



April 2003

Vol. 13 No. 4

8th IAYC Conference: in Baltimore: Yiddish Teachers: Heroes Then & Now

Report #6 Experience The Soul of Jewish Baltimore

From the minute you arrive at the **Hilton**, your Jewish experience in Baltimore begins. You will find yourself in **Pikesville**, the heart of Jewish Baltimore—a community of black hats, secular humanists and every point in between.

Reisterstown Road, where the hotel is sited, hosts many shops and restaurants. Parallel to this long avenue is **Park Heights Avenue**, a veritable parade of synagogues, and the prestigious **Rambam Yeshiva**.

An influx of young Orthodox and Iranian Jews, add to Baltimore's growing reputation as the **Yerushalayim d'Amerika**. Drop into the **7Mile Supermarket**. You'll think you are in Jerusalem—the frum, the fray, Russian émigrés, Israelis, Americans who speak the unique Bawlamor accent, former New Yorkers, all rubbing shoulders in the crowded aisles as they rush to buy kosher foodstuffs in time for Shabes.

Down Park Heights is **Baltimore Hebrew Univ.** a fountain of Jewish learning. They have a great collection of Yiddish films, tapes and books. There's a choice of kosher restaurants serving Chinese and pizza and more traditional items. Israeli products, Judaica and crafts abound.

Friday night's Shabes dinner of heymish gefilte fish, challah rolls and delicious entrees will be followed by Zmiros and other Shabes songs, sung in the Ashkenazi nusakh by **Cantor Allan**

Berman of the Moses Montefiore Modern Orthodox Synagogue.

Shabes, before the workshops commence, you'll hear davening emanating from our makeshift shtibele for the Shomer Shabes. Come join in if you wish, visit the synagogue of your choice or just happily reminisce with newly-found friends or former shule-mates.

Sunday, after the conference, you'll be able to board a bus, guided by docent **Aaron Seiden** who will show you **Old Jewish Baltimore** near the **Inner Harbor**, the lively **Jewish Museum of Maryland** and the beautiful landmark **B'nai Israel Synagogue, Di Russishe Shul - (1876)**, the oldest Baltimore synagogue in continuous use. You'll see **Corned Beef Row**, historic **Lombard Street**, where the Jewish immigrants lived, and so much more.

Baltimore was the hometown of **Henrietta Szold**, founder of Hadassah and the girlhood home of Yiddish actress **Bessie Tomashevsky**.

A great conference on Yiddish education, important speakers, concerts, a talent show, two film premieres, an exciting tour, and a great Jewish experience—this is not to be missed. Register early—don't be disappointed.

Have a question, call **Sylvia Schildt** at 410-298-4765 or e-mail: creativa@charm.net

From Our TYN Contact in Amsterdam
Jack Wiegman <jack_wiegman@yahoo.com>

I'm sending you separately for your files the booklet with poems by the Yiddish poets we commemorated on the 17th of November in Amsterdam. The meeting was a big success. The reason I didn't send you the booklet sooner, is that I became a *zeyde*. Our *eynikel* is doing very well.

As far as Yiddish is concerned, there were not too many new developments, except the publication recently of a 330-page booklet: *Hebreeuwse en Jiddisje woorden in het Nederlands* (Hebrew and Yiddish words in Dutch), published by SDU Publishers in The Hague. This compilation was produced by a group of 6 linguists and contains a total of about three thousand words.

Many Yiddish words have been absorbed into the Dutch language, especially in Dutch slang. To give you an example: the popular name for Amsterdam, used daily by all people here, is *Mokum*.

The Institute for Jewish Studies in Antwerpen, Belgium, is organizing a series of lectures. One of the lectures, was presented by Professor Dr Schlomo Berger of the University of Amsterdam, deals with the Philosophical Yiddish Publication *Davke*, published in Argentina between 1949 and 1982. The Institute email address is: ijs@ua.ac.be

Café Kasrilevke Presents
the Only all-Yiddish Seder in the D.C. Area

This year, enjoy a *seder* conducted totally in Yiddish! This wonderful Passover celebration and dinner will be held on Tuesday, April 8 at 6 p.m. The cost is only \$25 for JCC and Yiddish of Greater Washington members, and \$38 for the general public. Reservations are required by Tuesday, April 1, and can be made by calling 301-881-0100 ext. 6713.

This will be the fourth year that Yiddish of Greater Washington will conduct its Yiddish *Seder* at the Center. Written by Yiddish poets and developed by various groups in the Yiddish movement to supplement the regular *s'darim* as a celebration of both triumphs and tragedies of the Jewish people across history, the Yiddish *seder* has existed for almost a century. It was the first organized community observance to include in its liturgy a commemoration of the Holocaust.

A key element of the service is the recitation of the poem *In Varshever Ghetto iz ist Hoydesh Nisan* (*In the Warsaw Ghetto, it is Passover Time*), a poem commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, which took place during Passover. Led by members of Yiddish of Greater Washington, the *seder* is highly participatory, with a *haggadah* written in Yiddish, English transliteration, and translation. This is a very popular event, so reserve early!

Songs in the Key of Yiddish:
Recorded by Eleanor Reissa

Eleanor puts a jazz flare onto old Yiddish standards as well as some never recorded Yiddish gems that feel contemporary yet traditional.

It is unusual to have one person with this vocal talent also be a director, playwright, choreographer, actor, as well as a first class singer working in English and in Yiddish. She was most recently seen off-Broadway starring in the title role of *Yentl*.

To order Eleanor Reissa's *Songs in the Key of Yiddish* write to her c/o Two Egg Productions 535 East 86th Street, NYC 10028 or e-mail her at: ereissa@aol.com

Der Bay's Networking at Work
Sonia Fuentes, spfuentes@earthlink.net

In an earlier issue of *Der Bay* this year, you had a write-up about a new organization called the Federation of Descendants of Jewish Holocaust Survivors. I e-mailed Jeanette Friedman, one of the people mentioned as being involved. As a result of that, Jeanette will be featuring me in the June 2003 issue of *Lifestyles Magazine*, a hard copy magazine that she edits. The URL for her website is: <http://www.lifestylesmagazine.com/>.

Jeanette invited me to stay with her in New Jersey when I come to the area to see a musical about suffrage being performed at the Louis B. Armstrong Middle School in Elmhurst, New York on April 9

I have served as an advisor on women's rights to Clifford Carlson, one of the teachers at the school, who is the playwright and composer of this musical. She may be joining me to see this musical, along with a mutual friend, Lorri Greif, formerly with HIAS.

A Dictionary List from Shelby Shapiro

Here are some other dictionaries you might consider consulting, in addition to the 1928 and 1898 Harkavy's and Wenireich.

- Krupin, N. *hantbukh fun hebreizmen in der yidisher shprakh*. Buenos Aires: ICUF, 1957.
- Jacobson, Steven A., *Guide to the More Common Hebraic Words in Yiddish*. Fairbanks, AK, 1993.
- Yehoash and Dr. Charles Spivak. *idish verterbukh*. NY: Farlag, Veker, 1926.
- Niborski, Y. *verterbukh fun loshn-koydesh-shtamike verter in yidish*. Paris: Bibliotheque Medem, 1999.
- Levin, J. *verterbikh fun hebreish-yidishe verter*. NY: CYCO, 1958.
- Abelson, Paul. *english-idishes entsikopedishes verterbukh / English-Yiddish*
- *Encyclopedic Dictionary*. NY: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1924.

Der Bahaltener Oytser

fun Yhyal-Mekhl Ukrainik (Mitchell Nitikman) - fun der serie *Tipn un Bilder fun Mayn Shtetl, Tshon*

In 1914, bald nokhn oysbrukh fun der ershter velt-milkhome, hot der Tsar Nikolay aroysgegebn a bafel, az men zol opgebn der regirung ale meshene un kuperne khlim, oyf tsu makhn derf un gever far der milkhome. Dos iz beemes geven zeyer a shverer klap far di shtetlshe yidishe balebostes, vos hobn zikh nebekh gemuzt tsesheydn mit zeyere kuperne vaser-kvartrn, tep, fanen un randlekh un meshene mednitses [oyf tsu preglen ayngemakhts], fil fun velkhe zaynen geven a zamlung fun durusdike yerushes. Di *kazna* [regirung] flegt dos alts az opvegn un aroysgebn a kabole, az—lekhshirhib, ven got vet helfn men vet gevinen di milkhome, vet men amol batsoln derfar.

In der zelber tsayt hot di regirung oykh ayngekasirt dos gantse mints, vi di kuperne groshns kopikes, firers, zeksers un tseners, un oykh di zilberne un goldene, matbeyes un anshtot dem aroysgelozn papir gelt. Un far klain gelt zaynen banutst gevorn azelkhe spetsyel—gedruckte post-markes.

Azryal, der zeygermakher, hot tsunoyfgeklibn a bisl brukhvarg fun di zeygerlekh, tsuzamen mit a por kuperne teplekh fun Rokhls shrage, vos hot farnumen a gantze vant in der kikh, un es opgetrogn in volast arayn.

Visindik az er vet itst nit konen krign kayn ruye gold un zilber oyf tsu makhn khasene, ringlekh, oyf velkhe er iz geven a madim, hot er oykh tsuzamengeklibn a tsol zilberne halbe un gantse rubldike, un goldene finferlekh un tsenerlekh oyf der sume fun arurn toyznt rubl, un es bahaltn oyf a geheymen platz, ergets in a shpolt hinter a balkn, vu di vant funem nayem moyer iz zikh tsuzamengekumen

Farshteyt zikh, az dos iz geton gevorn b'sud sudus afile fun di eygene kinder, vayl di ruishe regirung hot aroyfgeleygt a shvere shtrof far oysbahaltn gold, un nor Rokhl, zayn froy, hot gevust derfun.

Oyfn tsveytn yor fun der milkhome iz Azryal, royter biletnik, gerufn gevorn tsu farteydikn dos *foterland*. Farn opforn hot er ibergetseylt dos gold un es tsurik bahaltn.

Far Peysakh hot Rokhl bashtelt Natalkan, a poyerte vos hot gevoynt oyfn rand fun shtetl un hot gekont azoyfil gut Yidish, az zi flegt afile zogn mit kleyne meydelekh *moyde ani*, nokhdem vi zi hot zey geholfn zikh onton inderfri—az yene zol ir oyskalkhn di shtub. Ven Natalka iz avek hot Rokhl gekukt tsu zen tsi der "oytser" ligt nokh in zayn baheltenish un hot im nit gekent gefinen.

Es hot zikh dan ongehoybn a korespondents vegn dem tsu Azryaln in polk (regiment) arayn, farshteyt zikh, in a farshtelter shprakh, biz Azryal hot zikh oysgekhlopotshet un urloiyb aheym. Ven er iz aheymgekumen iz zayn ershte uvde, natirlekh, geven

tsu zukhn dem oytser, velkhn er hot gefunen umbarirt.

Azryal hot opgedint in der milkhome tsvey yor tsayt un iz aheymgekumen bald nokhdem vi Kerenski hot ibergenumen di makht. Bald hot zikh ongehoybn der birger-krig. In shtetl zaynen forgekumen a por *grabezshn* fun di ruishe soldatn vos zaynen antlofn fun di pozitsies—ober der *oytser* iz geblibn gants.

Inem khoiydesh Tamuz fun 1919, hot dos troyerik—barimte Tarashtshanski polk, fun der royter armey, zikh arayngerisn in shtetl un durkhgefirt a shoyderlekhe sh'hiteh, oys'shlakhtndik arum 125 Yidn in eyn tog. Di meyste aynvoyner fun shtetl zaynen antlofn vu di oyg'n hobn getrogn, un tsvishn zey oykh Azryal mit zayn familye. Der pogrom iz dernokh forgezetst gevorn fun di poyerim fun der svive far fule akht teg tsayt un a halb shtetl iz farbrent gevorn.

Azryals moyer iz bagosen gevorn mit benzin, ober tsulib umbakante sibes hot men im nit untergetsundn.

Ven Azryal mit zayn mishpokhe hobn zikh tsurikgekert in shtetl arayn in tsvey vokhn arum, iz ales in hoyz geven oysgeroybt. Dos shvere mebl vos men hot nit gekont avekfirm iz tsebrokhn gevorn, oyf dem dil iz geven ongevorf'n brakhvarg fun di tsebrokhene vant-shpiglen un gefes oysgemisht mit federn; di vent zaynen geven fargelt funem benzin vos men hot oyf zey geshpirtst—ober der oytser iz geven umbarirt in zayn bahaftenish.

A por khadoshim nokhn pogrom iz Azryal farshloft gevorn fun di epidemie, vos hobn nokhgefolgt di milkhome un dem birger-krig un iz geshtorbn.

Fir khadoshim nokh im iz oykh zayn froy, Rokhl, geshtorbn. Di kinder hobn nokhdem farkoyft dem moyer tsu *sheyntse noskes* un hobn oysgevandert kayn Amerike, un der *oyster* iz farblibn an eybiker sud.

Oder, ver veys? efsher mitn letstn khurbn fun undzer shtetl hot epes a natsishe bestye geyoyvlt iber dem gefins fun a goldenem *oytser*, vos an erlekher, horepashner, yidisher zeygermakher hot bahaltn...

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Transliterated by Rae Meltzer. Rae was born in Mogliev, Russia and Yiddish was her first language. She was on the faculty of the University of Chicago. She is a graduate of the Workmen's Circle Yiddish H.S. She works extensively as a Yiddish translator with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. Chronicle Books published her books of translations and transliterations, Yiddishe Khokhme far Eltern (Yiddish Wisdom for Parents) and Yiddishe Khokhme far der Khasene (Yiddish Wisdom for Marriage).

The Hidden Treasure
by Mitchell Nitikman [Pen Name: Y.M. Ukrainik fYhial Mekhl Ukrainik]
Translated from the Yiddish by Rae Meltzer

In 1914, soon after the outbreak of the First World War, Czar Nicholas, issued a decree that all brass and copper pots and pans must be turned in to the government to be made into arms for the war. This was truly a very harsh blow for the Jewish housewives of the *shtetl* who had to give up their essential brass and copper water pails, cooking utensils, and any tools made of these metals. Jewish housewives were forced to give up their precious brass pots that they used for frying the traditional delicacy "ayngemakhts" [preserves or jam]

Many brass and copper items were inherited from parents and grandparents. When they were turned in to the government they were weighed and a receipt was given, with the statement that when, with God's help, the war is won, payment will be made at some future time. At the same time, the government controlled the mint, where copper coins, pennies, 4 centers, six centers, ten centers, gold and silver coins were held. In place of the metal coins, the government printed paper money. For small change, postage stamps were printed. Azryal, the watchmaker, collected parts of watches, several copper pots which hung over Rokhl's entire kitchen wall, and carried them to a good hiding place.

He knew that he could not get "raw" gold and silver to make wedding rings in which he was an expert craftsman. Therefore, he gathered silver rubles and half-rubles, golden fives and tens totaling approximately \$1,000 and hid them in a secret place in the wall of his house. The secret spot he chose was a crack in the wall behind a beam just where the new wall met the old wall of his dwelling. Of course, he did all this secretly. Even his children did not know the hiding place of the treasure, to protect them from the government's severe punishment for hiding gold. Only his wife Rokhl knew the secret.

In the second year of the war, Azryal, was drafted to defend the fatherland. Before he left for the army, he counted his gold and hid it again. For Passover, Rokhl hired Natalka, a peasant woman, who lived on the outskirts of the *shtetl* and spoke Yiddish very well. She even said prayers with the little girls, after she helped them get dressed in the morning. After Passover, when Natalka left, Robel went to check the hiding place to make sure that the treasure was there. She could not find it.

In a disguised language, Rokhl corresponded with Azryal about the treasure. At last Azryal was able to get a pass to go home. As soon as he got home, he immediately went to check the treasure and found that it had not been disturbed and was exactly where he had hidden it.

Azryal served in the Czar's army for two years. He came home just at the time that civil war broke. The Russian soldiers, who had run away from their posts, attacked the Jews of the *shtetl*. Through this chaos, the treasure remained safe and whole.

In 1919, the Red Army attacked the *shtetl* and began a dreadful massacre. Jews of the *shtetl* fled "wherever their eyes carried them." Azryal and his family fled. Local peasants continued the pogrom for 8 days. Half of the town was burned.

Azryal's new wall was doused with benzene, but miraculously, no one set it on fire. In about two weeks, Azryal and his family came back to the *shtetl*. Thieves had stolen everything from his house. They had smashed up the furniture that was too heavy to move. On the floor was a hodge-podge of scraps, shattered wall mirrors and broken dishes mixed up with feathers. The walls were yellow from the sprayed benzene— but the treasure was undisturbed and safe in its hiding place.

A few months after the pogrom, Azryal, succumbed to the epidemic that followed the war and the civil strife. Four months after his death, his wife Rokhl also died. Then the children sold their house to Sheynts Noskes and "wandered out" to America. The treasure remained a secret forever.

Or, who knows? Perhaps with the last "khubn" in our *shtetl*, some Nazi beast rejoiced when he found the golden treasure that an honest, hard working Jewish watchmaker had hidden there.

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Mitchell Nitikman, was born in 1904 in Teofipol, (Shon in Yiddish). After WW I there was widespread poverty and anti-Semitism in the Ukraine. Nitikman immigrated to Canada in 1922 and settled in Winnipeg where he lived until his death in 1982.

He apprenticed as a linotypist at *Di Yiddishe Vort*, and was editor in the 1960's and on staff until it closed in 1973. His Yiddish stories were published in *Di Yiddishe Vort* and in *The Jewish Daily Forward*. He called his collection, *Fun Mayn Shtetl Shon*, and used the pen name Y. M. Ukrainik.

He had much in common with Sholem Aleichem. Both wrote about the *shtetl* with humor compassion and empathy. Nitikman's stories deal with the *shtetl* folk of the WW I era. The main characters in many of his stories are his father Azryal a kind, honest, watchmaker and his mother Rokhl, who was forced to become a *bootlegger* when Azryal was drafted into the Czar's army. Other characters ranged from the generous, the devout, to clever, or selfish, and those who are brave. They encompass the human spectrum.

Association for Canadian Jewish Studies

June 1-3/03 – Halifax, Nova Scotia

Session 1 Holocaust Studies, Memoirs & Art

SOL LITTMAN (University of Arizona)

The Canadian Jewish Congress, the Ukrainian Canadian Committee and the 14th Waffen-SS

M. BUTOVSKY & K. JONASSOHN (Concordia)

Publishing Unpublished Holocaust Survivor Memoirs

LYNN ROTIN (Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia)

Holocaust and Memory

Session 2 Canadian Jewish History & Sociology

HAIM AVNI (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Zionism in Canada and in Argentina: The Study of the History of the Zionist Movement in 2 Settings

LEO DAVIDS (York University) and **RANDAL F.**

SCHNOOR (McGill University)

2001 Jewish Population of Canada: A First Look

Session 3 Montreal Jewish Life – Part I

SARA TAUBEN (Concordia University)

Immigrant Synagogues of Montreal-1880's-1945

REBECCA MARGOLIS (Columbia University)

Montreal Yiddish Literary Clubs, 1916-1940

DANA HERMAN (McGill University)

Hasidic/French-Canadian Relations in Montreal

Keynote Session

HAGIT HADAYA (Ottawa)

Case Studies in Maritime Synagogue Architecture

Tour Pier 21: If a relative immigrated to Canada

through Pier 21, bring the information for a search.

Session 4 Montreal Jewish Life – Part 2

IRA ROBINSON (Concordia University)

Violence as a Factor in Montreal Jewish

Community in the Early 1900s

EVE LERNER (Concordia University)

A Tale of Three Breads

Howard Gontovnick (Montreal)

The Synagogues of Laval, Quebec

Session 5 Administering Canadian Jew. Studies

Susan Landau-Chark (Concordia University)

Preservation of Jewish Archives in Canada"

Dennis Stoutenburg (Wilfred Laurier University)

New Direction(s) in ACJS Membership: A Proposal

Session 6 Jewish Education in Canada

ESTER REITER (York University)

Secular Yiddish School Movements in No. America

TONY MICHEL (Carleton University)

Jewish Responses to Religious Education in the

Ontario Public Schools, 1944-1969.

HERBERT BASSER (Queen's University) Shifts

and Trends in the Orthodox view of Jewish

Education in Toronto from 1950 to 2002

A Yiddish Teacher Writes from Chicago

In a journal I get from Israel, they write the khes, like an "H" with a line under it like, H or h. It sounds like a simple solution. What do you think?

I communicate in Yiddish with the Russian immigrants where I give classes on Jewish subjects. I also play Yiddish records for them that I purchased from Libby Olas when she closed her Jewish Radio Program. We had a great Yiddish sing-along.

Now I am teaching Yiddish to four different grades in our small elementary Jewish Day School. I use song and story pictures for the youngest grades, and speaking and reading for the older grades.

I enjoy Yiddish so much that I probably would pay someone to let me teach it. Thanks for all your efforts to promote the *Neshomo-Loshn*. The Lubavitcher Rebbe said that when you speak Yiddish, you feel the other speaker's G-dly, Jewish soul. **Reitza Kosofsky, Ph. 773-338-5063**
E-mail ikosofsky@unitedrecycling.com

The Vilnius Yiddish Institute

by Chic Wolk

After a lapse of more than 60 years Yiddishkeit has a new start in Vilna. Vilna is now known as Vilnius. Until the Nazis destroyed Vilna it was the center of Yiddish culture. Two years ago the Vilnius Yiddish Institute was established as a department within the University of Vilnius.

In addition to academic year classes, there is an exciting, well planned four week summer session.

Students of all ages and all degrees of Yiddish competence including beginners are welcome. The summer session includes field trips, cultural activities and the opportunity to meet other students from all corners of the globe.

The web site is: Institute@Yiddishvilnius.com
The American Friends of the Institute can be reached at: chicwolk@webtv.net

Bobbe Mashinke's Upcoming Events

By Marcia Gruss Levinsohn

Yiddish of Greater Washington and the Jewish Educational Workshop produced—Yiddish Family Fun, *Mishpokhe Yiddish*. Adults and children watch *bobbe mashinke's* Yiddish Purim folk tale, *Yentele, Royt Mentele*, make a Purim craft, learn a Yiddish song and game, and of course enjoy *homentashn*.

Our event at the Chesapeake Children's Museum will be April 13, 2 – 3 P.M. We shall enact, *der retek*, and make a craft to take home. Although, no prior knowledge of Yiddish is necessary, the story will be in Yiddish. Call *bobbe mashinke* 301-598-2187 and see: <http://www.geocities.com/yiddish2000us/>