

# Der Bay

## The International Anglo-Yiddish Newsletter

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### IAYC 9th Conference in Minneapolis:

#### They Came to the Goldene Medine: The Immigrant Experience

The demographics of Minneapolis/St. Paul have changed greatly. The predominant population had been Scandinavian. Now we have one of the largest Hmong populations in the U.S., and a very large Somali population. We are aware of the problems that immigrants have had to deal with.

Thinking about this resulted in thinking about our own parents and grandparents' experience coming to America. We wanted to explore the immigrant experience of those survivors who came to our community from the Shoah and from the former Soviet Union.

We chose our theme for the IAYC Convention (June 2-5, 2005) in Minneapolis ... "They Came to the Goldene Medine: The Immigrant Experience". All groups faced difficult times upon arrival in the U.S. ... language skills, employment problems, and, of course, limited or no income.

#### My Parents

They came to Minneapolis because my father's aunts were here. He was a graduate from a gymnasium in Odessa, worked as a janitor in the Nabisco cookie factory. He later had clerical jobs, and opened a clothing store. Times were hard, but my folks were involved with the Labor Zionists, and attended endless meetings. There were social and cultural activities, music, literary readings, and picnics.

To help one another, they formed a Genelas Chesed. Education of the children was a high priority. Even through the bitter depression, sons and daughters attended the University of Minnesota. The shoemaker's three sons all became doctors; prominent lawyers, professors and doctors also came from this group.

#### The Migration

To disperse the immigrants from the East Coast they were urged to accept land in North Dakota offered by Baron de Hirsch. Families settled in Devils Lake, ND. (This will be covered in a talk entitled *And Prairie Dogs Weren't Kosher*.) Some came to Minneapolis, but then moved on to Aberdeen, South Dakota, hoping it would be better there. Thirty families supported a rabbi. Kosher meat came to them by Greyhound bus from Iowa during the winter only.

#### The New Immigration

Many came from the Shoah—professionals: dentists, physicians, engineers, etc. Some re-trained to meet local standards. Others had vocational training. We were enriched by the quality of these people—their perseverance and intelligence were truly admirable. And, so it was with those who came from the former USSR. The Minnesota orchestra quickly hired talented musicians. Scientists joined the faculty at the University. Others have been very enterprising.

These are just a few examples of migrant experiences. We shall have sessions that tell the fascinating stories, of the Upper Midwest, and other parts of the country ... how, from these tribulations came achievements, and *nakhes fun di kinder* in *The Goldene Medine!*

This Ninth IAYC Conference will be in Minneapolis on Thurs., June 2nd to Sun., June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005. If you have any questions, please call **Chair Roz Baker at: 612-377-5456, or Publicity chair, Annalee Odessky at: annalee26@aol.com or 952-544-5423. Website: <http://www.IAYC-minnesota.org>**

**Editor's note: You'll find information about the *Tribute Book* in the back of this issue. Honor your immigrant parents or grandparents. Fishl, Sally & Debbie already have registered. See you there!**

# One Man's Vilna: Part I

by Britt Albritton

A vort foroy: *This is not a stuffy, scholarly, academic, piece. It has not been painstakingly researched in musty libraries or even on the Internet. It is rather a report in the first-person of my experiences in a totally unfamiliar environment, in this case the University of Vilna (Vilnius) in the city of Vilnius, capital of the Republic of Lithuania. A person's observations may at times be at variance with the facts. As long as the person believes what he reports as he sees it, the observations are valid—even though they do not agree with the facts. This isn't to say that first person reporting has a license to lie. It merely means that as Red Skelton's Clem used to say, "I calls 'em the way I sees 'em". Since I am not Jewish, my report contains material from the goyish point of view—if there is a difference.*

*Some of the subject matter in this piece is not pleasant to read, e.g., excursions arranged by the Yiddish Institute as integral parts of the program to scenes where mass murder occurred, such as Kovno and Ponar. Other than these, trips to the countryside were indeed delightful.*

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The year 2004 is the 9th year of a program of summer study of Yiddish arranged by the Yiddish Institute of the Department of Philology, University of Vilnius (hereafter called *Vilna*). It is the product of a general renaissance of the Yiddish language—however long the odds are against Yiddish resuming its place as the language of Eastern Europe and the world.

I didn't make a personal survey, but my guess is that I'm the oldest member of the class of '04. Personal accommodations vary from plush to bare-essential, according to individual needs. A couple of months in advance, I requested quarters within as near walking distance to classes as possible in view of my age. The arrangements made by the school turned out to be the nicest surprise one could hope for: A beautifully furnished apartment within fifteen minutes' walk to classes.

The University of Vilna (est 1579) is in the *Altstadt* (Old Town, or *Senamiestis* if you prefer Lithuanian), as was my apartment. We, the *talmidim* came from everywhere: The USA of course, Australia, the countries of Europe, Japan, China, Africa, and a sizeable group from Israel. The official welcoming program was emceed by the Chief of the Yiddish Institute, Mendy Cahan. It is impossible for me to lavish too much praise on this fellow. He has a very engaging personality, radiates charm, and makes complicated things look easy. He was everywhere at all times, completely tireless, with a million-dollar smile for everybody—the perfect hanchó.

The first contact with academics is the placement session: Each individual, having already sent in their own assessment of the level of skill that had attained in Yiddish, must face a group of faculty members whose attitude to your assessment or your Yiddish skill is, "Oh yeah?"

The cross-exam is conducted entirely in Yiddish. I was asked what my goal was in the study of Yiddish. I said I was interested primarily in the literature. They asked, "Name some of the Yiddish writers you have read." My mind went blank. I think I stammered out "Sholem-Aleichem...uh... Peretz....uh...Singer..." They crossed out my personal assessment - 4 - and downgraded it to 3.

That was the beginning of a panic that really overcame me with the first class: *It was total immersion in Yiddish. NO English was used at any time throughout the course.* All speaking and writing was in Yiddish. I was like a frog in a hailstorm. I simply could not understand the instructors. Both were Israelis, a male and a lady. And they wrote Yiddish on the blackboard as fast as they could speak it. I began to wish I were back in the safety and comfort of Fanny Yokor's Yiddish class in New Orleans!

The second day, I attended a speech of an hour and a half duration. Some of the Yiddish accents I could make some sense of—but this one—nebekh. After the speaker had finished, I asked my neighbor if she understood anything that lady said. She said, "Of course. I understood everything she said". I told her, "As far as I'm concerned, she might as well have been talking Mandarin Chinese!" My morale was at rock bottom. Next day, one girl closed her notebook and walked out of class, never to return. I told myself, "I can't keep this up. No way I can phony my way through this! Where the hell did all these kids learn to speak and understand such fluent Yiddish?" But then I began to recover some of my composure. I noticed the majority of the *talmidim* constantly rifling through their Weinreich Dictionaries—looking up words I had known for years. I realized I could read Yiddish better than any of them. I was saved. I also began slowly to understand my instructors.

Another problem: I have exasperated Yiddish speakers with my *daytshmerisms* in attempting to speak Yiddish. What I thought was passable Yiddish was nothing but a bastardized sort of German, and they really lowered the boom on me for this. I realized how far out in left field I was. One of my

instructors, Eliezer Niborski, introduced me to a book *A Century of Yiddish Writing*. The fantastic feature about this book is that it comes with 8 CDs of people - men & women - reading the texts of the stories. For me, it is a Godsend. ((Footnote: bk title: *With Great Pleasure - A Cenrury of Yiddish Writing*, Heather Valencia, ed., Oxford Institute for Yiddish Studies, 2003, ISBN 1 877909-76-9)) Niborski's father, Yitshok Niborski, also at the Vilna Yiddish Institute, is the co-author of *the* authoritative French-Yiddish dictionary, and an exhaustive dictionary of Hebrew terms used in Yiddish, available from YIVO.

My two instructors covered literature and grammar respectively. Another shock: Anyone coming to the Vilna course with the impression that all s/he'll have to do is stay awake in class and look forward to the evening's cocktail party, is in for a surprise. I can truly say, even allowing for *creeping senility* of advancing age, I can't remember when I worked so hard for any academic course—all the way to the PhD level! There's no intimidation, no 50 lashes for neglecting homework, but they have subtle ways of making you wish you had tried harder. More than one student I heard say that this course crams in an entire year's work into one month.

I missed more than one social event because of *heymerbayt*. I would study until 3:00 - 3:30 AM, rise at 5:30 and study for a couple more hours before heading for a 9:30 class. There were two classes per day, one from 9:30 to 11:00, a second from 11:30 to 1:00. There is a 30 minute break for coffee, tea and cakes after the first class.

The kids who made up the majority of students represented some of the prestige schools of the country—Harvard, Penn, Brown, the Univ. of Chicago, *et al.* Some of the musically talented even brought their instruments with them. One bouncy little *tsatske* with a Harvard Hillel sweatshirt was a real live wire. She was one of the musically inclined, even brought her own alto sax with her. In Niborski's class we had this song, titled *Mashke*, that this kid accompanied by the rest of us, could do one of the catchiest renditions of any I've ever heard. I'd love to have a CD with this one on it—a real turn-on.

\* \* \* \*

It was not all work and no play. There were many activities of a social kind as well as entertainment, some even provided by the students themselves. I must confess that I missed out on a good many of these activities because of my rundown physical condition. There were recitals, concerts, and walking tours in and around Vilna. Of course, I had no idea at the time I moved in, but my apartment

as located on a very wide, attractive street with a green promenade in the middle featuring many open-air beer gardens which also served excellent food. The local flea markets offer some pretty good bargains, a cut above the usual shlok. You haven't been to the Baltic until you've found a good piece of *bernstein* (amber). I hear that there are craftsmen who can split a piece of amber and insert a wasp or other bug in it so as to look a thousand years old. Pictorial art is also a bargain, and definitely superior to the *Elvis on a velvet* genre.

The name of the street where I lived is *Vokieciu*, ominously *Street of the Germans*, because German merchants settled there centuries ago. As it turned out, this broad avenue divides what were the two ghettos of wartime Vilna. There was one smaller one, and a large one. My walking route to and from classes was through the smaller former ghetto area. Two of the streets bore the names *Zidu*, and *Gaono-Jewish* and *Gaon*, the latter for the Gaon of Vilna. There is a marble plaque of the area of the ghetto and a simple memorial in Yiddish & Lithuanian on one of the streets.

The smaller ghetto lasted only a few weeks. Sept to Oct 1941. They ran out of people to kill. I will disclose the fate of the large ghetto subsequently. I was informed that Vilna was graced by about 100 synagogues in the pre-WWII era. Today, there is 1.

Anyone who thinks Yiddish is too tough to cope with should take a quick look at Lithuanian. This language, together with Finnish, is one of the most if not the most difficult of the European languages. It is related to Sanskrit. The Litvaks are aware of this, and *borukhhashem*, the menus, even in the smallest hole-in-the-wall shtub, have the menus with English translations.

#### About the Author

A retired career Air Force officer, Lt. Col. Albritton served in the US Navy and the US Air Force. He was in the Mediterranean Fleet and in the area during the campaign for Israel's independence in 1948. He served in the Korean conflict. Later he was assigned to the National Security Agency. While at the Agency, Col. Albritton earned a Master's and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Maryland. After retirement from military service, he was an Asst. Prof. in the field of International Relations at the University of Maryland's European Division, Heidelberg, Germany. Col Albritton's interest in the Yiddish language goes back many years, beginning with private instruction in Erlangen, Germany. After returning to the states, he resumed study of Yiddish at the Baltimore Hebrew College and the Israeli-sponsored *Ulpan* study of Modern Hebrew. He resides in Gulfport, Mississippi.

# One Man's Vilna: Part II

by Britt Albritton

Lithuanian food is excellent. The only place where I drew the line was at *deep fried pigs' ears*. (So help me. I'm not making this up!) You can have an excellent meal in Lithuania for as little as \$4.00. Everything seems so cheap there. The official exchange rate is 4 Litas to one dollar. The banks give 2.8. Lithuania converts to the Euro in 2007.

I must mention a couple of amazing facts that are immediately apparent when one arrives in Lithuania: Obesity is to all intents & purposes virtually non-existent in Lithuania! There are simply NO fat people. Everyone looks slim, trim, and athletic. Nikita S. Khrushchev, former premier of the Soviet Union, is quoted as having said, "The Swedes are the healthiest, happiest, best-looking, most robust people in the world". He might well have said the same thing about the Litvaks.

There are no special auto tags or reserved parking spaces for the handicapped. There may be a lot of *hoykers & hinkers*, but I didn't see any. But one thing I saw too many of for such a prosperous country: panhandlers. I don't just mean the old babushkas that hang around churches on Sunday, or like the nuns in Italy who display laminated beggars' permits, I mean young punks in their teens and 20s. Granted, some of them look pretty flaky, but there are too many of them.

Another thing you must see to really believe: In the *Altstadt* (Old Town), with traffic every bit as dense as any city in the United States, there are neither traffic signals nor traffic policeman! Pedestrians and motorists are so fery well synchronized that the need for traffic control devices has been totally eliminated. Pedestrians rule. That's it. NO honking of horns, no shaking of fists, no flipping of birds, no all-night serenades of emergency vehicle sirens and horns.

One night for a couple of hours during the Olympics, there was a noisy procession of horn-blowing cars—some with kids actually standing on tops of cars. I found out the reason was that Lithuania had just defeated the US basketball team. Not exactly Halloween in Detroit, but pretty noisy for a while.

As an ex-career military man, I have been stationed all over the world. Wherever you go overseas, the Americans re-create their own country: American PXs, Commissaries, Armed Forces Network Radio and TV (Except in Moslem countries), theaters - the works. All-American!

Not in Lithuania! They joined the EEC and NATO, but I doubt I'll live to see the day that the Baltic countries are Americanized. The only change that NATO membership has brought about in Lithuania is that I saw a report on the internet that the prostitutes there are charging NATO troops *three times* the rate they charge their regular customers.

## K O V N O

Prominent among the outings arranged by the Vilna Yiddish Institute was a visit to Kovno (Kaunas). About a hundred kilometers from Vilna, it is a clean, prosperous city. We were in two tour busses, and had lovely weather. Upon arrival in the city, we were conducted on a long walking tour through the center of town in a beautiful tree-lined esplanade—long enough to be exhausting for an old gaffer. After a rest and a lunch of pink borscht and potatoes, we boarded the busses and headed back down the road towards Vilna. But after 15-20 minutes we detoured to an isolated park-like area situated atop a long, sloping hill. From there one had a panoramic view of the city and the white birch forests of the surrounding countryside.

Standing starkly against the afternoon sky were three massive monuments which almost defied description. Intuitively I realized that we had arrived at the place for which Kovno will ever be stigmatized as the killing field for thousands & thousands. At some distance from the massive concrete monuments was a brick structure which had the appearance of a medieval fort, surrounded by barbed wire. I learned later that this was the infamous *Fort Nine*. It is one of a ring of twelve forts built by the Russian Tsars over two centuries ago. It was the final stop for many thousands of doomed people transported from all over Europe.

I broke away from the assembled group which was about to enter the fort and walked towards the massive structures—the center one several stories high. These are memorials erected by Lithuania, dedicated to the people who were murdered in the thousands.

But the thing that made the deepest, and most devastating impression on me was a very long trench, almost the entire length of a football field, and about 20-30 ft wide, and 20-30 ft deep. This trench was where thousands of people breathed their last. Cut down by MG fire like rows of mowed wheat, the dead and dying lay at the bottom of this trench.

As I stood there alone, staggered by emotion at this scene as I had never experienced before, a lone individual approached me from behind and laid his hand on my shoulder. I turned, and for a moment we gazed into each other's eyes in silence. He then turned and walked away. No words were spoken. For you who may think that this little incident was fabricated for dramatic effect, I am sorry for both of us. I can only swear that every word is true. You have to take it or leave it.

Yes, I had heard and read and even visited some of the notorious camps—if *camps* is the word—Auschwitz, Maidanek, Sobibor, Mauthausen, and the others—but Kovno was not one of those—by any stretch. The site at Fort Nine was nothing more, nothing less, than a killing ground—one of the many plaques was given by the citizens of Munich, Germany.

Any doubts as to whether the German civilian population at large were aware of what was being done to the deportees *nach Osten* were resolved by the frank admission on this plaque which began, "*Wir, die Mitwissende ...*" "We, who also knew ...", went on to express regrets for the transport of more than 800 Jewish citizens of Munich to Kovno, executed immediately upon arrival.

One wonders. What kind of person does it take to commit such acts as were carried out at Kovno and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. What could motivate those who made up the so-called *Eks*—the killing squads? By what process were decent, honest, moral, educated people transformed into murderers without a shred or vestige of conscience?

In WWI, as evinced in the memoirs of many people, German soldiers rendered every humanitarian service they could, including food distribution, to the Jewish population. A letter from the German commanding general was addressed << *To My Dear Jews!*>> Of course, they were looking for Jewish support against the Russians. It's amazing when one contemplates the *volte face* in a nation's attitude that took place in such an amazingly short time: 1918-1939. Adolf Hitler became Chancellor in 1933. By what miracle of black magic could a nation's attitude towards a people hitherto regarded as equals be so radically reversed *in just six short years!*?

A manifest impossibility!

(( Footnote: I strongly recommend *The Hidden History of the Kovno Ghetto* a publication of the US Holocaust Museum. Bullfinch Press Little, Brown & Co., 1999))

Footnote to Kovno: Outside the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum at Pamenkalnio Gate (pron: GAtch) (St.) 12, there's a monument commemorating *Chiune Sugihara*, a Japanese diplomat based in Kaunas (Kovno) who is credited with saving 6,000 Jewish lives during WWII by issuing them papers needed in order to leave the country. Sugihara is a virtual unknown in the West. Unlike the Swedish diplomat, Raoul Wallenberg, he was on the wrong side, but he is well known and revered in Lithuania.

Regarding the *numbers-game* concerning people killed by the Nazis in WWII: I refuse to become involved in hair-splitting over precise numbers of victims at various places during the holocaust. I have seen differing numbers on monuments in the same place. It depends often on who placed the monuments. At Kovno there are markers from France and Germany. The marker from the Soviet Union was replaced after Lithuanian independence in 1990. It memorialized "Soviet citizens" killed by the Hitlerites, and did not distinguish the Jewish dead from the other nationalities. The Lithuanian memorial distinguishes the Jewish dead. For my part, it suffices to show that large numbers of innocent people were tortured and killed by the worst kinds of criminals. Any hairsplitting dishonors the memory of those who lost their lives.

#### About the Author

A retired career Air Force officer, Lt. Col. Albritton served a combined total of 27 years active duty in the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Air Force. During service in the Navy, he was in the Mediterranean Fleet and in the area during the fight for Israel's independence in 1948. After attending college he entered active duty in the Air Force and served in Korea and Japan during the Korean War. From the Far East, he was assigned to the National Security Agency (NSA) at Ft. Meade, MD. Under the Dept. of Defense, the NSA directs the cryptologic services of the United States. While at the Agency, Col. Albritton completed requirements for and was awarded a Master's and a Doctor's degree from the University of Maryland. Following a tour of duty in Alaska, he was assigned to Hqs., Tactical Air Command, Langley Air Force Base, Virginia, and subsequently to Hqs., Military Assistance Command, Saigon, Republic of Viet Nam. After return to the National Security Agency, he retired from active duty. After retirement from military service, he was an Asst Prof in the field of International Relations at the University of Maryland's European Division, Heidelberg, Germany. His interest in Yiddish began with private instruction in Erlangen, Germany. After returning to the states, he resumed the study of Yiddish at the Baltimore Hebrew College, and Israeli-sponsored *Ulpan* study of Modern Hebrew. He resides in Gulfport, Mississippi

# One Man's Vilna: Part III (Final)

by Britt Albritton

A question I have been asked many times—even by one of my instructors at Vilna, "what is the *why* of your interest in Yiddish? It is a language used in Jewish old folks' homes and by slapstick borscht belt comedians. Aside from a perceived renaissance of the language, my primary interest is and has been in the vast literature in the language, much of it yet to be translated.

When I was a young man in college, the idea of Yiddish and Judaica in a university curriculum would have been preposterous. Today these subjects are not only available in the best of colleges, they are increasingly popular. Even in Israel, where for a long time there were bumperstickers which demanded, *Help stamp out Yiddish!* there has been a major change in attitude.

The Israelis were embarrassed to find it necessary to turn to New York for textbooks on Yiddish. There were none in Israel. I saw for the first time ever in Vilna a Hebrew-Yiddish, Yiddish-Hebrew dictionary in the possession of a young lady from Israel. "Fresh off the press", she said.

One of the oldest, if not the oldest in Europe, the University of Vilna is not surprisingly located in the old town part of the city. Established by Jesuits in 1570, it was closed for nearly a century. When it reopened it offered courses in over 60 subjects. At a time when both Arabic and Russian were taught, Lithuanian was prohibited! (By the Russians, who were then in control). After several name-changes it became the University of Vilnius and has remained so ever since.

American students notice immediately the absence of typical U.S. college features which they take for granted: ultra-modern student centers featuring shopping emporia and swimming pools, frat and sorority houses, mega athletic facilities with humungous stadia, and risqué student-published campus newspapers.

The Vilna school operates at a bare minimum: Academics only! There is a small book and souvenir shop. Yiddish books are available only at a special library, which operates on short hours. There are no Yiddish books in the bookstore.

Lithuania has been a traditional crossroads for warring armies, most recently the particularly brutal conflict between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. The Litvaks have become adept at

coping with radical changes imposed by the various occupying powers—some of long duration, some short.

They have enjoyed some triumphs of their own, one being the defeat of the Prussian Teutonic Knights at Gruenwald (aided by Polish allies). The high water mark came during the era of the combined kingdoms of Poland-Lithuania which stretched all the way from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

Lithuania was the last European country to convert to Christianity, in the 1300s. Some say this is the reason for the easy accommodation of other religions, especially the Jewish. One of the more interesting revelations to me was the history of the Karaites, a Turkic sect which adopted the Jewish religion back in ancient times. They have traditionally been recognized by rabbinic authorities as members of the Jewish faith with all rights & privileges.

A colony of Karaites has been in Lithuania for centuries, residing in the picturesque lake country at Trakai, location of the imposing *Fortress in the Lake*. These people were the palace guards for royalty. Imagine this, if you will: An SS Colonel requesting the assistance and advice of a Jewish Rabbi in determining whether the Karaites were racially related to the Hebrews. The Rabbi explained that while indeed the Karaites practiced the Jewish religion, they are not racially akin to the Hebrew people—they are of Turkic origin. Thus, the Karaites were saved by the Rabbi from certain extermination by the Nazis!

The SS Colonel believed what the Rabbi told him. "After all", he figured, "Would a Rabbi lie?" The Rabbi did not indeed lie. What he told the SS Colonel was true. Do you think the Rabbi would have lied if indeed the Karaites and Jews were Semitic brothers?

Each of the succeeding occupying powers in Vilna brought their church with them: The Russians the Orthodox, the Germans the Lutheran, The Poles the Roman Catholic, and the Jews the synagogues.

Thus Vilna has by far the densest population of magnificent churches of any city I have ever seen. There are approved plans to rebuild and restore to original condition the old synagogue in Vilna, with its fabled *shulhoyf* at its original location.

For the Jews who knew it, the *Vilne fun amol* no longer exists.

"On its site stands a place identified on the map as Vilnius, capital of Lithuania, a constituent republic of the Soviet Union. Like Troy, the Vilna I knew—the Vilne described in the Jewish annals—now lies buried beneath the debris of history, beneath layers of death and destruction. When the Soviets first occupied Vilna in 1940, they Sovietized it, destroying its historic identity and its Jewish particularity. The Germans who followed destroyed Vilna altogether, murdering nearly all of its 60,000 men, women, and children. Since then, nothing has remained of Vilna's Jewish culture and spirit. Hardly anything has remained of its buildings—the sticks and stones of Jewish architecture. What little the Nazis left standing, the Soviets, who returned after the war, erased. A visitor to today's Vilna can no longer find a trace of what had been "the Jerusalem of Lithuania".

Since Lucy Davidowicz wrote these pessimistic words, there have been increasing signs of a Jewish renewal in Vilna and Lithuania. There is hope among the Jewish people I met there, and I hope that my modest participation in the 2004 9th Annual Yiddish Language Program at the University of Vilna has contributed, at least in some small way, to the rebirth of the Jerusalem of Lithuania.

#### About the Author

A retired career Air Force officer, Lt. Col. Albritton served a combined total of 27 years active duty in the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Air Force. During service in the Navy, he served in the Mediterranean Fleet and was in the area during the campaign for Israel's independence in 1948. After college he entered active duty in the Air Force and served in Korea and Japan during the Korean conflict. He was assigned to the National Security Agency. While at the Agency, Col. Albritton earned a Master's and a Doctor's degree from the University of Maryland. He was assigned to Hqs., Tactical Air Command, and subsequently to Hqs., Military Assistance Command; Saigon, Republic of Viet Nam. After retirement from military service, he was an Asst. Prof. in the field of International Relations at the University of Maryland's European Division, Heidelberg, Germany. Col Albritton's interest in the Yiddish language goes back many years, beginning with private instruction in Erlangen, Germany. After his return to the states, he resumed study of Yiddish at the Baltimore Hebrew College, and the Israeli-sponsored *Ulpan* study of Modern Hebrew. He resides in Gulfport, Mississippi.

## EVENTIDE

By Itzik Manger

Quiet night. Twilight gold.  
I sip a glass of wine.  
What has become of my day?  
A shadow and a shine—  
Let but a moments twilight gold  
Into this poem of mine.

Quiet night Twilight gold.  
A Jew in reverent grace  
Through prayer shakes off the dust  
Of the yearly market place—  
Let but a murmur or a trace  
Of prayer, my poem embrace.

Quiet night. Twilight gold.  
Wind both far and near.  
Deep in sleep the baby deer—  
The gloom that was the week  
Should only let a breath of sleep  
In my poem appear.

Quiet night. Twilight gold.  
A bird of summer glides  
With wings of gray and gold  
To where "God presides"—  
Let but a flutter of his wings  
Into where my poem resides.

Quiet night. Twilight gold.  
Wind and road and wine—  
What has become of my day?  
A shadow and a shine—  
Let but a moments twilight gold  
Into this poem of mine.

### TRANSLATED BY: LEON H. GILDIN – 1994

Leon was a life-long resident of New York. In his youth he attended the Sholem Aleichem Folkshul. After graduating from Law School he was drafted into the Army. After service he was admitted to the Bar in New York. For 35 years he was counsel to actors writers and composers.

Leon was the Executive Producer of TV documentaries. The most recent one was *Therestenstadt, Gateway to Auschwitz; Recollections from Childhood*

Most recently he has published a book dealing with the infusion and use of Yiddish into the English Language as a result of the Eastern European immigration to the US in the early 20th century. The book is entitled, *You Can't Do Business (Or most Anything Else) Without Yiddish.*

## Yiddish at Tulane University

By Brian Horowitz, Director

For the first time, Tulane University's Jewish Studies Program is offering a Yiddish class in the fall semester of 2004. It is being sponsored by **Mr. Barry Katz and Dr. Victor Brown** of Buenavista Real Estate. It has long been our desire to introduce this class because of the significance of the Yiddish language.

Yiddish in the years before the Nazi rise to power was the native language of over five million Jews. It was the medium for a powerful and growing literature whose heads included Sholem Aleichem, Itzak Peretz, and Mendele Mocher Sforim. Younger authors, poets, and playwrights came to the United States and continued experiments with literary form, sound, and performance.

There was a thriving Yiddish theater on Second Avenue, the remnants we have in video films such as "*Yidl mit dem Fidi*" or "*Teveye der milkhiker*." Of course Yiddish was the language of the Bund, the Socialist Jewish Workers Party in Eastern Europe. The New York daily, *The Forward* is written in it. Many of our grandparents spoke it as children, but alas their own children hardly know a word.

It is time to offer the study of Yiddish. Our first class with over 25 students epitomizes the interest in this great and tragic tongue. We hope to continue to offer courses with the gracious help of the university administration and local community members.

### Joys Of Yiddish In Bergen Co.

The Senior Citizens Center in Teaneck is offering courses in Yiddish. The Yiddish Class with experienced teacher **Feygl Infeld Glaser**, will be held on Tuesdays, at the Richard Rodda Community Center, 250 Colonial Ct., Teaneck.

The course's aim is to familiarize students with vocabulary, pronunciation, and reading skills. Continuation students are encouraged to participate in discussions on current and past events (in their own lives and in the world); by learning about great Jewish personalities, the works of Yiddish poets and writers and by expanding their knowledge about Jewish historical events, holidays and songs. Students include Bergen County residents. **Call 201-837-0171. For private lessons, call: 201-385-8315, or e-mail: Yiddish1@Juno.com.**

A nayer yidish-kurs far dem kumendikn harbst  
mit der erfarener lererke feygl infeld glezer-  
heybt zikh on dinstik dem 21stn september,  
11:00 fri biz 12:30 nokh mitog, inem Richard  
Rodda Center, 150 Colonial Court, Teaneck, NJ.

Farinteresirte, kenen krign mer informatsye in  
Center, oyf: 201-837-0171.

Vegn private lektsyes telefonirt Feygl Infeld  
Glezer, oyf: 201-385-8315,  
oder Shraybt a blitzpost (elektronish) brivl oyfn  
adres: Yiddish1@Juno.com.

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# *In der velt fun bale-khay, fun Miriam Hoffman Part I*

## *IN THE WORLD OF LIVING CREATURES*

Transliterated & translated by Troim Katz Handler

Y: Ver zogt az yidn hobn nit gehat tsu ton mit gots bruim, mit khayes?

E: WHO SAYS JEWS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH GOD'S CREATURES, WITH ANIMALS?

Y: Men darf nor a bleter ton in yidishn folklor, ken men ful vern mit a velt mit lebedike bashefenishn in der luft, af der yaboshe, un in di vasern.

E: ONE HAS ONLY TO LEAF THROUGH JEWISH FOLKLORE, FILLED WITH LIVING CREATURES IN THE AIR, ON THE LAND AND IN THE WATERS.

Y: Kh'darf nisht geyn vayt: ikh aleyn hob oysgehodevet, tsuzamen mit mayne tsvey zindelekh, hint, kets, tsherepakhes, krolikes, a shtekhldikn yozshik, a grine salamandre, un tropishe fishlekh.

E: I DON'T HAVE TO GO FAR. I MYSELF HAVE RAISED, TOGETHER WITH MY TWO LITTLE SONS, DOGS, CATS, TURTLES, RABBITS, A PORCUPINE, A GREEN SALAMANDER AND TROPICAL FISH.

Y: Meyle, dos vos di khayes zaynen aroys mit gantse beyner, nokh dem vi di kinder hobn zikh mit zey gespravet; iz oykh a nes.

E: NEVER MIND THAT THE ANIMALS CAME OUT WITH ALL THEIR BONES INTACT AFTER THE CHILDREN "TOOK CARE OF THEM" IS ALSO A MIRACLE.

Y: Nor der koter hot undz emesdik bavizn vos a yidishe katz ken, be'eys mir hobn gelebt in yisroyel.

E: ONLY THE TOM CAT TRULY SHOWED US WHAT A JEWISH CAT CAN DO, WHILE WE WERE LIVING IN ISRAEL.

Y: Zet oys az di yisroyeldike luft makht nisht bloyz klug nor bashenkt ire bashefenishn mit a kamfsgayst, khutspe, un a gefil fun hefker petrishke.

E: IT SEEMS THE ISRAELI AIR MAKES ONE NOT ONLY CLEVER BUT ALSO IMBUES ONE WITH A CAMPAIGN SPIRIT, KHUTSPE, AND A FEELING OF INDEPENDENT WILD OATS.

Y: Ikh zog dos antkegn undzer kats.

E: I'M SAYING THIS ABOUT OUR CAT.

Y: Ven m'hot im arayngenumen in shtub, iz er geven a veykh volbaleml, a hopsedik un lebedik shpiltsayg.

E: WHEN WE TOOK HIM INTO OUR HOUSE, HE WAS A SOFT, WOOLY, BALL, A JUMPING AND LIVELY TOY.

Y: Mir hobn es a nomen gegeben KIZSHYU un geredt dertsu bloyz yidish.

E: WE NAMED HIM KIZSHYU AND SPOKE TO HIM ONLY YIDDISH.

Y: S'iz nisht avek keyn khoydesh, hot zikh dos baleml farvandlt in a soldat.

E: LESS THAN A MONTH LATER THE LITTLE BALL TURNED INTO A SOLDIER.

Y: Der koter hot zikh arumgeyogt tog un nakht vi af a shlakhtfeld, aruf un arop fun beymer un dekher, arayn un aroys fun mist-kestlekh, gemakht kozshlkes arum rizike hint-sobakes, un, der iker, terorizirt andere kets.

E: THIS TOM CAT CHASED AROUND DAY AND NIGHT AS IF ON A BATTLEFIELD, UP AND DOWN TREES AND ROOFTOPS, IN AND OUT OF GARBAGE PAILS, DID SOMERSAULTS AROUND HUGE HOUND DOGS, AND, ABOVE ALL HE DID WAS TO TERRORIZE OTHER CATS.

Y: Biz eyn mol, in der fri, iz er aheym gekumen on an oyg.

E: UNTIL ONE FINE MORNING, HE CAME HOME WITHOUT AN EYE.

Y: Hot men af im ongeshrign:

E: SO WE HOLLERED AT HIM:

Y: "S'taytsh, vi past es far a yidisher kats azoy zikh uftsufirn? Nokh alemen, kumst dokh aroys fun an onshtendik hoyz."

E: "HOW COME? IS IT RESPECTABLE FOR A JEWISH CAT TO BEHAVE LIKE THIS? AFTER ALL, YOU COME FROM A RESPECTABLE HOUSE."

Y: Ober s'iz im in eyn oyer arayn, fun tsveytn aroys.

E: BUT IT WENT INTO ONE EAR AND OUT THE OTHER.

Y: Vos an emes hot er afn tsveytn tog ongevoynr beyde oyern, un mit a vokh shpeter iz er kam gekumen tsu loyfn hinkendik af a fus mit a tsefliktn ek.

E: IN TRUTH, THE NEXT DAY HE LOST BOTH EARS; AND A WEEK LATER HE CAME RUNNING, LIMPING ON ONE FOOT AND WITH A PLUCKED TAIL.

Y: Volt ir dokh gemeynt, az er vet shoynt aynlign?  
E: YOU WOULD THINK THAT HE WOULD STAY PUT?

Y: A nekhtiker tog!  
E: NO WAY!

Y: Der koter hot zikh azoy lang arumgeyogt biz er iz aheymgekumen a tsebalter un a tsekaliyetsheter, zikh avekgeleygt in gortn, un geshtorbn.

E: THE TOM CAT CHASED AROUND SO LONG THAT HE CAME HOME SWOLLEN AND ALL CUT UP; AND HE LAY DOWN IN THE GARDEN AND DIED.

Y: Hobn di kinder oysgegrob'n a grub lebn hoyz, im bagrob'n mit trern in di oygn, un af zayn keyver a vays-bloye fon mitn oyfshrit: "Do lig't KIZSHYU, a yidishe kats."

E: SO THE CHILDREN DUG A HOLE NEAR THE HOUSE, BURIED HIM WITH TEARS IN THEIR EYES, AND PLACED A WHITE-BLUE FLAG ON HIS GRAVE WITH THE INSCRIPTION, "HERE LIES KIZSHYU, A JEWISH CAT."

Y: Mer hobn mir kn kets nisht gehalten.  
E: AFTER THAT WE NO LONGER KEPT CATS.

Y: Vayzt zikh aroys, az yidn hobn gehalten shtub-khayes, gepilnevet oyfes, un gekhovet bheymes.

E: IT TURNS OUT THAT JEWS KEPT HOUSE-ANIMALS, PAMPERED POULTRY, AND RAISED COWS.

Y: S'iz geven gor a yidishe mide fun tsar bale-khayem.  
E: THERE WAS ACTUALLY A JEWISH TRAIT TO TREAT ANIMALS KINDLY.

Y: Punkt azoy vi di yidn hobn toyznter yor gelebt zayt bay zayt mit eysevs kinder, azoy

hobn zey oykh nisht oysgemitn di velt fun got's bashefenishn.

E: JUST AS JEWS FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS HAVE LIVED SIDE BY SIDE WITH ESAU'S CHILDREN, THEY ALSO DID NOT AVOID THE WORLD OF GOD'S CREATURES.

Y: Iz di luft geven ful mitn krey fun a hon, mitn biln fun a hunt, mitn miyoken fun a kats, mit meken un beken un tsvitshen un griltsn—mit eyn vort, di shtume velt fun di bale-khay iz gornisht geven azoy shtum vi m'hot es undz ayngeredt.

E: SO THE AIR WAS FILLED WITH THE CROWING OF A ROOSTER, WITH THE BARKING OF A DOG, WITH THE MEOWING OF A CAT, WITH M-E-KEN AND B-E-KEN AND CRICKET SOUNDS; IN A WORD, THE QUIET WORLD OF ANIMALS WAS NOT ALWAYS AS QUIET, AS WE HAVE BEEN LED TO BELIEVE.

Y: Yidn hobn arum di bale-khay ufgeshtelt a rakhvesdikn folklor, fun kishef-mayses un shrek-ibergloybenishn, zabobones, zgules, un opshprekhenishn.

E: JEWS HAVE ESTABLISHED A BROAD FOLKLORE AROUND THIS CONCERN FOR ANIMALS, ABOUT STORIES AND FEARFUL SUPERSTITIONS, NOTIONS, REMEDIES, AND EXORCISMS.

Y: Der iker hot men zikh geshrokn farn gilgleshome.

E: THEY MAINLY FEARED THE TRANSMIGRATION OF THE SOUL INTO THE BODY OF ANOTHER CREATURE.

Y: Iz lomir af a minut a tap ton dem deyfek fun folks-gloybn un toyem-zayn fun der velt fun di bale-khay—nusekh shtetl.

E: SO LET US FOR A MOMENT TAKE THE PULSE OF FOLK BELIEFS AND SAVOR THE WORLD OF CONCERN FOR ANIMALS—IN THE STYLE OF THE SHTETL.

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This is the first of three parts to be published in *Der Bay*. Save this, so you will have the series. The author, Miriam Hoffman, teaches at Columbia University. The translator and transliterator, Troim Katz Handler is an author, lecturer and IAYC board member. She and Frank live in Florida and New Jersey. They can be reached at: troim@webtv.net

## *In der velt fun bale-khay, fun Miriam Hoffman Part II*

### *IN THE WORLD OF LIVING CREATURES*

**Transliterated & translated by Troim Katz Handler**

Y: Shtelt aykh for di freyd ven es vet geboyrn a yingele, eyn kleynikayt, a zokher bYisroyel!  
E: IMAGINE THE JOY AT THE BIRTH OF A LITTLE BOY—NO SMALL MATTER—A MALE FOR THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL!

Y: Af der vant flegt men tsehengen di shir-hamayles.  
E: ON THE WALL THEY USED TO HANG THE PSALMS.

Y: M'hot getsitert un geflatert ibern nay-geboyre nem oyfele; gehit es fun di lapen fun Lilisn, di malke fun di nisht-gute.  
E: THEY TREMBLED AND HOVERED OVER THE NEWLY-BORN INFANT; PROTECTED IT FROM THE PAWS OF LILITH, THE FEMALE DEMON, THE QUEEN OF EVIL.

Y: Derfar hot men im ongeton a royt bendele un opgeshprokhn an ayen-hore: Tfu! Tfu! Tfu! S'zol im kholile gornisht shatn.  
E: THEY THEREFORE TIED A RED RIBBON ON THE INFANT AND UTTERED AN AYEN-HORE AGAINST THE EVIL EYE: TFU! TFU! TFU! MAY NOTHING, HEAVEN FORBID, HARM HIM.

Y: Dervayl hot men ongeton dem "khosn bokher" in meydlshe kleyder un gelozt vaksn zayne lekelekh; un alts af tsu fardreyen di yoytsres baym sotn.  
E: THEY DRESSED THE LITTLE FELLOW IN GIRLS' CLOTHING AND LET HIS CURLS GROW—TO CONFUSE SATAN.

Y: Ven s'iz gekumen di tsayt tsu leygn dos kind in vigele, flegt men koydem ahin araynleygn a kats un bshas-mayse aynroymen in oyer: "Her zikh tsu, du ketsisher moyekh! Megst zayn di kapore far ot dem oyfele un aldos shlekhts vos s'iz im bashert zol oysgeyn tsu dayn kop."  
E: WHEN IT CAME TIME TO LAY THE CHILD IN THE CRADLE, THEY FIRST PUT IN A CAT AND WHISPERED INTO ITS EAR, "LISTEN, YOU CAT'S BRAIN, MAY YOU BE THE SCAPEGOAT FOR THIS INFANT; AND EVERYTHING BAD DESTINED FOR HIM SHOULD END UP ON YOUR HEAD."  
Y: Ersht nokh der tseremonye hobn zikh tate-mame geleygt shlofn mit a ruikn kop.  
E: ONLY AFTER THIS CEREMONY HAD OCCURRED WOULD THE PARENTS GO TO SLEEP IN PEACE.

Y: An ander bayshpil hot tsu ton mit a ferd.  
E: Another example has to do with horses.

Y: A balegole tsi a milkhiker iz geven mitn ferdl a guter Bruder.  
E: A COACHMAN OR A DAIRYMAN WAS A GOOD BUDDY TO HIS HORSE.

Y: M'hot zikh dermit oysgetaynet vi mit an altn, gutn fraynd.  
E: YOU WOULD UNLOAD YOUR FRUSTRATIONS AS YOU WOULD WITH AN OLD, GOOD FRIEND.

Y: Ot, lemoshl, az m'hot gefirt a kapelye tsu a khasene, hot men dem ferdl ongezogt—"Mitn rekhtn fus foroys, in a mazdikar sho."  
E: FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU DROVE A BAND TO PLAY AT A WEDDING, YOU WOULD TELL THE HORSE "RIGHT FOOT FIRST FOR A LUCKY HOUR."

Y: Oyb, lehavdl, m'hot gefirt a mes tsu kvure fun eyn shtot in der tsveyter, hot men ayngeroymt dem ferd in oyer: Du first a bar-menen."  
E: IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, YOU WERE DRIVING A DEAD PERSON TO THE CEMETERY FROM ONE CITY TO THE NEXT, YOU WOULD WHISPER INTO THE HORSE'S EAR, "YOU ARE CARRYING A CORPSE."

Y: Dos ferd hot tsugesheklt mitn kop vi es volt farshtanen.  
E: THE HORSE WOULD SHAKE HIS HEAD AS IF HE UNDERSTOOD.

Y: Mit hiner un hener, hot men zikh gemuzt rekhenen.  
E: AS FOR HENS AND ROOSTERS, YOU HAD TO TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY.

Y: S'iz arumgegangen a shmue az oyb a hon shteyt af eyn fus un halt eyn oyg tsugemakht, iz es a simen az got zitst oybn un tsornt untu.  
E: A RUMOR WENT AROUND THAT IF A ROOSTER STANDS ON ONE FOOT AND KEEPS ONE EYE CLOSED, IT IS A SIGN THAT GOD IS SITTING ABOVE AND IS FURIOUS BELOW.

Y: Geloybt tsu got vos lang hot der hon nisht gekent shteyn in der poze.  
E: PRAISE GOD THAT THE ROOSTER COULD NOT HOLD THAT POSITION VERY LONG.

Y: Vos hobn yidn geton ven zey hobn gevolt zayn zikher az fun ale eyer veln zikh oyspikn hiner on a hezik un on shodn?  
E: WHAT DID JEWS DO WHEN THEY WANTED TO BE SURE THAT ALL CHICKS WOULD HATCH WITHOUT DAMAGE AND WITHOUT HARM?

Y: Hot men azoy oysmarkirt, m'zol zetsn di kvokes af di eyer zuntik, mitog-tsayt, punkt ven di goyim geyen aroys fun kloyster.

E: ONE WOULD THEN PLAN TO PUT ALL THE SITTING HENS ON THE EGGS SUNDAY, NOONTIME, JUST AS THE GENTILES WERE LEAVING THE CHURCH.

Y: Meynt ir dokh az di goyim hobn nisht gekhapt dos fortl?

E: DO YOU THINK THAT THE GENTILES DIDN'T CATCH ON TO THIS TRICK?

Y: Zey hobn gezetst zeyere kvokes af di eyer shabes, ven di yidn flegn geyn fun shul.

E: THEY PLACED THEIR SITTING HENS ON THEIR EGGS SHABES, AS THE JEWS WERE COMING FROM SHUL.

Y: Mir redn fun a tsayt ven keyn moderne vunder-refuyes zaynen nokh nisht geven, un di kholasn hobn arumgevoyevet af vos di velt shteyt.

E: WE ARE SPEAKING OF A TIME WHEN MODERN WONDER MEDICINES WERE NOT YET IN EXISTENCE AND, UNOBSTRUCTED, DISEASES SPREAD QUICKLY.

Y: A kranker iz demolt geven af got's barot.

E: A SICK PERSON WAS THEN IN GOD'S HANDS.

Y: M'hot ober fort nisht gelozt a khoyle-mesukn glat azoy oysgeyn vi a likht.

E: HOWEVER, ONE DID NOT ALLOW A DANGEROUSLY SICK PERSON TO SIMPLY DIE AND PASS AWAY LIKE A CANDLE.

Y: Hot men ayngerisn veltn im gezunt tsu makhn.

E: THEY TRIED EVERYTHING ON EARTH TO MAKE HIM WELL.

Y: M'hot prubirt alerley potrades, kraytekhtser, un opshprekhenishn.

E: THEY TRIED ALL KINDS OF DELICIOUS FOODS, HERBS, AND EXORCISMS.

Y: M'hot gebundn a hun un zi aruntergeleygt untern bet fun krankn—dos hindl zol zayn far im di kapore.

E: THEY WOULD BIND A CHICKEN AND PLACE HER UNDER THE BED OF THE SICK PERSON SO THAT THE CHICKEN WOULD BE THE SCAPEGOAT.

Y: Oyb ober s'hot geholfn vi a toytn bankes, hot men gerufn an opshprekherke,

E: BUT IF IT HELPED AS MUCH AS CUPPING HELPS A DEAD PERSON, THEY WOULD CALL IN A SOOTHSAYER.

Y: Di skeyne iz gekumen ongelodn mit di letste heyl-mitlen: a meser, a kam, a zip, a zok, un amol a rod fun a vogn.

E: THE OLD WOMAN WOULD COME, LADEN WITH THE LATEST CURE-ALLS: A KNIFE, A COMB, A SIEVE, A SOCK, AND SOMETIMES A WHEEL FROM A WAGON.

Y: Zibn mol hot zi zikh gevashn di hent, gebrokh'n piskes, getsoygn bay di ojern, opgeshnitn di negl in a labn veykh broyt, un gegebn dos tsu esn a shvartsn hunt.

E: SEVEN TIMES SHE WASHED HER HANDS, HURLED INSULTS, PULLED HER EARS, CUT THE NAILS OF HER LEFT HAND, KNEADED THE NAILS INTO A LOAF OF WHITE BREAD, AND FED IT TO A BLACK DOG.

Y: Zi hot oykh ibergeton dos hemd fun krankn af der linker zayt un gezogt derbay a shprukh.

E: SHE ALSO TURNED THE SHIRT OF THE SICK PERSON INSIDE OUT AND UTTERED AN INCANTATION.

Y: Gleybt mir, s'iz geven kemat azoy gut vi penitsilin.

E: BELIEVE ME, IT WAS ALMOST AS GOOD AS PENICILLIN.

Y: S'iz nor a shod vos s'iz undz nisht farblibn kn statistik af vifl di opshprekhenishn hobn geholfn.

E: IT'S ONLY A SHAME THAT WE WERE NOT LEFT STATISTICS TO SHOW HOW MUCH THESE INCANTATIONS HELPED.

Y: Yidn zaynen nisht geven keyn panibrat mit hint.

E: JEWS WERE NOT PALS WITH DOGS.

Y: Dos darf ikh aykh nisht zogn.

E: I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT.

Y: Az a Yidish kind hot bagegnt a hunt in gas, hot er im aroysgeshtekt dray faygn un im bazungen mit aza borekh abo:

E: WHEN A JEWISH CHILD MET A DOG IN THE STREET, HE HELD OUT THREE FINGERS AND GREETED HIM LIKE THIS:

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This is the second of three parts to be published in *Der Bay*. Save it, and be sure to get the last one. The author, Miriam Hoffman teaches at Columbia University in New York City. The translator as well as the transliterator, Troim Katz Handler, is an author, IAYC board member and a well-known lecturer. Troim and her husband Frank spend their summers near Cranbury, New Jersey and winters in West Palm Beach, Florida. Troim can be contacted at: troim@webtv.net

# *In der velt fun bale-khay, fun Miriam Hoffman Part III*

## *IN THE WORLD OF LIVING CREATURES*

**Transliterated & Translated by Troim Katz Handler**

Y: "Hunt, hunt, du bist eysevs hunt. Ikh bin yankevs kind. Oyb du vest mikh baysn, vet kumen a beyzer tayvl un vet dikh tseraysn."

E: "DOG, DOG, YOU ARE ESAU'S DOG. I AM JACOB'S CHILD. IF YOU BITE ME, AN ANGRY DEVIL WILL COME AND TEAR YOU APART."

Y: Nu, mit aza shprukh un mit a grobn shtekn in hant iz a yidish kind geven gut bavornt kegn beyze hint.

E: WELL, WITH SUCH AN INCANTATION AND A THICK STICK, A JEWISH CHILD WAS PROTECTED AGAINST DOGS.

Y: Ober nisht ale hint zaynen arumgegangen mit taynes tsu der velt.

E: BUT NOT ALL DOGS WENT AROUND ANGRY WITH THE WORLD.

Y: Farkert, ven m'hot derzen a hunt gut oyfgeleygt un tsugelozn, hot men farshtanen; S'iz a simen az eliyohu hanovi gefint zikh in shtot.

E: ON THE CONTRARY, WHEN THEY SAW A RELAXED AND AFFECTIONATE DOG, THEY UNDERSTOOD THAT IT WAS A SIGN THAT ELIJAH THE PROPHET WAS IN TOWN.

Y: Mit kets, zet ir, iz geven shoyan an ander mayse.

E: WITH CATS, YOU SEE, IT WAS DIFFERENT.

Y: Kets hobn farhit di shtub kegn shtshures un mayz.

E: CATS PROTECTED THE HOUSE AGAINST RATS AND MICE.

Y: Nor vi tsugebundn di kats zol hobn geven tsum hoyzgezind, hot men zi say vi gerufn *falsh* kats.

E: BUT NO MATTER HOW ATTACHED THE CAT WAS TO THE HOUSEHOLD, IT WAS CALLED FALSE CAT JUST THE SAME.

Y: Az a shvartse kats iz farlofn emetsn dem veg, hot men gevust tsu nemen dray trit af tsurik.

E: WHEN A BLACK CAT CROSSED SOMEONE'S PATH, ONE KNEW TO TAKE THREE STEPS BACK.

Y: Az a kats hot zikh gevashn, hot men gevust az es kumen gest.

E: WHEN A CAT WASHED ITSELF, ONE EXPECTED GUESTS.

Y: Ven m'git a trakht af tsurik, az yidishe kinder in shtetl zaynen oysgekumen on kompyuters, on videotashmes, televiziyes, telefonen, khapt azsh on a tsiter.

E: WHEN YOU THINK BACK, THAT JEWISH CHILDREN IN THE SHTETL GOT ALONG

WITHOUT COMPUTERS, WITHOUT VIDEO-TAPES, TELEVISION, TELEPHONES, YOU ARE SEIZED BY A SHUDDER.

Y: Onshot dem hobn zey zikh geshpilt mit zshabkes, zumerfeyglekh, shpinen, un zshukes.

E: INSTEAD THEY PLAYED WITH FROGS, BUTTERFLIES, SPIDERS, AND BUGS.

Y: S'hot getrofn, az kleynvarg hobn a zshabkele tsekvetsht oder tsemeyest, hot men getsitert eymes-moves m'zol zikh kholile nisht aropredn fun hartsn farn reboyne-shel-oylem.

E: SOMETIMES IT HAPPENED THAT CHILDREN SQUASHED OR KILLED A LITTLE FROG; THEY WERE MORTALLY SCARED THAT A COMPLAINT WOULD BE FILED IN HEAVEN—THAT THEY MIGHT HEAR FROM THE LORD ABOVE.

Y: M'hot gegleybt az got baviligt zshabes dem koyekh fun kloles.

E: THEY BELIEVED THAT GOD ENDOWED FROGS WITH THE ABILITY TO CURSE,

Y: Un oyb s'iz geshen epes shlekhts mitn kind, oder mit zayn tate-mame, iz geven a simen az dos zshabkele hot im farsholtn.

E: AND IF SOMETHING BAD HAPPENED TO THE CHILD OR WITH HIS PARENTS, IT WAS A SIGN THAT THE LITTLE FROG HAD CURSED HIM.

Y: Az m'hot nisht vilndik oyfgetrofn af a zshabke, hot men glaykh gemuzt zogn: "*Zalts in di oygn—fefer in der noz.*"

E: IF YOU ACCIDENTALLY STEPPED ON A FROG, ONE IMMEDIATELY HAD TO SAY, "SALT IN YOUR EYES—PEPPER IN YOUR NOSE."

Y: Loyt ale simonim, hobn zshabkes farrmogt magishe koykhes.

E: ACCORDING TO ALL SIGNS, FROGS POSSESSED MAGICAL POWERS.

Y: Ver es hot geshribn mit kotsheres un lopetes un gekholemt fun a sheyner hantshrift, hot men im gerotn er zol onrirn a zshabe.

E: IF SOMEONE HAD A POOR HANDWRITING AND DREAMED OF BEAUTIFUL PENMANSHIP, HE WAS ADVISED TO TOUCH A FROG.

Y: Tsi dos hot take geholfn, vet shoyan blaybn an eybiker sod.

E: WHETHER OR NOT IT HELPED WILL REMAIN AN ETERNAL SECRET.

Y: Faran a zshukele vos m'ruft im bay undz, *moyshe raboynes kiyele* oder *meshiyekhl*.

E: THERE IS A WINGED INSECT WE CALL MOSES' LITTLE COW OR LITTLE MESSIAH.

Y: Ot dos fliyendike zshukele tor men bshum oyfn nisht ton kn shlekhts.

E: ONE MAY NOT HARM THIS FLYING INSECT ON ANY ACCOUNT.

Y: M'zogt az dos kepele fun dem dzshet-propelerdikn zshukele endlt vi tsvey tropns vaser tsum ferdele vos af im vet meshiyekhl kumen tsu raytn.

E: THEY SAY THAT THE LITTLE HEAD OF THIS JET-PROPELLED INSECT, A LADYBUG, RESEMBLES LIKE TWO DROPS OF WATER THE HORSE ON WHICH THE MESSIAH WILL COME RIDING.

Y: Dos bafli glte zshukele kumt take onzogn vegn der geule.

E: THIS WINGED INSECT WILL COME TO ANNOUNCE THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH.

Y: Az m'vil davke visn vegn sof fun di teg, darf men khapn dos MESHIKHL un shnel ibertseyln vifl pintelekh er farmogt af zayne fligelekh.

E: IF ONE TRULY WANTS TO KNOW ABOUT THE END OF DAYS, ONE HAS TO CATCH THIS LITTLE MESSIAH AND QUICKLY COUNT THE DOTS ON ITS LITTLE WINGS.

Y: Yedes pintele iz a yor; un loyt dem ksheshbn veyst men genoy, ven meshiekh vet kumen.

E: EVERY DOT IS A YEAR, AND, ACCORDING TO THE CALCULATION, ONE CAN TELL EXACTLY WHEN MESSIAH WILL COME

Y: Ot hot ir a tropn in yam funem raykhn yidishn folklor vos hot tsu ton mit lebedike bruim mit vemen mir teyln di yaboshe.

E: HERE YOU HAVE A DROP IN THE SEA OF RICH JEWISH FOLKLORE, WHICH HAS TO DO WITH THE LIVING CREATURES WITH WHICH WE SHARE THE LAND.

Y: Haynt. hot men gemakht fun di fir-fisike, svishstshendike, poyzedike bashefenishn a groysce industriye.

E: TODAY WE MAKE OF THESE FOUR-FOOTED, WHISTLING, CRAWLING CREATURES A GREAT INDUSTRY.

Y: A khutz shpayz, puts-salonen un heyl-mitlen, batsirt men di hayntike shtub-khayes mit regnmantelekh, shirems, kaloshn, oyringlekh, un shnirlekh kreln.

E: BESIDES FOOD, BEAUTY PARLORS, AND MEDICATIONS, WE ADORN TODAY'S HOUSE

PETS WITH RAINCOATS, UMBRELLAS, GALOSHES, EARRINGS, AND NECKLACES.

Y: Volt ir dokh gezogt az di khayes zaynen gliklekh.

E: YOU'D SAY THAT THE ANIMALS WERE HAPPY.

Y: A nekhtiker tog!

E: NO WAY!

Y: Zey muzn nebekh opkholyen gantsene teg in di farhakte shtiber, zeen nit di likhtike shayn far di oygn azoy groys vi der tog iz.

E: THEY MUST SPEND WHOLE DAYS IN CLOSED HOUSES AND DON'T SEE SUNSHINE.

Y: Hot dokh shoyn mayn soldatske kats gehat dos gan-eydn af der velt.

E: SO MY BRAVE CAT ENJOYED PARADISE ON EARTH.

Y: Zi hot gelebt vi a frayer foygl un gehat a gliklekh toyt.

E: HE LIVED AS FREE AS A BIRD AND ENJOYED A HAPPY DEATH.

Y: Dos partsef-ponim fun di yidishe bale-khay hot zikh in gantsn gebitn.

E: THE FACE OF JEWISH CONCERN FOR ANIMALS HAS CHANGED COMPLETELY.

Y: Haynt zaynen zey oder khutspedik un hefker, oder zey zaynen oysgeputst in esik un in honik vi yentl tsum get.

E: TODAY THEY ARE EITHER BRAZEN OR WILD OR DRESSED UP IN VINEGAR AND HONEY LIKE YENTL GOING FOR HER DIVORCE.

Y: Nu, ikh ze shoyn, az ikh vel muzn aroysgeyn khapn moyshe raboynes kiyele, ibertseyln di flekelekh af zayne fligl, un prubirn oysrekehnen ven meshiyekhl vet kumen.

E: WELL, I SEE THAT I HAVE TO GO OUT TO CATCH A LADYBUG, MOYSHE RABEYNUS LITTLE COW, COUNT THE DOTS ON THE WINGS AND TRY TO FIGURE OUT WHEN MESSIAH WILL COME.

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This is the last of three parts to be published in *Der Bay*. The author, Miriam Hoffman, has taught Yiddish at Columbia University for over ten years. She was born in Lodz and came to the United States in 1949. A dozen of her plays have been staged, including *Songs of Paradise*, produced by the late Joseph Papp. Other plays have toured Amsterdam, Regensburg, Zurich, Munich, and Warsaw. She has published children's books and is known for her column in the *Forverts*. In May of 2005, she will be on the faculty of a Yiddish Teachers' Institute at Vilnius University, Lithuania.

## Richard Stockton College of NJ

Senior Scholar/Associate or Full Prof.,  
Holocaust and Genocide Studies,  
Tenure Track Position

**DEPARTMENT:** Office of Arts and Humanities  
**Qualifications:** Applications are individuals with excellent teaching credentials, strong research and publication history and a proven track record in administration.

The ideal candidate will have extensive experience teaching at the graduate level and possess a commitment to the *seminar* method. A strong understanding of Jewish life and culture before, during and after the Holocaust, the Church Struggle and the Holocaust, Jewish Christian relations in contemporary society.

**DESCRIPTION:** The Richard Stockton College Master of Arts Program in Holocaust and Genocide Studies is a recognized program. Founded in 1998, it is America's first Master's program in Holocaust and Genocide Studies in a degree granting institution of higher learning. The Founding Director of the program, Dr. Marcia Littell, plans to return to full time teaching. A scholar of senior rank is sought to both teach and direct the program.

The Master's Program is Interdisciplinary Interfaith, and International. Candidates should hold an earned doctorate in a field relating to Holocaust & Genocide Studies. Consideration will be given to Jewish Studies, Psychology, Religion, History, Political Science, Sociology, Literature and Education. The Expected starting date is September 2005. The teaching load will be 2 courses/semester. Salary is competitive with a generous benefits package.

**SUBMIT:** Letter of application, curriculum vitae, names and contact information of (3) references, teaching philosophy and a statement of vision for a MA Program in Holocaust and Genocide Studies to: **Kenneth Dollarhide, Dean of Arts & Humanities The Richard Stockton College of NJ, AA118, PO Box 195, Pomona, NJ 08240.**

Application deadline is December 1, 2004.

## Notes from IAYC Convention City

Although we are busy planning a spectacular conference (**JUNE 2-5 of 2005**), our monthly Vinkl meetings continue to be informative and fun! We meet the 2nd Sunday of each month from 10-a.m. until noon.

We opened in **SEPTEMBER** celebrating the centennial of Isaac Bashevis Singer. Our speaker, Rosalyn Fletcher, presented Singer's colorful background—including his special relationship with each of his translators. Rosalyn then read *The Destruction of Kreshov*, a gripping and dark tale!

In **OCTOBER** we marked Columbus Day entitled *Aza Yor af Kalombus!* We sang all verses of *Di Grine Kuzine*, plus the Expulsion of 1492 and Ladino Music was presented.

**NOVEMBER** - "Where did my people come from? Where did they settle and why there?"

**DECEMBER**- theme is "The most remarkable gift I have ever received"

**JANUARY**- *The Hassidic Movement*

**FEBRUARY**- *If I were a "Gevir*

**MARCH** - the film *The Dybuk*

**APRIL** - A newly revised production of "Mayn Tayere Meydl"

**MAY**- *Yom Hashoah*

Besides the theme, all programs have music, singing, a classic Yiddish story is read and we have, of course, refreshments. We shall not meet program for you at the IAYC Conference:

- Three distinguished scholars will speak at the plenary sessions
  - 24 breakout session on immigration, art, literature, music, theatre and much more!
- And, of course, the entertainment will be freylekh!
- See you in Minneapolis in June!

Check out our Web site:

[www.IAYC-minnesota.org](http://www.IAYC-minnesota.org)

<<http://www.IAYC-minnesota.org>>

## Yidish Sof Vokh Oystralye 2004

By Ruth Boltman

They came from the borsht belt; they came from Byron Bay. They drove up from Melbourne and they flew down from Sydney. The drawcard was *Yidish Sof Vokh Oystralye 2004*.

Inspired by *Yidish-Vokh* in the Berkshire Mountains in upstate New York, the inaugural Australian version was held in the Dandenongs, at the Chestnut Hill Conference Centre in Kallista. The aim of the two-day program was to immerse participants in Yiddish, to improve their language skills, and to inspire them to increase their usage and knowledge of Yiddish thereafter—and, of course, to have fun!

Sponsored by The Penina Zylberman Foundation, J Waks Cultural Centre, Kadimah, and The Australian Centre for Jewish Civilization at Monash Univ, the weekend attracted families and singles; those who learnt Yiddish at home and those studying at Monash Univ., Mount Scopus & King David. They ranged in age from 15 to “once you get to my age you don’t say.” The activities were pitched at adult level. An exception was the eight week-old daughter of two participants, who became the camp mascot.

Freydi Mrocki was thrilled with the numbers the weekend attracted. “We ended up with 50, and some who came up especially for one day only. In the days before the weekend, I had to turn people away—the venue simply couldn’t accommodate any more.”

As well as the numbers attracted, Mrocki was encouraged by the range of participants. Many of those who attended were outside the circle of the *usual suspects* who patronise events held by the Yiddish organisations. Mrocki said, “We aimed to be inclusive, and were pleased to have attracted a cross-section of Jewish Australia”.

The formal program included two reading levels, lectures on Jewish cooking, on culture, Yiddish on the radio and the Internet, word games and song-writing. The informal program included much laughter and eating, sport and singing, and walks in the beautiful Dandenong Ranges.

At the conclusion of the weekend, there was much enthusiasm for further events to be organised. It is hoped that further Yiddish weekends will take place once or twice a year, as well as discussion groups, excursions to the botanical gardens and the zoo, coffee get-togethers, and reading groups, all of which will be conducted in Yiddish. *Mitn rekhtn fus!*

For information regarding future Yiddish events, Contact Zylberman at: [mzylberman@tpg.com.au](mailto:mzylberman@tpg.com.au)

## Yidish Sof Vokh Oystralye:

We came, we shmoozed, we conquered

By Eloise Rosenstein (First year Yiddish student at Monash University)

The minute we arrived, it felt as if another world — welcoming, warm, the air thick with *yidishkeyt* and *chavershaft* across 3 days, speaking only Yiddish. My intrepidation was matched only by my excitement and expectation for a challenging yet fulfilling weekend. Having neither grown up in a Yiddish-speaking home nor studied the language for a long time, I wasn’t sure if I would manage amongst a crowd of long-time speakers.

We got to know each other over *Shabes* dinner. Soon my nerves settled, and I was asking people to ‘*derlang mir der rayz*, already!’ in all confidence. Later we sang *Yidishe lider* together, then, naturally, we finished with more food (*nu, voden?!).*

Next morning we split into 2 groups according to our language proficiency. I joined the beginners’ group. We read an autobiographical piece by Sholem Aleichem, aided by Danielle Charak, our *lererin* from the university. This was followed with a lecture about Yiddish poets by Hinde Burstin. After this, the option was to go for a walk, have a chat over coffee or play soccer in Yiddish. I went for a lie down instead—a break, and some more food. A cooking demonstration with Rosie in Yiddish and then a debate with Leon Gettler, Alex Dafner, and Danielle Charak and then dinner.

That night we were treated to the Yiddish *Roy and H.G.*, and watched *Der Dybuk*. It gave a hint of what might have been, had we not lost so many of our Yiddish theatre greats. It encouraged me to work at keeping our fabulous language and culture alive for generations to come.

The next morning we resumed our classes. Half of us joined Shifre Burstin to play games, whilst the rest wrote an original song to mark the occasion—*A Sof-Vokh Hymn*. We then learned about Yiddish radio and Yiddish on the Internet. Originally planning to leave straight after lunch, my friend and I found ourselves staying longer and longer into the day, saddened by the prospect of leaving behind so many new friends.

On returning home, trying to go back to speaking English was a struggle (much to the amusement of my flatmate). Bustling through the aisles of Coles, an *antshuldik!* here, a *sheynem dank* there—thinking, breathing, feeling only Yiddish. It is the greatest thing about Sof Vokh? I’m now more sure than ever before of the language with which my heart lies—it is *mame-loshn!*