednesday two very vital groups converge on classroom #105 of the Santa Monica Emeritus College. The Mama Loshn is the draw, and the response has been both overwhelming and extremely gratifying.

The morning class, present enrollment an astounding 54, engages in discussion of Jewish issues and exchanges information re Yiddish cultural happenings. Yiddish songs are literally translated and sung. There is never a session without some vocabulary, sayings, adages and proverbs with handouts for home use a/o further transmittal.

The more advanced afternoon class, enrollment 34, is currently reading Sholem Aleykhem's "Motl Peyse dem Khazn's" in the original... "nuff said".....

One afternoon student recently thanked me for "stretching us..." And both classes are hanging around "shmoozing" with one another and with me, as friendships are formed and forming.

Every Wednesday afternoon, between 3:30 and 4 P.M., you can find me on the Pacific Coast Highway, on my way home, with a smile on my face---and very high!....

**Vos a mekhaye!**  
Isaac Koziol, ikoziol@uro.com

Kum arayn un zetz zikh avek un mir veln hobn a Yidishn klas. Each month the residents of the Beth Sholom Gardens Assisted Living facility (Harry and Jeanette Weinberg building) of the Beth Sholom Continuing Care Campus in Richmond, Virginia meet in what is called the Joys of Yiddish hour. The residents are mostly in their 80s and 90s. Most have had some contact with Yiddish- Bubbe or parents spoke it, they spoke it, they may have knowledge of some words etc. One resident is Christian but she enjoys the "flavor" and she says the stories we read are universal. Each class involves some talk in English and Yiddish about some topic—the home, holidays, families. Then we read poems or proverbs, and we always finish with Yiddish songs.

At our next session I shall play the NPR audio of Yiddish broadcasts from 1930-1950. This is now on a CD (for the title and company send me an e-mail). When I started, I thought I would be the teacher. I have learned that a teacher always learns from his/her students.

**L'Chayim Comrade Stalin**  
John H. Rauch: Center for Jewish Culture & Creativity

Yale Strom's film, "L'Chayim Comrade Stalin," was completed under the auspices of the Center for Jewish Culture and Creativity. It covers the failed Soviet experiment to establish a Yiddish language Jewish homeland in Birrbidzhan as an alternative to Eretz Israel. It includes Yiddish dialogue and newly composed music selected from among 1300 entries to premier at the prestigious Berlin Film Festival this fall.

Communities or Jewish Film Festivals interested in screening the film should contact the Center at: mtarbut@aol.com or fax 323-658-5826. You will recall, that our prior films with Yale "The Last Klezmer" and "Carpati: 50 years 50 miles" were greatly enjoyed by Yiddish speaking and general audiences.

## Treatment Of Subject- L'chaiyim, Comrade Stalin By Elizabeth Schwartz and Yale Strom

This documentary film relates the history of the Jewish Autonomous Region (JAR). It incorporates the Soviet propaganda film about Jewish pioneers traveling via Trans-Siberian Railroad to settle the region, "Seekers of Happiness" (1936) to provide a history of the region.

### Introduction:

The film opens with Stalin and Lenin, and shtetl life in the USSR. It describes the circumstances for Soviet Jews during that period, and Stalin's impetus for creating a Jewish state. Subliminal flashes "The Jewish Question" and "The Fifth Column" will be flashed during the film. This device editorializes the government's "company line" of its alleged reasons for creating the J.A.R.

Footage from "Seekers of Happiness" and Yale Strom's journey retrace these steps. This arduous train journey (the longest in the world—in 1930 it took 10 days) to create a secular Yiddish utopia.

We see four informants—Jews from Birobidzhan, and Slava Shulyapov, the interpreter. Yale makes the serendipitous discovery that Slava is the grandson of Mikhail Kalinin, the first president of the Soviet Union and the architect of the J.A.R.. Slava shows his outrageous candor, anti-Semitic statements and insider's point of view as a former KGB agent. This trip takes us deep into Mother Russia to the Jewish State

The footage fades out over the first title card "L'Chaiyim, Comrade Stalin". It fades to black, the music fades out, and we hear the sounds of children learning Yiddish over black for 10 seconds.

### Arrival to Birobidzhan:

The picture opens. We are in a classroom (present day Birobidzhan) with Oxana Petrovsky teaching Yiddish to third and fourth graders. Interviews with original pioneers like Fira Kofman (Director of the Construction Museum), Eyda Peretzman (her husband was chief editor of the Birobidzhaner Shtern) and Laib Geffen (his father founded the kolkhoz (communal farm). Then there are the children and grandchildren of pioneers who are annotated by footage of the pioneers from "Seekers of Happiness" as they arrive, deal with the harsh environmental conditions and labor to establish a homeland. We see our informants in the school, in the offices of the Birobidzhaner Shtern (the region's newspaper), the local Duma, the synagogue and their homes.

The narration details the ICOR (Yiddische Colonizatzia Organizatzia), the American organization established in the 1920's to help Soviet Jews adopt agricultural skills in the Crimea and Ukraine. By 1928, ICOR's focus was on Birobidzhan. We see interviews with Americans whose parents had taken them to Birobidzhan as children. We see footage of Jews arriving from around the world under narration explaining that many of these immigrants were not Soviet idealists, but fleeing starvation. Later, more Jews arrive, this time as refugees of war-torn Europe.

### The Dream is Purged:

In "Seekers of Happiness", the main Jewish character, Pinye, cannot become the useful, agrarian Soviet Jewish ideal. This is shown by his discovery of gold, which he hoards with "typical" Jewish avarice. This assumption of the Jewish character, underscored by Slava's rhetoric, indicates the challenge for the pioneers. Despite physical hardships and challenges of building the J.A.R., the real challenge was to attain acceptance. ("SOH" does have an ideal, Soviet Jewish character, Rosa, who provides a contrast to Pinye). As we will learn from the informants, particularly Eyda (whose husband was arrested and executed by Stalin, only to be "posthumously rehabilitated") any toeholds these Yiddish secularists obtained were erased by Stalin's paranoia and psychotic purges.

Other informants share their experiences with the purges. Ana Pellar's father, who was a dedicated kolkhoz leader, was put in a gulag for saying "L'Chaiyim!" in a moment of unguarded exuberance. The JAR was crippled by 1948, its Yiddish culture suppressed—Yiddish was outlawed, Yiddish books were burned, and the Yiddish schools and theatres were closed. The region managed to limp along until Perestroika.

### The Future:

These Birobidzhaners, who have related their experiences and emotions in arriving at Birobidzhan, memories of constructing this utopia, and the horror caused by Stalin's purges, share perceptions about the J.A.R. today and their prognoses for the future. Three points of view are presented-. Fira Kofman remains an avid believer in the ideals of the J.A.R., and believes that it will be built up to its former promise. Ana Pellar, whose father was a leading communist and founder of the region (and whose story gives us the film's title) feels that the promise was a lie and that the region, and its Jews, will continue to dwindle. Rabbi Olek Machulsky shares this position. Sisters Alla and Sveta and Albina Fischman (a radio journalist), are learning Yiddish and are committed to staying in the region, but have little idea as to what will happen to the Yiddish identity of their home.

These interviews show footage of everyday life in Birobidzhan today, both Jewish and Russian. As Yale explores the possibility of Jewish continuation, the wedding scene from "Seekers of Happiness", in which Rosa marries the gentile head of the kolkhoz, is intercut with a Shabes celebration in Birobidzhan today. Russian and Yiddish folk music of the region complement the narrative.

## Fall Programs

by Mark Levy [www.marklevymusic.com](http://www.marklevymusic.com)

Here are the classes and lectures I've presented at temples and synagogues around the Bay. These can be scheduled through Lehrhaus Judaica or independently.

I bring rare video and audio-tape footage of Jewish performers at their best. With guitar and dumbek drum I demonstrate the wealth of Jewish folk music. Here are the topics. They can be one-shot or multi-session lectures.

Zing-zhe mir a lidele: Yiddish folk songs from Eastern Europe were described by Albert Einstein as "the most heartfelt" he had ever heard. We'll hear why in live and recorded performances of love, work, children's and other songs from a bygone era of Jewish culture.

Klezmer 101: Beginning with the turn of the 20th century, listen to vintage recordings of the most famous klezmer bands and learn about the players, the rhythms, and the wedding dances they accompanied. Both audio- and video-clips of rare recordings will be presented.

Golden Age of Yiddish Theater: From Rumania to New York's Second Avenue Yiddish, theater enjoyed two "golden ages." Avrom Goldfaden, Boris Thomashevsky, Jacob Adler, Molly Picon, Aaron Lebedef, Jenny Goldstein, Moishe Oysher were some of the great actors and singers who graced the Yiddish stage over a 50 year period. They will be seen and heard on vintage recordings and film.

Cry of Hope: Music of the Holocaust: Yes, we sang and composed during the years 1939-45. Songs and poems continued to be written and performed even under the deathly conditions in the camps. These songs and poems were collected by the survivors. We'll hear excerpts of the creative effort to overcome this most terrible tragedy.

Columbus' Medina: Songs of Immigration: The years 1881-1923 brought millions of our eastern European ancestors to the shores of the New World. Songs of longing, love, and labor and, of course, songs of the journey across the ocean will be heard and sung.

In Kamf: Songs of the Jewish Labor Movement: What began as local organizing efforts in Poland and Russia continued in the United States as the immigrant workers learned that labor in the New World needed unions, too. The songs from both sides of the ocean chronicle this struggle for better pay and conditions in the workplace.

For more information, please contact Mitzvah Music at 888-505-8953, or email ([mitzvahmus@aol.com](mailto:mitzvahmus@aol.com)).

### Yiddish Club in San Diego, California fun Raquel Leisorek, [elileis@worldnet.att.net](mailto:elileis@worldnet.att.net)

Mir hobn gefaiert 15 yor fun undzer yiddisher grupe fun di JCC fun La Jolla, San Diego, CA. Mir hobn gehat zeier a ztugepastn program, der zal iz geven ful sai di members vi di gest zainen geven zeier tzufridn. es zogt zij laijt 15 ior, vi shnel zainen di iorn ariber. Tzugreitn a gutn un interesantn program far iedn monat iz nit laijt. Bemeshaj fun der tzait hobn mir geshafn a grupe fun gute ibergegebene fraind vos hobn lib di idische shpraj, ir literatur un ales vos hot tzu ton mit idishkait. Mir hofn az undzer grupe zol vaiter existirn un mir zoln hobn mer idische grupen nit nor far dervaksene nor hiberhoipt far kinder, dos klingt abisl shver vail do in Amerique zainen do oder kimat nishto shuln vu men idish. Undzer grupe kumt zij tzuzamen dem ershtn montik fun iedn monat.

## Der Abraham Golomb Fond (Meksikeh - 2002)

A grupe gevezene talmides fun dem bavustn dertziier Abraham Golomb hobn, nokh zayn ptireh, in 1982, bashlosn tzu shafn a fond in dem gayst fun zayn pedagogisher un ideologisher arbet. Abraham Golomb hot gevidmet zayn gantz lebn far ophitn dem hemshekh fun der yiddisher kultur un fun der yiddisher shprakh.

Di farvaltung fun dem fond vet oysteyln fir premies.

-Di ershte premye vet bakumen Arieh/ Arturo Kerbel Shein, a talmid fun der idisher shul in meksikeh. Er vet es bakumen dem kumendikn 5-tn may in zal fun idishn sportzenter, 12 a zeyger far mitog. Arturo/ Arieh, iz bakroynt gevorn mit a simbolisher-premye onteyl tzu nemen in a yiddish reydnidkn kemp in nu-york. Er hot es fardint tzulib zayn mutikn kamf az der limud fun yiddish zol nit farshvindn fun zayn shul.

-Di tzveyte premye iz far dem doktorant, Yoshua Karlip fun dem yidishn teologishn seminar. Er greyt zayn dokter dizertatzye unter der oyfzikht fun profesor Dovid Fishman. Zayn shtudium analizirt di filozofische ideen fun ongezeehne intelektualn tzvishn velkhe Abraham Golomb farnemt a bekovedikn ort.

-Di drite premye iz bashtimt gevorn far Yugntruf-di yugnt far iddish. Zeyer zshurnal velkher geyt aroys fir mol a yor, vet in meshekh fun fir oysgabes shraybn vegn di filfarbrike perzenlekhkayt fun Abraham Golomb.

-Di ferte premye iz far a verterbukh mitn titl: "*Vi zogt men oyf Yiddish? An English-Yiddish Dicionary for the 21st Century*", orientirt oyfn morgn fun der yiddisher shprakh, unter der hashgokhe fun dokter Mordkhe Schaechter.

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### The Abraham Golomb Fund. (Mexico City - 2002)

A group of former students and friends of the well-known educator Abraham Golomb decided, after his death in 1982, to create a Fund in the spirit of his work. A. Golomb devoted all his life to preserve the continuity of the Yiddish culture and the Yiddish language.

The Fund Committee will, distribute four prizes.

- First will be granted to Arturo Kerbel Shein, a student of the Yiddish School "*Colegio Israelita de Mexico*", He was distinguished with a symbolic prize of a trip to New-York to the *Yugntruf Yiddish-Vokh* camp, where all the activities are done in Yiddish. He was granted so for his defense and struggle for the survival of Yiddish in his school.

- Second prize goes to Yoshua Karlip, a student of the Jewish Theological Seminary who is working on his dissertation under the supervision of Professor Dovid E. Fishman. He analyzes in his thesis the philosophical ideas from well-known intellectuals, Abraham Golomb certainly, among them!

- Third prize goes for the Yugntruf-youngsters for Yiddish. They will analyze in their publication the colorful personality of Professor Abraham Golomb.

- Fourth prize goes for the publication of a Yiddish-English dictionary under the supervision of Dr. Mordkhe Schaechter/ It is oriented to the future of the Yiddish Language and will be called: "*Vi zogt men oyf Yiddish? An English-Yiddish Dicionary for the 21st Century*."